CHAPTER FOUR

THEORIES OF POWER AND A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

This is one of the reasons why the interpretation of ideology may illicit strong reactions from some of the individuals who make up the social world. It touches the nerves of power, it highlights the positions of those who benefit most and those who benefit least from existing social relations and it examines some of the symbolic mechanisms by virtue of which these asymmetrical social relations are established and maintained in the day-to-day flow of social life.

Thompson, 1996:26

Power

In the ongoing discussion and debate about professions, a number of themes are recurrent: control, culture, power, ideology and domination. Of these, control of the profession, by management or self-control, is raised nearly twice as frequently as power or culture. But control is one form of exercise of power. It is power over one’s group - the training, the entry requirements; power over the professional by others and power over one’s self. Hence, the concept of control can be merged with power and it then becomes the single most recurrent theme in the discussion of professions.

Power, as a concept has a longer history than the concept of profession and is arguably more contested. The theoretical analyses of power do not build neatly on each other and there is no chronological sequence of argument. More modern writers such as Hannah Arendt (1958) attempt to redefine the concept from first principles. Neo-Marxist writers, as outlined by Larrain (1983), have subtly altered definitions and emphases and at times, have been close to arguing a contrary views to those proposed by Marx and Engels. In this section, the main themes of power and its sub-concepts (e.g., force, authority and influence) are summarized. How these are manifested in dependency relationships, through interest, by intellectuals and by élites is discussed and finally, the development of theoretical framework used in this study is described.

The point of such a summary is to highlight the genealogy of the concept power and to demonstrate the extent of its contested nature. More importantly, it is to show that it is easy to uncover power where there are human interactions and easy to find a series of respected
theorists to support the identification and nomenclature of the type of power. It is more difficult and challenging, to go beyond this, to determine how specifically power was exercised; to identify what precisely was done and how; and therefore to gain a greater understanding of the meaning of that exercise of power for those involved, for those on the periphery at the time and for us today, some decades later.

Positive, Neutral and Negative Power

Power, can be seen as a positive concept, as a potential and an act which may bring about change (Arendt, 1958, Parsons, 1957). It can also be seen as neutral (Aron, 1953, Michels, 1962) and natural, as ‘the way things are’, founded on observations of the course of nature - like the volcano. It can further be seen to be negative: to be a denial of choice, of rights, liberties and freedoms of action, thought and movement. It can be seen to be a restriction of access to resources and embedded in the structures, language and belief systems of the societies and cultures we inhabit (Lord Acton 1988; van Doorn, 1962; Bachrach, & Baratz, 1970; Marx, & Engels, 1976; Gramsci, 1971; Dahrendorf, 1967; Mosca, 1938; Pareto, 1955; Schumpeter, 1951; Lasswell, & Kaplan, 1938 and others).

There are limits to the concept of power. It exists only where there is a relationship or interaction between two or more people but it does not exist in every human relationship according to Arendt, 1958 and Bachrach & Baratz, 1970. It is not a commodity; it cannot be bought and sold in the market, although some of the trappings of power can be; and it occupies no space (Aron, 1953; Lefort, 1986). Power cannot be kept in reserve, although resources and instruments associated with power can (Arendt, 1958; Aron, 1953). These resources or instruments can be seen as power potential (puissance) but the mobilization of these instruments, like the power of the press, a nuclear arsenal, paying money into a political party campaign or denying a teenager’s access to the family car are actual exercises of power (pouvoir) (Aron, 1988). Power therefore refers to a potential combined with action; it is where word and deed are not separated. For, if one has all the potential but never exercises it, power is lost (Arendt, 1958).
Power in Relationships

Theorists diverge on their definitions about the nature of the relationships where power may be found. For some, the relationships can be seen to be systematically asymmetrical. That is, where one person or a group of people have sustained a greater degree of power in a relationship over time so that they are in effect, dominant (Marx, 1974; Gramsci, 1971; Larrain, 1983; van Doorn, 1962; Thompson, 1996; Bierstedt, 1974). Others claim that no one is purely subject or object in a relationship. There is reciprocity (Aron, 1953). It is difficult to find the border between domination and subjection (Dahrendorf, 1967). Alternatively, the special nature of dependence relationships is considered (Emerson in Blau, 1974), where one or both parties rely on each other for certain goods (material, emotional or social). Further, there is the notion that the power can shift due to differences in values or interests so that a relationship between two people is not what it first appears; the power-balance can change over time; and also over different issues occurring in close temporal proximity (Bachrach, & Baratz, 1970).

The successful exercise of power cannot be determined by the number of desires achieved by an individual or group. It is dependent upon the relative importance of conflicting values in the mind of the recipient in the power relationship (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970). The most graphic example of this is of the sentry on duty who confronts an intruder. The sentry is not using power if the intruder stops, regardless of the sentry being armed - both agree on values. Neither does the sentry have power if the intruder does not comply with the sentry’s demand to stop, because the value of breaking in is more important to the intruder. Finally, if the intruder wants to die and is shot by the sentry, then the intruder is not a victim of the sentry’s discharge of weapon and the use of deadly force.

Theoretical Divisions about Power

It is at this point that the greatest division in the theoretical views can be seen. Some theorists continue to see power and authority in a positive light, where force is defined out of power, where power only occurs where there is difference between groups and individuals and where one’s ability to choose among alternative routes is maintained. There is a sense that rational people can resolve power issues; that informed democratic processes would prevail. There is legitimacy in the superiority of those in esteemed positions; there may be times when force is
necessary and this is a natural part of life to which we must adapt. Élites, that is, minorities who exercise power where they are formed, serve a purpose and function in maintaining social stability. Within this view, power is seen as an enabling force, as ‘power to’. It is focused on achieving some goal or end, whether that is for stability or change.

A second group sees power as being differentially distributed, like resources, with some people in power and others out of power. Relationships in all hierarchical structures are interpersonal and asymmetrical (Aron, 1953:71). At each level, people are subordinate to some higher level. Even leaders of government are seen to be answerable to constitutional law. In this view, the notion of a ruling class is seen to be misleading, as there are many ruling élites in competition (Aron, 1953:75-76, Dahrendorf, 1967:167). Not all interests are equally represented and some interests are defined out of consideration. Power can then be defined as the structurally determined capacity to control others by deciding issues, by deciding which issues are to be contentious and by suppressing manifest and latent conflicts (Brym, 1980: 26, Lukes, 1974).

The third view is that of state organized and ideologically secured social reproduction (Thompson, 1996:85-97). In this, the state is responsible for reproducing social relationships and ensuring the reproduction of material conditions of social life and collectively shared values and beliefs. The state organized education system, industry protection through tariffs, wage system, taxation and welfare systems keep social relationships stable and secure. They define the knowable and what constitute acceptable desires. Differences between sub-groups in the community cause no threat to the reproduction of the social order so long as there is sufficient dissensus (along the lines of gender, race, skill, intellectual ability, physical ability, religious belief etc) to prevent the formation of an effective oppositional movement (Thompson, 1996:90). The state, therefore, is seen to act in the long-term interests of the class or classes which benefit most from existing social relations - that is, it acts to the benefit of the dominant classes. The state can afford to appear to be flexible around the relatively unimportant edges, while retaining the core principles and processes of domination. Stability, too, can be produced not from consensus but by dissensus that occurs at the point of decision-making, dividing the oppositional groups so that their voice is lost (Bachrach, & Baratz, 1970; Lukes, 1974).

The fourth view is based, initially, on the idea that the ruling material force in society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. Members of the dominated classes are said to have difficulty in developing forms of autonomous thinking because they lack the means of
intellectual production and because they are constrained by the dominant social relations (Marx, & Engels, 1976:59). These constraints include the lack of economic resources and access to educational opportunities to develop ideas and/or media outlets to disseminate them. The solidarity of popular beliefs is seen to have the same energy as material force (Gramsci, 1971:377) so popularly held beliefs can constrain individual, group and class behaviour along lines approved by those who have the power to develop, market and sanction those beliefs. As a result, a coherent Weltanschauung (Lukács 1971:65) is achieved where ideas have produced an integrating effect in society, as they win the free consent of the people. Hegemony describes the observation that those in subordinate positions will argue for and support the ideas and concepts that perpetuate their domination.

Hegel (1821) argued that it is possible not only to apply concepts to reality but also to learn the constitution of reality from the study of concepts. He claimed that every individual is a product of their own time and therefore limited the task of understanding history and human relationships to the rational present (Outlines of the Philosophy of Law). People’s circumstances are the products of current ideas and the material realities would not change without changes in the concepts and reasoning. Marx and Engels (1976:56) argued that domination is based in material realities and, until change occurred in the material world for those who were dominated, there could be no real change in ideas. Gramsci (in Larrain, 1983:82) further argued that to wait until the proletariat had achieved the new ideology was utopian because, for that to occur, they would have had to already become the ruling class. These are not either/or categories in real life. Ideas, material realities and changing levels of class power are fluid and there are key points in the history of societies and communities where change has an opportunity to occur. It is also true, however, that minor changes can be misleading and one has to watch a society through a considerable length of time - a cycle - (Gramsci, 1980) to determine whether the changes have been maintained or whether the initial ruling class and system has prevailed. As Gramsci says, to see small variations as evidence of greater social change is ‘primitive infantilism’ (Gramsci, 1971:407).

Concealment

Power, then, is about the capacity a section of society has to conceal what is really going on. Ideology is the study of the way in which ideas and concepts are used to conceal contradictions and thereby establish and sustain relations of dominance. Take, for instance, the notion of fair
wage for a ‘full day’s work’. The form of the wage conceals the reality that it is not full day’s wage and, therefore, is not a fair wage. These notions are so embedded in our understanding of wage relations that most workers do not question the contradiction inherent in the level of their wages (Larrain, 1983:128).

Therefore, values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain groups at the expense of others are seen to be strategies of the exercise of power. Power, then, is exercised through *coercion, influence, authority, force* or *manipulation* (Lukes, 1974:32). The bias of a system is not, however, sustained simply by a series of individually chosen acts but by the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviours of groups and practices of institutions which may indeed be manifested by individual inaction (Marx and Engels, 1962:247). Power here is *power over* not *power to*.

**Force is ‘Power Over’**

The mobilization of instruments of power is force (Arendt, 1958; Aron, 1988; Bachrach & Baratz 1970). Once the button is pushed or the punch thrown, the person on the receiving end has lost the capacity to choose to comply or to negotiate an alternative arrangement. This is the use of force. Those involved in an interaction understand that force, in the sense of a final closing action or a sanction, might be used. Aron (1988:82) says that great powers must tolerate being flouted by small powers. It is not so much a matter of must but that they *can* tolerate being flouted and still not lose their power. Great powers will, from time to time, take strong action domestically or offshore, as evidence that word and deed are not parted and, if they chose not to retaliate with military force, there are other forms of force which can be used - economic, cultural sanctions manipulation and influence. Great powers which have a vision of their longevity and stability, can afford to take a longer-term position in dispute management.

Coercion and manipulation are types of force. They ensure that the subject has no choice but to comply. In coercion, the subject is aware that there is no choice. With manipulation, the subject may believe that free choice has been exercised but, in reality, the subject’s perception of the available options has been altered without the subject’s knowledge or awareness. Concepts, values, beliefs, rituals and standard practices may conceal manipulation.
Dependence Relationships

Blau (in Bell 1974, 293-308) outlined a schema, developed by Emerson, for examining power by looking at dependence relationships and their consequences. A dependence relationship occurs when someone needs something from another person or group. The individuals who want the thing have a number of alternatives. First, they can provide the potential supplier with something the supplier wants badly enough to induce an offer of the wanted item or service in return. This becomes a reciprocal exchange. Second, they can obtain the needed item or service elsewhere, assuming there are alternative suppliers, so the reciprocal exchange now occurs in a different relationship. They can coerce the provider by establishing a domination relationship or resign themselves to not having the sought-after object or service, perhaps finding a substitute for it which requires they change the values that determine their needs. Finally, they can comply with whatever the supplier wishes.

From both sides of the model comes a set of strategies to either avoid the dependent relationship or prevent the other member from using the avoidance strategies. This can be done without direct recourse to the instruments of power although manipulation, inducement, encouragement and persuasion may be used directly or indirectly.

For those wanting to attain and sustain power and prevent others from choosing any of the strategies of avoidance except compliance, one can remain indifferent to the benefits offered in exchange. This includes denying others access to resources that are vital for the welfare of a group or individual. One can alternatively, secure needed benefits from outside sources rather than subordinates and encourage competition among suppliers of essential services, e.g., opposing the formation of unions that would restrict competition for jobs among workers. One can ensure the continued dependence of others on the services one has to supply, by barring access to alternative suppliers through establishment of a monopoly. One can discourage coalitions among subordinates which includes blocking their access to political power, supporting law and order and resisting political control of exchange processes. As power depends on people’s needs for the benefits those in power have to offer, the promotion of materialistic values, patriotic values, religious convictions or revolutionary values can be undertaken. Even though the dominant group’s power may rest on different social values and there are conflicting interests, there may be common interest in preserving an existing power structure overriding these differences and contradictions in values.
The conflict between the powerful (who have an interest in fortifying their power) and the people over whom they have power (who have an interest in strengthening their independence) centres on four types of issues. First, resources of the subordinates can be pooled. Second, competition among superiors for the services of subordinates increases the subordinate's independence. The question of the degree of collective organization permissible to restrain free competition is raised. Third, recognition that the conflict is political is necessary and coercive force may need to be used in the fight against power based on superior resources. Coalitions need to be developed and other forms of action created. New ideologies can be produced which attempt to shift dependence but not necessarily reduce it. Finally, there may be a point where as Blau (1974) points out:

If the power demands are too severe, relinquishing these benefits may be preferable to yielding to the demands

Blau, 1974: 298

**Authority**

This leads the discussion to *authority*, for, if there is no conflict in interest or values between people, there would appear to be no use of power (Aron, 1953). Equally, if a person did not comply with an expressed wish or demand, the demand becomes a ‘dead letter’ or is effected through the use of force, not power. There is a debate among the theorists that power over others is to have them do what they would otherwise not do. If they chose to do it power disappears and, if they chose not to do it, power becomes force.

Authority has been defined as power differentially distributed throughout social systems, where a person or group of people can expect that others will do as instructed (Dahrendorf, 1967:165). There is an ability to predict that instruction will meet with compliance. Authority relations are relations of superordination and subordination and relate to relatively permanent social roles or positions. Those people in the dominating position are endowed with authority and participate in its exercise. Those subjects of the domination are deprived of authority and excluded from its exercise (Dahrendorf, 1967:167; Schattschneider, 1960:71).

Authority, for some theorists, is not power because there is a sharing of values (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970). The person in the subordinate position believes in the right of those in authority
to issue demands and expect compliance (Weber, 1950:152). The authority is seen by the subordinate to be legitimate. ‘Consensual authority, with no conflict of interests is not, therefore, a form of power’ (Lukes, 1974:32).

The contrary view is that agreement on values may not be true agreement. It is, rather, agreement under duress because the range of choice of behaviours of the subordinate person may be limited by their socialization (Thompson, 1996) and may be a reflection of coercive and oppressive social forces (Marx & Engels, 1976, Lukes, 1974). Power is also exercised when the dominant group or individual devotes energy to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices which limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to those in dominance (Bachrach, & Baratz, 1970:7). As Lukes (1974:23) states, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others, to have the desires you want them to have - that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires? It might be assumed that, if people feel no grievances, then they have no interests that are harmed by the use of power. But, the supreme and most insidious exercise of power is to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things. This is because they can neither see nor imagine an alternative or because they see it as divinely ordained and beneficial (Lukes, 1974).

Knowledge as Power

According to Bourdieu (1971:174-5), some agents or groups of agents, defined by the position they occupy in the intellectual field, can impose their cultural norms on other sections in the field. This can limit interactions and the manner in which issues are considered. Michels (1962:35) sees increasing size of and division of labour within, political organizations as the chief factor that prevents mass membership from effectively participating in the political process. Brym (1980:26) adds that the three most important structural determinants of the capacity to control others are, in ascending order of importance, group size, level of group social organization and resource control. If everything else is the same, larger groups will have more power than smaller groups. If two groups are the same size, then the one that is more highly organized will be more powerful. And if two groups are the same size and equally organized, the one that controls more resources will have more power (Bierstedt, 1974:220-41). These resources may be divided into three types. The first is physical or coercive resources, including
access to the means of violence. The second is material resources, involving the capacity to bestow, withhold or withdraw economic gains and losses. The third is symbolic or normative resources involving the ability to control communications networks for purposes of legitimizing or undermining the legitimacy of a political system (Oberschall, 1973, 246).

Further, as Michels (1962) comments, it is little wonder that intellectuals in political parties and movements occupy such a prominent position: they possess skills that mesh neatly with the oligarchic demands of complex organizations. Professional leadership, according to Michels, accentuates the cultural differences between the leaders and led. The formal instruction of the leaders, their special competence and expert knowledge (which the leaders acquire in matters inaccessible or almost inaccessible to the mass) gives them security of tenure which conflicts with the essential principles of democracy. He goes on to say that, within political institutions, the distribution of power between intellectuals and non-intellectuals is contingent upon their relative size, level of social organization and access to resources (coercive, material and normative). For Michels, the oligarchic control and elitist attitudes are manifested by the intellectuals only to the degree that they are more powerful than the non-intellectuals. Hence, the necessity to include in any analysis of power, the group size, level of social organization and resource control. It also needs to include not only the actual level but perceived resource control, based on the valuation or worth of the knowledge or skill of the intellectual(s).

Michels also notes that intellectuals do not invariably become oligarchies. Other groups, for example, the military, may be more organized and have larger coercive powers available.

**Influence**

James March (1994:166-180) defines influence as the inducement of change. One can see the effect of influence when the behaviour of something is different from that which would be predicted. Influence occurs when a subject is persuaded to internalize a desire for a particular state of affairs. This internalization of values increases the probability of support for a decision, even if the subject would have supported the decision for more pragmatic reasons. Socialization and enculturation have this effect and can be seen to be examples of influence.

Influence occurs when the probability of connections between elements of a decision is altered, for example, through threats of sanctions, promises of rewards or provision of information.
These activities are directed towards restructuring connections between elements of the decision-making process, that is, the person making the decision, those affected, the obvious consequences and hidden consequences, in short and longer terms.

Influence also occurs when a person who usually only responds in one way is given an alternative set of responses or, conversely, it equally exists when a person is deliberately taught only one way to respond. The provision of information to people and the denial of information are both influential.

Having defined influence in this way, the potential power exerted by intellectuals with access to information and methodology, either to expand or contract the repertoire of others and, through training institutions, to be responsible for the socialization, basic education and enculturation of the new generation of workers, can be considerable. Their research can influence people in determining possible consequences resulting from various decisions and the political viewpoint of the intellectuals may limit the quality of the analysis of various events.

Élites

Terms related to discussing élites include the political class or the ruling class (Mosca 1938), governing and non-governing élites (Pareto 1955) and open and closed élites (Lasswell, Lerner, & Rothwell, 1971). Aron (1988) narrowed ‘élite’ to the ‘minority’ that ‘exercises power’. The dominating group maintains and defends their position so that the arrangements appear stable to the point of being inert and legitimacy maintains or changes the authority structure.

Although dominating groups tend to be smaller in number than the subordinate group within the modern industrial scene, legitimate authority might be spread over large number of positions. The alleged characteristics of ruling groups include energy and superiority (Pareto 1955). Or they are superior people or descendants of superior people, whose real or apparent properties are highly esteemed in the society (Mosca, 1938). For Dahrendorf (1967), ruling groups exist only within their associations and there can be many competing associations in the broader community.

If one applies an élite model in a study, questions will seek out those in charge and assume that there must be someone in charge. Questions like ‘Who is in charge?’ or, ‘Is there anyone in
charge?", lead to an answer of a power élite whereas the application of a pluralist model will assume no one is in charge (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970). But power structures have shifting allegiances over time and various issues. So, even if an answer was given on who is in charge at the moment, it does not mean that it is an accurate answer. This is where Gramsci's imperative to avoid primitive infantilism (see above) is operationally relevant.

Bachrach and Baratz (1970:8-9) challenge the student of power to not only examine decision-making when looking for power in a community but also to consider the possibility that an individual or group in a community participates more vigorously in supporting non-decision-making processes than in participating in actual decisions. Lasswell, Lerner and Rothwell (1971) add that the political élite comprises the power holders of a body politic which includes the leadership, the social formations from which leaders typically come and to which accountability is maintained during a given generation. In other words, the political élite is the top power class. They make a distinction between an open and closed élite. An open élite exists when all or a very considerable number, of the members of a body politic are included. A closed élite, on the other hand, embraces only a few. Where leadership is reserved for those who come from a few select families - or select other types of institutions such as tertiary education institutions - a caste system develops.

Interest

The concept of interest is central to the understanding of power (Bachrach & Baratz 1963, 1970 & 1971; Bourdieu 1984; Dahrendorf 1967; Gramsci 1980; Larrain 1983; Lukács 1971; Lukes 1974 & 1986). It is also a central feature in the radical argument that every social interaction is based in a conflict of interest, whether or not the actors in the interaction are aware of that conflict.

The interests of dominant groups are in the maintenance of a social structure that, for them conveys authority whereas the interests of the subjugated group are in changing a social condition that deprives its incumbents of authority (Dahrendorf, 1967). The roles held by people and differential allocation of authority can clearly be in conflict. Role interests are latent interests, in that they are undercurrents of a person's behaviour which are predetermined for the duration of performance of a role only. The individual may not personally hold this interest. They are objective interests associated with social positions and have no psychological
implications or ramifications. When these interests become conscious, they are *manifest interests*.

Therefore, manifest interests are articulated and conscious to individuals and collectivities, while latent interests are orientations of behaviour inherent in social positions, without necessarily being conscious to their incumbents (role expectations). In effect, some people may be conscious of interests and articulate them but, as a result of their social position, act (and are required to act) in ways that are contrary to their manifest interest. There are many holocaust stories of people who did precisely this.

An interest group is an organized collectivity of people with shared manifest interests. Any antagonistic relationship between organized collectivities of individuals that can be explained in terms of social structure is called group conflict. For Weber (1950), class conflict is group conflict arising from and related to the authority structure of imperatively coordinated associations. That is, an association where members are, by virtue of a prevailing order, subject to authority relations (1950). Social classes therefore arise from the differential distribution of authority within social structures and are always conflict groups. (1950). Robbins contributes the notion of communities of interest which can be subjective, that is, affected by decision-making or objective, that is, in roles or positions of authority related to the decision-making (in Dahrendorf, 1967).

If there are latent interests embedded in people’s roles within the social structure and authority is differentially distributed, on economic, social and cultural lines and there are communities of interest, as well as interest groups, then the identification of power becomes increasingly ambiguous. So does the degree of difficulty in establishing whether those in dominant and subjugated positions are consciously aware of the power being exercised and their personal exercise of power. Further, if issues which are potentially difficult or those which may lead to conflict are organized off agendas consciously or unconsciously, it is little wonder that analysts see consensus, where, in fact, none exists or they see conflict where there is no observable skirmish.

For example, Robert Brym (1980:26) suggests that power itself may be defined as the structurally determined capacity to control others by deciding issues, by deciding which issues are to be contentious and by suppressing manifest and latent conflicts (Lukes, 1974). This
supports Bachrach & Baratz (1970) on the necessity to go beyond the analysis of decision-making and non decision-making and to include those issues and voices that have been excluded from the agendas and meetings or consultations. Crenson’s (1971) analysis of air pollution exemplifies this.

In particular, the determination of interest for liberals is based on ‘a want regarding principle’ whereas reformists understand that not all peoples’ wants are equally regarded by the political system. Thus interests include reflected, submerged or concealed wants and preferences (Lukes, 1986). The radicals hold that peoples’ wants may themselves be a product of a system which works against their interests and, in such cases, relates the latter to what they would want and prefer, were they able to make the choice (Lukes, 1986).

The greatest difficulty in the analysis of decision-making or non-decision-making is, therefore, the justification of the relevant counterfactual. By this Lukes means the establishment of the interest of the citizens affected by the exercise of power. This requires three conditions. First, the value judgement implicit in the citizen’s interest has to be indisputable. Second, the empirical hypothesis has to be that, if the citizens had the choice and fuller information, they would not prefer the current situation. Third, that comparative data exist to support the claim that, under different conditions where the alleged power was not operative or operative to a lesser degree, people with comparable social characteristics did make and enforce that choice or did so with less difficulty.

The major problems here are that analysts cannot necessarily assume that the victims of injustice and inequality would but for the exercise of power, strive for justice and equality. A secondary problem may be that the assumption is ethnocentric and fails to take into account cultural relativity. However, one can adduce indirect evidence to support the claim that an apparent case of consensus may not genuine but imposed. Gramsci writes that a social group

may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action but occasionally and in flashes- when, that is, the group, has for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group; and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it, because this is the conception which it follows in ‘normal times’ - that is when its conduct is not independent and autonomous but submissive and subordinate

Gramsci, A 1971: 327
Lukes (1974) suggests that it can be highly instructive to observe how people behave in abnormal times when submission and intellectual subordination are absent or diminished and/or when the apparatus of power is removed or relaxed. Further, if we are concerned to find out what the exercise of power prevents people from doing and sometimes even thinking, we should examine how people react to opportunities (even perceived opportunities) when these occur, to escape from subordinate positions in hierarchical systems.

**Summary on Power**

Power in sociology can be compared to a diamond cut with multiple facets, with some of those cut in ever-greater detail. This section has examined some of the main facets. In the analysis of the actions and utterances of the AASW, this study will investigate the arguments and strategies used by the Association and educational institutions in their determination to establish themselves and maintain their positions in the field of professional and higher education.

In the study, all of the facets of power mentioned above are demonstrated. The interactions are not just demonstrations of influence. There is concealment; there is debate on legitimate authority; élite behaviour; and establishment of a caste system. There are competing interests and knowledge is the major currency being exchanged. There is a dependency relationship between the educational institutions and the professional association. Various strategies used by both parties have resulted in more or less authority and influence.

In order to sieve the voluminous records and extract examples of these forms of power, a comprehensive framework of analysis is necessary. It will need to examine the language and arguments used, the procedures, strategies and structures established, the social and political context and the nature of the field - that is, ‘the game’ these people believe they are playing and to what end.
The Theoretical Framework for Analysis

In relation to this case study, the model for analysis will cover, first, an historical description based on the records. In this way, the development of the Association is embedded in a broader history and the analysis meets Gramsci’s dictum to cover a cycle, in this case the genesis of social work in Australia through the establishment of the AASW from 1942-1977. In building the framework for analysis in this case study, the concepts of Thompson’s (1996) model of depth hermeneutics, Lukes’ (1974) essay on power and Bourdieu (1971-93) have been used.

Key periods where there were changes and developments, not necessarily conflict, will be examined. This meets Lukes’ criteria for one and two-dimensional analyses of power. The symbolic forms, the use of concepts, by whom, how uttered, to whom and in what context, will be analyzed, using Thompson’s model. This will clarify which, if any, of the concepts were being used ideologically and whether there are contradictions which reflect material inequalities or which could benefit from dialectical analysis. Using Thompson’s model assists in the identification of ‘invisible’ conflicts and leads us back to the examination of symbolic power. It enables, too, a three-dimensional analysis of power.

Thirdly, the whole analysis needs to be embedded in an understanding of the field of interaction, in the nature of the people, their habitus, their beliefs and vision. (This can only be done in the most cursory way, given the scope of the research). These reflect active participation in a field of interaction with its doxa and illusio. It is hoped that doing so will yield an outline of the more central contradictions which need to be resolved ideologically (Hegel) and materially (Marx), not only in the short term but in the longer cycle of social interaction (Gramsci).

In the process of this analysis, this four stage sweeping of the same material (historical analysis, Lukes, Thompson and Bourdieu) will lead to clues about the nature and process of the influence of a professional association over the provisions of tertiary education in Australia. It may reveal other unforeseen insights into the nature and process of professions and the nature of power itself.
Lukes and the Three-Dimensional View of Power

For Lukes, there are three ways of looking at power which he described as three dimensions. The first involves a focus on behaviour in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests, seen as policy preferences, revealed by political participation (Lukes, 1986:15). Here the researcher studies actual behaviour, either at first hand or by reconstructing behaviour from documents, informants, newspapers and other appropriate sources (Polsby, 1963:121).

The two-dimensional view of power extends the first, by adding that power is also exercised when energy is devoted to creating or reinforcing, social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to those in power. To the extent that this is successful, the subordinate is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might, in their resolution, be seriously detrimental to the dominant group’s set of preferences (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970:7; Schattschneider, 1960:71). Therefore, values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain groups at the expense of others are seen to be strategies of the exercise of power.9

In this two-dimensional view, not only is power more complex but it also operates in decision-making and in non-decision-making. Decision making is defined as a choice made among alternative modes of action (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970:39) and non-decision-making is a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker and is thus

9 As stated earlier, power for Lukes comprises coercion, influence, authority force and manipulation. For Lukes, coercion occurs when compliance is secured by threat of deprivation or sanctions. Influence exists where, without resorting to a tacit or overt threat of severe deprivation the other person or group’s course of action is altered. Authority is when the other person or group complies because of a recognition that the command is reasonable in terms of their own values - either because its content is legitimate and reasonable or that it has been arrived at through a legitimate and reasonable procedure. Force occurs when the dominant group or individual’s objectives are achieved in the face of non-compliance by stripping the subordinate individual or group of the choice between compliance and non-compliance and manipulation is, thus, an aspect or sub-concept of force, since compliance is forthcoming in the absence of recognition on the part of the subordinate individual or group either of the source or the exact nature of the demand made (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970: 28).
a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process.

Bachrach & Baratz, 1970: 40-44

The two-dimensional view that stresses observable conflict, overt or covert, is inadequate as far as Lukes is concerned. First, it gives a misleading picture of the way in which potential issues are excluded from the political process. The bias of a system can be mobilized, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individual’s choices. Moreover, as Bachrach and Baratz (1970:50) maintain, the ‘domination of defenders of the *status quo* may be so secure and pervasive that they are unaware of any potential challengers to their position and thus of any alternatives to the existing political process, whose bias they work to maintain’. Then, too manipulation and authority may not involve observable conflict as they are agreements based on reason but they may involve possible conflict of values. Finally, it is assumed that, if people feel no grievances, then they have no interests that are harmed by the use of power. This, to Lukes, is highly unsatisfactory, because a grievance is an articulated demand, based on political knowledge, an undirected complaint arising out of everyday experience and/or a vague feeling of unease or sense of deprivation.

To assume that the absence of grievance equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus by definitional fiat

Lukes, 1986:24

The three-dimensional view of power allows for consideration of the way in which potential issues are kept out of politics through social forces, institutional practices or individuals’ decisions. This, Lukes claims, can occur in the absence of actual observable conflict which may have been successfully averted - though there remains here an implicit reference to potential conflict. This potential may never in fact be actualized (see dependence relationships above). There exists, then, a latent conflict which consists of a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude. These latter may not express or even be conscious of, their interests but the identification of those interests ultimately always rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypotheses. A latent conflict, therefore, is a conflict of wants or preferences between those exercising power and those subject to it, were the latter to become aware of their interests (Lukes, 1986:24-25).
Lukes makes a large contribution in terms of how to identify the process or mechanism of an alleged exercise of power on the three-dimensional view. Where, for example, the exercise of power is a non-action rather than observable action, it may be a featureless non-event or inaction where acting in that way may well have specifiable consequences. One of those consequences may be the non-appearance of an issue on an agenda where the action in question would predict that the issue would be raised. Second, the decisions may be unconscious, as a result of the actor not being aware of the real motive or meaning of what is actually being done. The actor may be unaware of the meaning an action may have for others. Or there may be no means of finding out the consequences because neither the knowledge about the consequence nor the means to retrieve it was available. Third, power might be exercised by collectivities, such as groups and institutions. In this case, it has to be determined that the members of the group or institution could have combined or organized to act differently. And that it is in the exerciser or exercisers’ power to act differently, else it may not be an exercise of power but a case of structural determination.

The justification of this claim and the key to the latter two difficulties involved in the identification of the process of exercising power, lies in the relation between power and responsibility. The reason why identifying such an exercise involves the assumption that the exerciser(s) could have acted differently - and, where they are unaware of the consequences of their action or inaction, that they could have ascertained these - is that an attribution of power is at the same time an attribution of (partial or total) responsibility for certain consequences. The point, in other words, of locating power is to fix responsibility for consequences held to flow from the action or inaction, of certain specifiable agents.

Lukes, 1986: 55-56

In this final point, Lukes calls upon C. Wright Mills’s ‘sociological conception of fate’. This has ‘to do with events in history that are beyond the control of any circle or groups of men [sic]: (1) compact enough to be identifiable; (2) powerful enough to decide with consequence and; (3) in a position to foresee the consequences and so to be held accountable for historical events’ (1959:21). C. Wright Mills also argued in favour of attributing power to those in strategic positions who are able to initiate changes that are in the interests of broad segments of society but do not. He claims that it is ‘now sociologically realistic, morally fair and politically imperative to make demands upon men [sic] of power and to hold them responsible for specific courses of events’ (1956: 100).
Thompson: Symbolic Forms and Ideology

Ideology is broadly speaking, meaning in the service of power. Hence the study of ideology requires us to investigate the ways in which the meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of various kinds, from everyday linguistic utterances to complex images and texts; it requires us to investigate the social contexts within which symbolic forms are employed and deployed; and it calls upon us to ask whether the meaning constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms serves or does not serve, to maintain systematically asymmetrical relations of power. It calls upon us to study symbolic forms in a certain light: in the light of the structure social relations which their employment or deployment may serve, in specific circumstances, to create, nourish, support and reproduce.

Thompson, 1996:7

Thompson’s work provides a process for identifying ideology and its transmission within a discrete group.\(^{10}\) His definition of ideology avoids some of the contested and difficult meanings attributed to ideology. These meanings include that ideology acts as social cement - stabilizing societies by binding their members together and providing them with collectively shared values and norms. It can be seen as a characteristic or attribute of certain symbolic forms or symbolic systems as such (conservatism, communism etc.). It can be defined solely or even primarily, in relation to forms of power that are institutionalized in the modern state or as pure illusion. It has been described as an inverted or distorted image of what is ‘real’ or as having a role within a broader theoretical framework about social reproduction and social change (1996:7-11).

He does not agree with the notion that certain beliefs and values are shared by all or that consensus is the stabilizing force in society. The stability could come from diversity and lack of consensus at the very point where oppositional attitudes might be translated into political action. Thompson believes that people experience the effects of domination and power in everyday interaction. These experiences may well be linked to broader structural inequalities, for example, race, gender and class. Ideology, to Thompson, is ideas and meaning in the service of domination - mobilized for a purpose in social interactions and through a society that has been increasingly media-ized.\(^{11}\)

\(^{10}\)Through this examination, the concepts and the consequences of their implementation over a period of time can highlight the contradictions inherent in their use. It can lead later to a dialectical examination of the ideologies and their resulting material contradictions. As Marx and Engels assert, ideology conceals material contradictions. It is a specific kind of distortion which conceals contradictions and stems from their existence. Hence it can only disappear when the contradictions which give rise to it are resolved in practice (1976:56).

\(^{11}\)The analysis of symbolic forms and systems of thought or belief requires us to see their development and use within the social-historical contexts in which they take hold. Ideology, to Thompson (1996), is an integral part of social relations and society. It is a creative and constitutive feature of social life: for him it is no illusion.
The analysis of ideology is primarily concerned with the ways in which symbolic forms intersect with relations of power. It is concerned with the ways in which meaning is mobilized in the social world and serves thereby to bolster up individuals and groups who occupy positions of power.

Thompson, 1996:56

Thompson stresses that symbolic phenomena or certain symbolic phenomena, are not ideological as such but are ideological only in so far as they serve, in particular circumstances, to maintain relations of domination. By examining the interplay of meaning and power in particular circumstances and by examining the ways in which symbolic forms are employed, circulated and understood by individuals situated in structured social contexts, it can be detected whether symbolic forms are being used to establish and sustain relations of domination (1996:56). Thompson includes in systematically asymmetric relationships those between sexes, ethnic groups, individuals and the state, nation states and blocs of nation states (1996:58).

Thompson’s definition of what constitutes a symbolic form includes a broad range of actions, utterances, images and texts that are produced by subjects and recognized by them and others as meaningful constructs. Linguistic utterances and expressions, whether spoken or inscribed, are crucial in this regard but symbolic forms can also be non-linguistic or quasi-linguistic in nature (e.g., visual image). Hence, minutes of meetings, conference papers, newsletters of an organization, speeches, texts of internal discussions and reports of interactions with third parties are all symbolic forms legitimate for analysis within a specific socio-historical context.

The key characteristics of symbolic forms (1996:59 and 137-45), by which they may be regarded as meaningful phenomena for study, include that the symbolic form is intentional, conventional, structural, referential and contextual.

The constitution of objects as symbolic forms presupposes that they are produced, constructed or employed by a subject for a subject or subjects and/or that they are perceived as so produced by the subject or subjects who receive them.

Thompson, 1996:138

There are two significant considerations in this: first, that the producer of the symbolic form is capable of acting intentionally but may not have produced the object intentionally. Second, that the intended meaning of the object may not be the ‘real meaning’ because of unconscious processes, lack of awareness of its meaning, confusion, being inchoate, etc; and because the receiver of the object may attribute a different meaning to it. This is typified in the retort, ‘That
may be what you meant but it's certainly not what you said!' Thompson adds that this lack of clarity of meaning is exacerbated when the transfer of the symbolic form is not happening in a dialogue where the message can be easily clarified and that, over time and space, the intended meaning can and does become distorted (1996:138).

The production, construction or employment of symbolic forms, as well as their interpretation by the subjects who receive them, are processes that involve the application of rules, codes or conventions of various kinds, including grammar, language and speech patterns. Problems occur here when the rules of encoding or decoding may not coincide or coexist and when forms are decoded as evidence of mental illness, threat, etc. It is not sufficient to analyze the meaning through minutely analyzing the *structural* elements of the symbolic form. The form is not merely elements related to each other, it is also about something, an object or experience or action and it's *real* meaning is also embedded in the socio-historical context of the period when the symbolic form was constructed. So one cannot determine the meaning of a symbolic form in isolation from its socio-historical context.

Some symbolic forms are ‘free floating’ and refer entirely to the current context (I, you). Others are ‘proper’ and refer to a smaller number of possible people. Some are caricatures of individuals or nation-states. Others, however, require creative interpretation to decipher the connections and references in order to glean the meaning. One therefore needs to be conscious about the context in which the symbolic form was constructed and received (Thompson, 1996: 144).

Symbolic forms are contextual (Thompson, 1996:145) in that they are *always embedded in socially structured contexts and processes within which and by means of which, they are produced, transmitted and received*. There are systematic differentials in terms of the distribution of and access to, resources of various kinds. Individuals have, by virtue of their location, different qualities of and different degrees of, access to available resources. Only a few people with access to the material are in a position to make decisions and take action. Some

---

12 Minutes of associations are usually only available to members and to those who attended meetings. Minutes of AASW meetings and particularly the Professional Education and Accreditation Committee (PEAC) had limited distribution within the membership of that committee and the Federal Executive of the Association. People who were general members and persons outside the Association, including academic institutions and organisation of welfare workers had, in effect, no access to this material at the time of its production. Some AASW material is still unavailable for general public viewing. It is covered by the 30 year rule, or requires permission from the AASW Executive to view, even though it is held in the National Library of Australia.
are in decision-making positions but have to rely on democratic processes that resolve to make decisions contrary to the individual’s preferred view. There are times of dissensus.

Thompson speaks of domination when established relations of power are ‘systematically asymmetrical’. That is, when particular agents or groups of agents are endowed with power in a durable way which excludes and to some significant degree remains inaccessible to, other agents or groups of agents, irrespective of the basis upon which such exclusion is carried out (1996:59).

Once the item under analysis has been identified as a ‘symbolic form’, it can be analyzed to determine whether it represents one of five general modes of operation of ideology. He has a set of strategies attached to each of the modes (see Appendix 4). He qualifies his framework by saying that these are not the only strategies, nor do they always operate independently of each other: on the contrary, they may overlap and reinforce. Ideology may operate in other ways. The strategies are not uniquely associated with the particular mode. Nor are the strategies mentioned the only relevant ones. He adds that certain strategies are typically associated with certain modes: the strategies exemplify but do not provide an exhaustive list. Nor are these highlighted strategies ideological as such: indeed, no strategy is intrinsically ideological. It depends on how the symbolic form as constructed is used and understood in particular circumstances - is the symbolic form so constructed serving, in these circumstances to sustain or subvert, to establish or undermine, relations of domination?

Examining typical strategies of symbolic construction can alert us to some of the ways in which meaning may be mobilized in the social world, can circumscribe a range of possibilities for the operation of ideology but it cannot take the place of a careful analysis of the ways in which symbolic forms intersect with relations of domination in particular concrete circumstances

Thompson, 1996:61

13In this context, the general membership of the AASW are in this position due to lower levels of access to information and exclusion from the debate and decision-making processes of the Executive or the PEAC. Certainly academic institutions and social welfare groups were not privy to this material. It can be argued that this is rightly so, as the Association has every right to retain control over its own business. In Lukes’ terms, it has the authority to do so because the process of electing people to duly constituted positions was carried out correctly and hence their authority is vested in general consensus about just process.

14Thompson adds that even a simple phrase embedded in a structured social context bears traces: accent, intonation, mode of address, choice of words, style of expression, [...] of the social relations characteristic of this context. More complex forms, e.g., speeches, texts, TV programmes, works of art, generally presuppose a range of specific institutions within which and by means of which, these forms are produced, transmitted and received (1996:145).
Culture and Symbolic Forms

The passing on from one generation to the next the meanings and understandings of the world and the relationships between humans and their environment through symbolic forms, either utterances or objects, moves the analysis beyond the realm of politics and into a consideration of culture. Culture, too, is a contested concept. It can be seen as a process of intellectual or spiritual development or as a varied array of values, beliefs, customs, conventions, habits and practices characteristic of a particular society or historical period. Alternatively, there is Geertz’s symbolic conception of culture as ‘the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs’ (Thompson, 1996:132).

For Geertz, cultural analysis ‘has little to do with the formulation of laws and predictions; it is more that the analyst is seeking to make sense of actions and expressions, to specify the meaning they have for the actors whose actions they are. In so doing, to venture some suggestions, some contestable considerations about the society of which these actions and expressions are a part’ (Thompson, 1996:131-2).

Therefore, cultural phenomena are seen to have meaning for actors as well as for those who analyze them. This leads Thompson to state that symbolic forms are always embedded in structured social contexts. They are expressions of a subject, situated in a socio-historical context, endowed with resources and capacities of various kinds - the symbolic forms may bear traces of the social condition of their production. They are generally received and interpreted by individuals who are also situated within a specific socio-historical context and endowed with various kinds of resources.

---

15It is about having an attitude of not seeking to classify and quantify but, ‘rather the sensitivity of an interpreter seeking to discern patterns of meaning, to discriminate between shades of sense and to render intelligible a way of life which is already meaningful for those who live it’ (Thompson, 1996:32).

16They are embedded in specific social-historical contexts and processes within which and by means of which, they are produced, transmitted and received; they may be structured in various ways including asymmetrical relations of power, differential access to resources and opportunities and by institutionalized mechanisms for the production, transmission and reception of symbolic forms and, the analysis of cultural phenomena involves the interpretation of symbolic forms by means of the analysis of socially structured contexts and processes (1996:136).
A further consequence of the contextual embedding of symbolic forms is that they are often the object of complex processes of valuation, evaluation and conflict. They are valued, evaluated, acclaimed and contested by the individuals who produce and receive them.

Thompson, 1996: 146

This last series of actions, Thompson terms, the *process of valorization* and he returns to this in the process of examining differential positions of power.

Moreover, symbolic forms are exchanged through a means of transmission which differ in different social contexts and are spatially and temporally specific. The social contexts are also structured in various ways (Thompson, 1996: 147). These levels of structure are termed fields of interaction, social institutions and social structure. The concept of fields of interaction was developed by Pierre Bourdieu and can be ‘conceptualized synchronically as a space of positions and diachronically as a set of trajectories.’

Particular individuals are situated at certain positions within this social space and they follow in the course of their lives certain trajectories. The volume and distribution of certain kinds of resources or ‘capital’ determine the trajectories. These are economic capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. Economic capital consists of property, wealth or financial assets; cultural capital includes knowledge, skills, educational qualifications; and symbolic capital consists of accumulated praise, prestige and recognition associated with a person or position. Within any given field of interaction, individuals draw upon these differing kinds of resources in order to pursue their particular aims. They may also seek opportunities to convert resources from one type to another, e.g., wealth into educational opportunities. Further, they draw upon rules and conventions of various kinds. Mostly these are implicit, informal, unformulated and imprecise. Where they are well formulated, they are ignored as often as respected. They may be constructed as flexible schemata that orient individuals in their everyday lives. They are socially inculcated and socially differentiated and reproduced every time a person acts. But individuals also add to the schemata and rules. So there is a degree of selection and judgement.

Thompson distinguishes between fields of interaction and *social institutions* which are relatively stable clusters of rules and resources, together with the social relations that are established by them and within them. This appears to be a significant misunderstanding of the concept of field developed by Bourdieu. A social institution can be a field of interaction, just like the International Soccer Federation is part of the field of the game of soccer. In institutions,
individuals can find themselves in a career which involves the institutions in the individual's life-trajectory but that is still within the individual's field of interaction. Fields of interaction include all social structures, marriages, clans, professional groupings (such as academics) state systems like education and complex intervening structures involved in the processes of classifying distinction (see Bourdieu).

The two final contributions of Thompson are his outline of the strategies of symbolic valorization as enacted by those in dominant, intermediate and subordinate positions of power. The symbolic form may have all the features listed above, indicating that it is an attempt to effectively use a concept in the service of domination. However, if the recipients of this symbolic form reject it or deride it, then it is less valuable.

There are two types of valorization, symbolic and economic. The first relates to the value objects have by virtue of the ways in which and the extent to which, they are esteemed by the individuals who produce and receive them. They can be praised, denounced, cherished or despised. Economic value is an amount for which the object could be exchanged in the market and transforms items of symbolic value into commodities. There can be conflict about both symbolic and economic valuation of certain objects and processes.

The three main strategies for symbolic valorization for those in the dominant position of power are distinction, derision and condescension. Distinction occurs when a high symbolic value is attributed to goods which are scarce or expensive (or both) which are therefore largely inaccessible to individuals less well endowed with economic capital. Derision occurs when the symbolic forms produced by those in lower power positions are regarded as brash, gauche, immature or unrefined. Condescension occurs when the symbolic forms of people in lower positions of power are praised in a way that puts down their producers and reminds them of their subordinate position. Condescension enables individuals in dominant positions to reaffirm their dominance without openly declaring it (Thompson, 1996: 159).

Those in an intermediate power position are people who may have high economic capital and low cultural capital (nouveaux riches) or high cultural but low economic (intelligentsia or avant-garde) or moderate amounts of both (rising bourgeois strata). Their strategies for symbolic valorization are moderation, pretension and devaluation. Moderation occurs when they positively value those things known to be within their reach or may value those symbolic forms
that enable them to exercise their cultural capital without compromising their economic resources. Therefore, they choose maximum style or benefit for minimum expense. Pretension occurs when people produce symbolic forms as if they were the products of dominant individuals or groups or appraises them as if the members of the dominant group were appraising them. In this, they are pretending to be what they are not and seeking thereby to assimilate themselves to positions which are superior to their own. Similarly, they may adopt mechanisms to produce symbolic forms which display dominant characteristics and which attest to their ambition, their insecurity or both. Devaluation occurs when they devalue or debunk the symbolic forms produced by the dominant group in an attempt to elevate themselves above these positions.

Those in the sub-ordinate position are the least endowed with resources and whose opportunities are most restricted. Their strategies for symbolic valorization are practicality, respectful resignation and rejection. Practicality occurs when they ascribe more value than others do to objects that are practical in design, functional, inexpensive and easy to maintain. Respectful resignation is when the forms produced by individuals occupying superior positions are regarded as superior, that is, worthy of respect but it is a strategy of resignation in so far as the superiority of these forms and hence the inferiority of one’s own products is accepted as inevitable. Rejection is when people reject or ridicule the symbolic forms produced by individuals in superior positions. They are not trying to raise themselves: by rejection, they may enable themselves to affirm the value of their own products and activities, without fundamentally disrupting the unequal distribution of resources characteristic of the field of interaction.

Thompson’s framework implies that one can determine an individual’s position in terms of power by accurately identifying the strategies used. This, in reality, may be difficult, when those in intermediate positions use pretension but gain high economic value from using this strategy. Also, in times of flux, when power relationships are being displaced, rejection, devaluation and derision may be difficult to ascribe. Again, the socio-historical context and the outcomes and consequences of the engagement between those in different levels will guide the analysis. This framework on its own could produce a biased and erroneous result.

Institutions, Thompson claims, have a separate effect on these strategies of symbolic valorization. The accumulation of resources, the fixation of position of valuation and the differentiation of cultural spheres accompany the development of institutions. Particular
institutions emerge in which resources are amassed: economic resources and accumulated forms of knowledge and prestige. By virtue of their location in these organizations, individuals assume a position of valuation which confers a certain authority on the valuations they offer. They speak as a professor, director or senior editor. These individuals may not have previously occupied a dominant position as individuals or been members of a dominant social group but, by virtue of their position within an influential institution, are ascribed the power to attribute value. This reflects the earlier discussion on latent and manifest interests in relation to roles. Further, the development of institutions is also accompanied by the differentiation of cultural spheres. That is, with the emergence of institutions concerned with producing, transmitting and accumulating symbolic forms, different types of symbolic forms emerge in relation to one another, differentiated in terms of their modes of production, transmission and reception and in terms of the symbolic and economic value accorded to them. In written texts, for example, a piece of great literature emerges and is perpetuated by the educational system’s institutionalization of literary criticism; ‘this book constitutes literature’, whereas, in the past, popular literature was excluded as being unsuitable for study. It was not deemed to be of literary worth (Thompson, 1996:162).

Universities, therefore, as institutions have an independent role in the valorization of symbolic forms. They are concerned with the renewal, in part, of the ascription of symbolic value that may, from time to time, be based on concepts and knowledge at odds with that held and used by the dominant group to establish and sustain their position in the field of interaction. As players in a field of interaction, they are not immune to the valorization of the dominant group and the wielding of power.

**Bourdieu**

For Bourdieu, people (agents) do not act in a vacuum but rather in concrete social situations governed by a set of objective social relations (1993:6). To account for this, as mentioned above, Bourdieu developed the concept of field. A field consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital) (1992:16). This notion of field provides a means of going beyond internal analysis (whether formalist or hermeneutic) and external explication, both of which Bourdieu sees as inadequate and reductive (1993:10).
any social formation is structured by way of a hierarchically organized series of fields... each defined as a structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy, except, obviously, in the cases of the economic and political fields. Each field is relatively autonomous but structurally homologous with the others. Its structure, at any given moment, is determined by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field. A field is a dynamic concept in that a change in agents’ positions necessarily entails a change in the field’s structure.

Bourdieu, 1993:6

Bourdieu uses the analogy of a playing field, where the game has a set of rules and the successful player has a ‘feel for the game’ (1990). The game has a meaning, a raison d’être, a direction, an orientation, an impending outcome, for those who take part in it and know what is at stake. There is an investment (illusio) in the game and a commitment to the presuppositions of the game (doxa).

And it also gives the game an objective sense, because the sense of the probable outcome that is given by practical mastery of the specific regularities that constitute the economy of a field is the basis of ‘sensible’ practices, linked intelligibly to the conditions of their enactment and also among themselves and therefore immediately filled with sense and rationality for every individual who has the feel for the game (hence the effect of consensual validation which is the basis of collective belief in the game and its fetishes). Because native membership in a field implies a feel for the game in the sense of a capacity for practical anticipation of the ‘upcoming’ future contained in the present, everything that takes place in it seems sensible: full of sense and objectivity directed in a judicious direction. Indeed, one only has to suspend the commitment to the game that is implied in the feel for the game in order to reduce the world and the actions performed in it, to absurdity and to bring up questions about the meaning of the world and existence which people never ask when they are caught up in the game - the questions of an aesthete trapped in the instant or an idle spectator.

Bourdieu, 1990:66-67

Bourdieu contrasts social life to the game by reminding us that we know the rules of games are arbitrary social constructs where we autonomously agree to be bound by informal contracts about how we will play. In real life, we are born into the game and the notion of investment and the outcomes for us of this investment are often outside our awareness (1990:66-67). Belief, therefore is an essential element to belonging to a field.

To enter a field (the philosophical field, the scientific field, etc.), to play the game, one must possess the habitus which predisposes one to enter that field, that game and not another. One must possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge or skill or ‘talent’, in the most advantageous way possible. It means, in short, ‘investing’ one’s (academic, cultural, symbolic) capital in such a way as to derive maximum benefit or ‘profit’ from participation. Under normal circumstances, no one enters a game to lose.

Bourdieu, 1993:8

...practical faith is the condition of entry that every field tacitly imposes, not only by sanctioning and debarring those who would destroy the game but by so arranging things, in practice, that the operations of selecting and shaping new entrants (rites of passage, examinations, etc.) are such as to obtain from them undisputed, pre-reflexive, naive, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions of the field which is the very definition of doxa.

Bourdieu, 1990: 67-68
Bourdieu labels ‘officialization’ as the process whereby the group (or those who dominate it) teaches itself and masks from itself its own truth. It binds itself by a public profession which sanctions and imposes what it utters, tacitly defining the limits of the thinkable and the unthinkable and so contributing to the maintenance of the social order from which it derives its power (1990:108). There are, therefore, strategies utilized to transform private and particular interests into ‘disinterested’ publicly avowable and legitimate interests. In the absence of a regime based on violence, this is achieved through officialization (1990:109).

In any field, agents engage in competition for control of the interests or resources specific to that field. These may not necessarily be material resources, nor are their actions always based on conscious calculation (1993:6-7). Competition can be for recognition, consecration or prestige (symbolic capital) and may not imply possession of increased economic capital. It is competition for symbolic power (1993:7). Cultural capital concerns forms of knowledge, competencies and dispositions. It is usually accumulated through a long process of acquisition or inculcation which includes the pedagogical action of the family or group members (family education), educated members of the social formation (diffuse education) and social institutions (institutionalized education) (1993:7).

The importance of Bourdieu’s ideas for this study is in the idea that the full explanation of a set of events (or an artistic work) cannot be found in the text itself. Rather it is found in the history and structure of the field, with its multiple components and in the relationship between that field and the field of power (1993:9). The theory of field leads to a rejection of the direct relating of individual biography or the relating of social class of origin, to the set of events (or works). It leads further, to a rejection of internal analysis of an individual work or intertextual analysis. Bourdieu proposes that we have to do all these things at the same time. For example, it would not be enough to look at the influence of John Lawrence and the power embedded in his utterances as a result of his biography. It would also not be enough to place the outcomes of social work’s success in its heritage of women from middle class and professional families. Nor would it be enough to complete a detailed analysis of documents, reports and journal articles relating to social work. Rather, the analysis of the issues or events must be more like a hologram, developing a three dimensional image from multiple sources of laser light, than using one or two frames of reference.
Bourdieu's method attempts to incorporate three levels of social reality. First, to locate the position of the field within what he calls the field of power (i.e. the set of dominant power relations in society or, in other words, the ruling classes). Second, to determine the structure of the field (i.e., the structure of the objective positions occupied by agents competing for legitimacy in the field as well as the objective characteristics of the agents themselves). Third, to identify the genesis of the producers' *habitus* (i.e., the structured and structuring dispositions which generate practices) (1993:14).

We can further understand individual actions and decision-making by acknowledging that position and position-taking is mediated by the dispositions of the individual agents, their feel for the game mediated by *habitus* (1993:17). Strategy too, results from unconscious dispositions towards practice - it depends on the position a person occupies in the field. It depends too on the state of the 'legitimate problematic' - the issues or questions over which confrontation takes place which constitute the stakes of struggle in the field and which orient the search for solutions. Finally it depends of the *trajectory* of the individual (series of positions successively occupied by the same person).

The task of sociology, according to Pierre Bourdieu (1989a:&), is 'to uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the 'mechanisms' which tend to ensure their reproduction or their transformation' (1992:7). For him society is understood as a system of relations of power and relations of meaning between groups and classes. It needs a set of double-focused analytical lenses.

A field consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital), while habitus consists of a set of historical relations 'deposited' within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action.

Bourdieu, 1992:16

In this way Bourdieu can account for hegemony as an historical genesis of the dispositions that 'entrap' the dominated, because, being homologous to the objective structures of the world of which they are issued, they render the bases of inequality literally invisible in their arbitrariness (1992:24). As a result, resistance can be alienating and submission can be liberating. 'Such is the paradox of the dominated and there is no way out of it' (1987a:184; 1992:24).
For, in the routine flow of day-to-day life, power is seldom exercised as overt physical force: instead, it is transmuted into a symbolic form and thereby endowed with a kind of legitimacy that it would not otherwise have. Bourdieu expresses this point by saying that symbolic power is an ‘invisible’ power that is ‘misrecognized’ as such and thereby ‘recognized’ as legitimate. The terms ‘recognition’ (reconnaissance) and ‘misrecognition’ (méconnaissance) play an important role here: they underscore the fact that the exercise of power through symbolic exchange always rests on a foundation of shared belief. That is, the efficacy of symbolic power presupposes certain forms of cognition or belief, in such a way that even those who benefit least from the exercise of power, participate, to some extent, in their own subjection.

They recognize or tacitly acknowledge the legitimacy of power or of the hierarchical relations of power in which they are embedded; and hence they fail to see, that the hierarchy is, after all, an arbitrary social construction which serves the interests of some groups more than others. To understand the nature of symbolic power, it is therefore crucial to see that it presupposes a kind of active complicity on the part of those subjected to it. ‘Dominated individuals are not passive bodies to which symbolic power is applied, as it were, like a scalpel to a corpse. Rather, symbolic power requires, as a condition of its success, that those subjected to it believe in the legitimacy of power and the legitimacy of those who wield it’ (1991:23)

In every field certain interests are at stake; even if they are not recognized as such; a certain investment is made, even if it is not recognized as an investment.

17 I now come to the concepts, the words and the methods that the ‘profession’ employs to speak about and to think, the social world. Language possesses a particularly dramatic problem for the sociologist: it is in effect an immense repository of naturalized preconstructions and thus of preconstructions that are ignored as such and which can function as unconscious instruments of construction. I could take here the example of occupational taxonomies, whether it be the names of occupations that are in currency in daily life or the socioeconomic categories of INSEE (the French National Institute of Economic and Statistical Research), an exemplary instance of bureaucratic conceptualization, of the bureaucratic universal and, more generally, the example of all the taxonomies (age groups, young and old, gender categories which we know are not free from social arbitrary) that sociologists use without thinking about them too much because they are the social categories of understanding shared by a whole society. Or, as in the case of what I called the ‘categories of professorial judgement’ (the system of paired adjectives used to evaluate the papers of students or the virtues of colleagues [Bourdieu 1988:194-225], they belong to their professional corporation (which does not exclude their being founded upon homologies between structures, i.e., upon the fundamental oppositions of social space, such as rare/banal, unique/common, etc) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:40).
Limitations

No theoretical framework is complete. Neither Thompson, Lukes nor Bourdieu is independently sufficient or coherent by itself. Thompson's depth hermeneutics is limited to examination of the documents available. While it identifies the concepts used one cannot tell whether these concepts were used to promote the domination of an individual or a group, that is were they used ideologically, unless some other analysis also occurs. It cannot stand alone. Further, parts of Thompson's framework (symbolic valorisation) are less useful in application than they first appear in theory.

Lukes' three dimensional view of power has deficiencies. Giddens (1979: 90) argues that his concept of interest and 'real interest', like that of conflict, 'has nothing logically to do with that of power; although substantively, in the actual enactment of social life, the phenomena to which they refer have a great deal to do with one another.' ‘Real interest is related to individual citizens exercising 'uncoerced choice' under conditions of adequate information (Clegg, 1979:58). For Hawthorne (1975: 88), it raises at least two difficulties: who is to say what others real interests are? And how is one to be sure that in not acting – that is to say, in suppressing debate- the putatively powerful are being deliberate (for Lukes is clear, rightly, that if they are not, then they cannot be held responsible for not allowing “potential” issues to come out)? Hawthorne (1975: 88) further argues that if a body has an interest but its actions have the effect of not allowing the articulation of a demand in line with the interest then Lukes seems to not want to call this power. Lukes therefore has an individualist and voluntarist reliance on individuals' choices as an underpinning explanation of particular outcomes (Clegg, 1979:58). This does not sit comfortably in a radical, structuralist analysis of power.

Dant (1991:199) supports Lukes' way of understanding the exercise of power because it makes knowledge a central issue; knowledge legitimates and is legitimized by the exercise of power. Dant (1991:200) states that rules of exclusion and inclusion regulate the content of discourse. Only some people gain the right to speak. This regulation both maintains and limits exchange. Hence when those who have the ability to enter the discussions do so in a reasoned way, it is often not recognised that the 'truth' that results comes out of a exercise of power. He takes this further by saying that power can be seen as bringing about the very structure of the discourse. This is different from what Lukes was saying because A is not trying to get B to do anything
(Dant, T 1991:201). A might however, be stopping B from understanding or analysing things in certain ways.

Power in social theory, he [Lukes] argues, as I do, is centrally involved with human agency; a person or party who wields power could ‘have acted otherwise’ and the person or party over whom power is wielded, the concept implies, would have acted otherwise if power have not been exercised.

(Giddens, 1979: 91)

Finally, Giddens (1979:91) states that Lukes is unable satisfactorily to deal with structure as implicated in power relations and power relations as implicated in structure. He talks of ‘where structural determinism ends and power begins’. This last point is a theme that transfers into criticism of Bourdieu. Jenkins, (1992:21) stated that despite Bourdieu’s best efforts to transcend the dualistic divide between ‘objectivism’ and ‘subjectivism’, his model of humanity, his philosophical anthropology, remains caught in an unresolved contradiction between determinism and voluntarism, with the balance of his argument favouring the former. Jenkins adds that Bourdieu lacks clarity in his understanding of the nature and sources of power. Bourdieu, he says, treats power almost as a natural force – fields are, remember, ‘fields of forces’ – which flows through the system from top to bottom and against which there is only the possibility of symbolic resistance which is doomed to eventual failure (1992: 123).

Bourdieu needs to take seriously the question of how the actions or practices of institutions differ from those of individuals (and how each becomes translated into the other; this is after all at the heart of why institutions exist).

And it does matter given the centrality of the linked topics of power and domination in Bourdieu’s thinking. Power and domination are among the most important concerns and characteristics of organisations and institutions.

(Jenkins, 1992: 123-4)

Most of the other criticism of Bourdieu relates to his writing which many agree is valuable if not simple (Hawthorne, G. 1977:356), vague, difficult to read and that his lack of clarity sometimes masks internal contradictions (Jenkins, R 1992).

Bourdieu is assessed to have increased the examination of the gap between subjective and objective; introduced and worked with reflexivity and the interrelationship between social structure, systems of classification and language (Calhoun, C, LiPuma E and Postone M 1993: 2). As an active social researcher he has been able to raise and address epistemological
questions about the nature of adequate sociological knowledge and the conditions under which it is possible. (Jenkins, 1992: 10)

Hence, even though using an amalgam of history, Thompson, Lukes and Bourdieu resulting in a more clear view of the subject of the study, there may not be an ability to resolve ‘structure as implicated in power relations and power relations as implicated in structure’. A possible way of addressing this theoretical deficiency is examined in the conclusion to this thesis.

Summary

Power, has many facets, exercised within processes of human and social interaction. The framework outlined assists in uncovering power with structured sets of human interaction within a professional association and between it and other institutions such as educational facilities, government and colleagues in related professions. The framework allows for the symbolic and cultural exercise of power to be revealed. It allows for discussion of not only those things on agendas but those things missing from agendas. It addresses concealment, blindness and active complicity - which may in fact be unconscious or socialized. Further, the framework uses a series of phases of analysis to systematically unpack the story from the historical record and see beyond that to the nature and the meanings of the game in which these players competed.

The next chapters reveal that history and some of the key matches.
CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From Charity and Philanthropy to Social Work

This chapter sets the historical background for the foundation of social work education in Australia and the subsequent establishment of the Australian Association of Social Workers. It traces the genesis of social work and social work education, from Europe and the USA. The role of women in making social work and social work education occur, by using lobbying, authorship and networks to achieve the goal of the first women’s profession in Australia, is made explicit. These people were committed, connected and helped each other.

A feature of industrial society was the extension of social provision, both government and non-government. In the UK, local governments built workhouses and the national government legislated on welfare issues (The Poor Law 1601). Tasks previously the domain of the church became first, those of good people with means who had a Christian duty towards the poor. This duty was based on the notion that each person has a divinely appointed station in life. The middle-class had obligations commensurate with their higher station, including supporting the poor. As industrialization and urbanization increased, it became obvious that many individual problems were outside individual control or deficiency models. Individual middle-class responsibility moved to corporate and community responsibility. The emergence of political democracy in Europe, the rise of the labour movements and programs aimed at the elimination of illiteracy, strengthened ideas of equality and the interdependence of society's members. Attitudes to the recipients of charity changed from the ‘deserving poor’ and the ‘indigent poor’, to notions of assisting fellow citizens. It was now the community's duty to ensure for all its citizens, certain minimum standards of welfare and each citizen had a right to expect this (Lawrence, 1965:3). Modern social security programs for broad groups of people, not just the poor, began in Germany in the 1880s with health insurance for workers. Britain followed this lead in 1911. It was precisely this attitude that led to the provision of Aged Pensions in Australia in 1908.
Social work began in Australia as a response of the middle class and powerful (usually women) to the perceived needs of the poor (indigent or deserving). It was Governor Darling’s wife who established the Parramatta Female Factory in 1826 to provide shelter and trade training for neglected and deserted female children. Most Australians recognize the social reform contributions made by Caroline Chisholm in the early 1800s. Richard Kennedy (1985), wrote a history of the first decade, 1887-1898 of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in Melbourne, ‘a period which saw the forging of ruling class social work into an instrument to help slay the rising ‘threat’ from the organized working class.18 19 There were social workers, unpaid middle-class women of good standing and welfare officers who were paid staff who provided material assistance and relief to the poor. In hospitals there were almoners, typically the wives or daughters of medical practitioners who provided counselling, advice and assistance to patients while hospitalized and on discharge.

As the economy contracted in 1890, especially in Victoria, the power of the middle-class liberals was eroded. They too lost their financial security (Kennedy, 1985). The charities had to become more efficient and effective on less. Charities, and the social workers of the day, made new power alliances to improve their ability make appeals on behalf of the poor and to influence social reform. Clergy, academics and medical practitioners were targeted. These professional groups were assumed to have a strong sense of altruism and to be willing to advocate on behalf of the social workers. These women and men of charity and social work, were not seeking out men per se but those influential and powerful members of the dominant class in Australia. The social work advocates were effectively utilizing networking and lobbying skills.

In 1893 in America, Miss Anna L Dawes had identified a need in the profession to pass onto new workers the practice knowledge held by those who were retiring. She had identified (but not specified) the special ‘know how’ that she thought should be passed on to new practitioners, ‘to save him (sic) from the needless repetition of the mistakes through which the earlier practitioners had learned their art’ (Bruno, 1957: 137). In 1897, Mary Richmond addressed the US Conference on Education for Social Work and asserted that, ‘preparation for the personnel

---

18 Members of the Salvation Army were imprisoned on arrival in Australia because the government perceived they would mobilise the poor.
19 This is an example of the reduction of cleavage for the defence against socialism. ‘Cleavage’, for Sorel, is the equivalent of class consciousness, of the class-for-itself; eg. ‘When governing classes, no longer daring to govern, are ashamed of their privileged situation, are eager to make advances to their enemies and proclaim their horror of all cleavage in society, it becomes much more difficult to maintain in the minds of the proletariat this idea of cleavage without which Socialism cannot fulfil its historical role.’ Sorel, 1950:186  Reflections on Violence, Collier Books, 186. Sorel, in Gramsci 1971:126. fn.4
of social work should be undertaken as an educational function.’ She proposed a training school where the Director would be a ‘university trained man’ (Bruno, 1957: 138-9). The first project in social work education began the next year.

Abraham Flexner at the 42nd National Conference on Charities and Corrections (USA) 1915, defined ‘profession’ for the conference and reported that he could identify no method unique to the practice of social work. It was, to him, rather a function of discovering the resources of a community and placing them at the disposal of the applicant. Bruno 1957 argues that, at that time using Flexner's analysis, neither law nor the ministry could be called professions either (1957:141).

The effect of Flexner's paper was profound and far reaching. The challenge was accepted at its face value and has set social workers to defining and perfecting their methods with a singleness of purpose that has all but blinded them to the fact that method is only one test. Philosophy - what it is about; why it is undertaken; what are its ultimate goals and its relationships to other activities - is as essential to a profession as method.

Bruno, 1957:141

Mary Richmond wrote *Social Diagnosis* in 1917. It firmly outlined social work’s unique method - casework. A body of knowledge could now be identified as relating directly to that method.

Another speaker at the 1915 conference was Felix Frankfurter who proposed, that all social work courses should be within universities. There had been a proliferation of social work schools in USA, the most famous being the Chicago School that became the Graduate School of Social Service Administration in the University of Chicago in 1920. In the UK, the London School of Economics established a Department of Social Science and Administration in 1912. Other training schemes were begun at Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The British schools trained welfare workers. Schools of social work in Britain began as courses for hospital almoners within hospitals and then incorporated people from the Charity Organisation Society and the child guidance movement (Lawrence, 1965). British social work education did not begin with university based courses.

Social work, from the beginning, had an ethos of service and a growing awareness of the interplay between individuals and societies that lead to accidental disadvantage. This liberal philosophical tradition moved workers to teach the poor better skills and develop more responsive and better-coordinated services. It acknowledged that there were unmet needs and
that the poor failed to articulate what these were. Skilled go-betweens were necessary (Thorpe and Petruchenia, 1985).

Former British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee in 1920 wrote *The Social Worker*. In it he said:

> Every social worker is almost certain to also be an agitator. If he or she learns social facts and believes that they are due to certain causes which are beyond the power of an individual to remove, it is impossible to rest contented with the limited amount of good that can be done by following old methods...

> The word 'agitator' is distrustful to many; it calls up a picture of a person who is rather unbalanced, honest perhaps but wrongheaded, possibly dishonest, troubling the waters with a view to fishing in them for his own benefit. This is mainly the point of view of the person who is on the whole contented with things as they are.

Boreham, Pemberton & Wilson 1976:193

Community work and social policy were part of the repertoire of the social worker as Atlee makes clear. Unfortunately, no one wrote the texts for these core methods in the early years of the profession. Hence, the scientific and rational approach to the delivery of material goods and services was supported by major charities in the UK, USA and Australia and was based on the core text - on casework.

In 1921, the American Association of Social Workers formed and restricted its membership to paid social workers. By 1930, it had 5,030 members and in 1933, it further restricted membership to those qualified from accredited schools of social work (Bruno, 1957: 145-51). So, for nearly ten years the American Association of Social Workers admitted for membership those who had not been trained in universities. This was *thirty-five years* after the first university course had begun.20

In the mid 1920s, Elizabeth Macadam reported that British social work students were 'generally older than the average undergraduates, fell into three classes - graduates, experienced workers with little or no previous academic training and students who desired to train for some career for which a university degree was not necessary. Some schools granted diplomas to graduates only’ (Lawrence, 1965: 4-50). By 1965, there were seventeen associations representing social workers.

---

20Had the AASW waited 35 years from the beginning of the first university course, that is until 1964 before closing their doors, they could have had an enormous membership and much greater power to influence course development when the Binary System arrived. But Australia seems to have been anxious to catch up.
Australia’s First Social Work Course

Sydney University was Australia’s first (1850). Early in the new centur, the NSW government funded the Sydney Technical College (Turvey, et al 1991: 345-7). This sent a challenge to Medicine, Law and Engineering at the University to become more vocationally oriented. Sydney, from 1900 onwards would become an expanded and modern rather than traditional university. Influential groups in the community promoted new professional courses. There was, therefore, a precedent for outside organizations to influence the university to provide courses in new disciplines.

The Sydney University Women's Settlement which had its origins in late C19th, was by the 1920s very much a part of University life. Staff, graduates and undergraduates, who sought to meet the needs of youth in the local neighbourhood, supported it. Until 1925, it had to depend on rented property. Then a building became available and although the settlement only had one-tenth the requisite amount of money in its building fund, the committee headed by Lady MacCallum as president, with Isabel Fidler (tutor to women students at the university) as Chairperson, was most anxious to buy the property. Mrs Lightoller (daughter of Lady MacCallum), provided a mortgage at very generous terms and Lady MacCallum and Miss Evelyn Tildesley lent the balance without interest. The purchase became possible. Assistance with renovation came from St Paul’s and Wesley Colleges. The salary for the Settler in charge was paid for by the principal of Ascham School (an élite girl’s school), Miss Margaret Bailey. These women used their personal networks and wealth to ensure success.

Within the University, interest in the settlement was revived and undergraduates and graduates made it the ‘focus of their social work.’ University staff wives held bazaars, concerts, bridge parties and dances. This fund raising improved the relationship between the academics and local people.

21 In 1911 the University of Western Australia was founded which provided modern subjects and practical work to advance the prosperity and welfare of the people.
22 Dentistry, for example was promoted by professional groups and the Dean of Medicine; Architecture by Professional Engineers; Agriculture and Veterinary Science by Government Officers and, Economics by the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.
23 In 1931 a new constitution was set up that opened membership to men. The settlement was renamed the Sydney University Settlement. It was however never a recognised and official university society.
Those working in the Settlement were increasingly aware of the need for qualified social workers. In May 1928 Professor Tasman Lovell made reference to this need at the Annual Meeting and suggested that there should be a course of Social Studies and Training within the University. Later that year an extramural Board of Social Studies and Training was established and as part of the students’ practical work it requested observational facilities at Edward Street.

Turvey, et al 1991:603

In 1928 the Board of Social Study and Training was set up to advise and supervise a course of study (both theoretical and practical) for students desiring to train as social workers. The initiative for the course had come primarily from the 1927 interstate conference of the National Council of Women. The three university women, Isabel Fidler, Lady MacCallum and Mrs Muscio, wife of Professor Muscio, were among those influential in setting up the Board (Turvey, et al 1991:486 - 487). The networks of relationships now extended beyond family and local community to include a national body of women.

Initially the Board was not a University Board. A draft scheme for the training of social workers, was drawn up by a Committee of the National Council of Women and submitted to the University Senate. The president of the recently formed board, Professor Henry Tasman Lovell, requested Senate to appoint three representatives of the University to the Board. He pointed out to Senate that the majority of the subjects chosen for this course were currently taught by the University. The three members appointed were primarily drawn from Medicine.

\[24\]Report of the Sydney University Senate 1928
\[25\]In Mrs Muscio’s Presidential address in 1928 she stated ‘no gulf separates the interests of the professional woman from those of the non-professional woman’ Marchant (1985:35).
\[26\]Minutes of Sydney University Senate 8 October, 1928
\[27\]The influence of the National Council for Women in the development not only of courses (including at other Universities) but general welfare provision needs examination.
\[28\]Minutes of Sydney University Senate 5 November 1928
\[29\]Some analysts hold that this presence of Medicine was part of the domination of the social work profession - back to hand-maiden status. Turned the other way the alliance with Medicine put social work in a safe position within the university as a new course - it had strong allies; some senior medical practitioners have finely tuned social consciousness; social work was a course requiring field based education - training in practice, medicine had experience with this. At that time an alliance with any school within the university would have significant male membership. Social work wanted to be seen to be scientific. This alliance was sensible in the situation.
The course began as a two-year diploma course, only available after matriculation and which some people completed following an Arts Degree. Only a small percentage of the state's population of secondary students completed school to matriculation level and an even smaller percentage were women. These women, who came from the most privileged families were eligible to enter the Sydney University course.

In 1940, the university assumed responsibility for the course and established a University Board of Social Studies and Training to prepare students for the Diploma in Social Studies. The Director of the course, Ms Elizabeth Govan, joined the Executive Committee of the Settlement as an ex-officio member. Twenty-six years later, a degree course was introduced largely as a result of the work of Professor Tom Brennan who was awarded Directorship of the Department of Social Work in 1958.

Other courses began in Australian universities at a measured pace. The courses were initially aimed at generalist education in social work and included subjects in recreation which reflected interest at the time in the genesis of youth delinquency and criminality. The universities were expected to provide the education and training for the future worker and assess the student's capacity to perform the necessary tasks of practice. There was no body to overview the decision of the university. The decision of the academic institution was final. The university was placed in charge of the pre-service quality control of the professional practitioner.
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF
SOCIAL WORKERS (AASW)

The act of institution is thus an act of communication but of a particular kind: it signifies to someone what his identity is but in a way that both expresses it to him and imposes it on him by expressing it in front of everyone (kategorēin, meaning originally, to accuse publicly) and thus informing him in an authoritative manner of what he is and what he must be. This is clearly evident in the insult, a kind of curse (sacer also signifies cursed) which attempts to imprison its victim in an accusation which also depicts his destiny.

Bourdieu, 1991:121

In 1942 the Australian Association of Social Workers formed out of a federation of branches in most states. This section covers the way in which the AASW formed and was constituted; how it defined its central purpose and, how it exercised this in its early years. The Association’s federal minutes indicate the organisation’s response to education and training issues for the profession. The minutes show that the Association was committed to proving and maintaining itself as a profession. The actions of the Association were directed to influencing those it perceived to be in authority. There were no thorough examinations of social problems and their effective amelioration with subsequent analyses of training and personnel needs related to those problems. Rather, in these early years, the Association confronted the perceived threat of the loss of their professional status, through the potential loss of their unique methods of practice, by those people without university qualifications who were employed to do the work of the ‘professionally qualified social worker’.

R. John Lawrence’s 1965 Social Work Profession in Australia, charts the beginnings and development of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW or the Association). Lawrence states that the social work training movement began overseas and influenced Australia. Those people who were trained became organized professionally. Even though Sydney University’s social work course began in 1929, social work only moved into the universities in the 1940s, thus explaining why the Australian Association of Social Workers was not constituted until 1942. According to Lawrence, the major causal factor for this slow development and low status was the preponderance of women in the profession. He says, questions of status, number and sex are closely connected. Regardless of this view, Australia’s movement to professional association took two years less than that of the USA.
The Threefold Function

The AASW initially had a threefold function: to provide educational opportunities for its members; to take action on their behalf on social issues; and to protect their employment standards. In Lawrance’s view, the professional Association suffered from weak administration and, as a result, there was movement on all except the last function (Lawrence, 1962; v). In the years 1942 to 1964, there were three themes for the Association central to the development of professional education: membership of the Association; standards of training; and status.

Structure and Sources of Data

The AASW has a Federal Executive Committee (FEC) made up of the Federal Office Bearers (FOB). In the records, the minutes of these meeting are headed with either of these nomenclatures. There is also a Federal Council (FC), comprising the executive and representatives from each state branch. Federal Council meetings are held every 6 months and Federal Executive (or Office Bearers) meetings are held more frequently. Some state representatives are also academics in schools of social work. This becomes increasingly relevant over time when the AASW moves towards the accreditation of courses. Unless otherwise stated, the comments made by individual state members are in the minutes of Federal Council or Federal Executive meetings.31

Eligibility for Membership

The Association decided that eligibility for membership was to be based on the successful completion of a university-based course. It did not at the time engage in an analysis of the work which constituted the business of social work, nor explore the range of qualifications held by people in the community who were currently engaged in that service. They adopted the definition of profession used by Abraham Flexner in 1915.32 This definition had an undeniable

30Based on his PhD from the Australian National University
31The Box number indicates the document box held in the Manuscript Library of the National Library of Australia MS6202 is the catalogue number for all the AASW Federal records. See Appendix 2
32Reiterated by Lawrence in his PhD thesis on the History of the Australian Social Work Profession. Lawrence's work was published in 1965 as a book and extensively used as a text.
privileged class bias, one where only an élite sub-set of those involved in the business of social work could be considered eligible.33

Social Work has been classified as a semi-profession (Etzioni, 1969), as it lacked the status and elements of a full profession. Few people in 1940 challenged the status of professions or their place in the power relationships of western capitalist society. Also missing from the analyses, was that most members of the ‘traditional’ professions were male, from ‘the gentleman class’.34

The AASW rejected a staged and stepped model of professional recognition available from England (a class society) and instead, assumed a model from the USA, a young country, where expert and élite status were highly prized. However, the USA allowed 35 years from the start of the first university based course until the closing of membership to only the university educated. The consequences of this AASW decision are revisited in almost every key event in its brief history.

Social welfare courses were being provided in community and technical colleges35. Some of these courses were very brief with little theory and less critical analysis. In some of the charitable agencies and government departments, there were in-services training courses for new workers. Social welfare courses were defined by social workers as not social work. Although the content was similar and increasing numbers emulated social work courses, the two groups were being defined as separate activities. Even into the late 1970s, some university courses were teaching that social work was a profession and that social welfare was an occupation; that those who

---

33Flexner’s definition denied the legacy of early social reformers Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Fry, William Booth, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Caroline Chisholm, Octavia Hill and enabled future unqualified reformers to be ignored. The profession’s forebears, who laboured to clear slums, worked on the provision of universal franchise, established schools for poor children and soup kitchens for the retrenched and unemployed, who were union activists for the rights of workers’ wives and children rarely had formal social welfare qualifications. People in Australia doing this work without university based qualifications were not eligible to join Association. No matter whether people without a university background had been socially disadvantaged themselves, were successfully delivering a high quality service or working with those most disadvantaged, they were not professional social workers - partly because of the definition of profession.

34Stokes (1977:197) argued that prior to the 19th Century few professions, gained the liberal education that fitted them to be gentlemen, specialisation was ill-defined, social superiority was used as the criterion of professional acceptance rather than professional competence. Early in the 19th Century a new type of professional education arose based on relevant knowledge, analytical skill and competence in a particular field. He argues that the older professions had achieved a fusion between status and professionalism primarily gained from the class origins of the membership and their original positions in power elites. New professions retained the traditional organisational structure and revived the concept of service to the community that had been a feature of many professions at the time of their movement from the church.

35NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/April 1960-1962 especially the reports of the Ways and Means Committee.
graduated with social welfare degrees were really only suited to be aides and assistants to the professional social worker.

Pareto V, in *The Mind and Society* vol. III defined élites as people who gain the highest indices in their branch of activity. The focus of the AASW became the ‘top end’ of the profession. As Pareto says ‘it serves to emphasize the inequality in individual endowment in every sphere of social life’ (1935). Those who held the power in the professional association actively believed that higher academic pursuits were vital in the establishment of the evidence that Social Work was a true profession. There was no agonizing about how this process would reduce the access to a career for people who could not afford university education. There was no analysis of how this process would remove the worker from the people, from the common touch and make it more difficult for the poor to articulate their needs effectively to service providers. Later on (1976) Throssell would critique this view.

Social workers are increasingly playing the same kind of game. They are saying that personal problems cannot be sorted out by ordinary people and their friends but require professional techniques which can only be acquired with years of tertiary training. ... This does nothing to spread relevant information through the community, to those who need it but it does a great deal to enhance the career prospects of the educated.

Throssell 1976: 188-189

As most clients are working class and not academically successful, built into the system is a huge social gap. The implication is that people with problems need ‘helpers’ who have not experienced life in the same way as themselves but who have nevertheless acquired a lot of ‘knowledge’ about it. The argument that one of their own number would be easier to identify with and would have a much more real understanding of the situation, is ignored.

Throssell, 1976:190

Hence, in its early years, the Australian Association of Social Workers represented only the interests of the tertiary-trained, middle-class professional.36

---

36Pavlin, (1970) in this masters thesis found that social work recruits were for the most part from the middle-class like most university students, 75% of their fathers were are in managerial and professional occupational groups. Students, selected by academic success, were mostly middle-class recruits who were academically competitive.
Registration as a Trade Union

In 1949, the decision was made to register as a trade union\(^{37}\). There is no information about any investigation or deliberations that lead to this decision. One of the clearest deficiencies within the documentation is the definition of the trade and who were the members represented by this union.

Male Social Workers and Untrained Workers

On 16 June 1951, a letter from a male social worker in South Australia to the Federal Council of the AASW, claimed that male social workers were discriminated against in their search for employment. The Executive responded by preparing a report for Federal Council\(^{38}\).

Federal Council was also concerned at the numbers of untrained people occupying positions requiring a qualified social worker. On 16 June 1951 Ms Taylor (Branch Representative from Tasmania) stated that it was unrealistic ‘to deplore the problem of untrained Social Workers where we cannot supply trained ones.’\(^{39}\) The small numbers of students in social work courses was seen to be the main problem. Council resolved to speak with Mr. Townley, Commonwealth Minister for Social Services to seek to have the age limit for Commonwealth Scholarships raised to enable people of mature age and experience to enter social work courses\(^{40}\). The Association applied to a trust for a contribution to assist with recruitment\(^{41}\). From the early days of the Association there was an awareness that Australia was training too few social workers for the requirements of the community and that continuing to do this would affect the status of the profession.

At the 13 December 1952 Federal Council meeting\(^{42}\) these two issues, the discrimination against male social workers in employment and the shortage of qualified social workers came together. It was resolved, that the Federal Executive would guide a study to be done by the state branches of the AASW on the issue of male social workers. The meeting resolved also, to ‘define its

\(^{37}\)NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/18 June 1949  
\(^{38}\)NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/16 June 1951  
\(^{39}\)Ibid  
\(^{40}\)Ibid  
\(^{41}\)Trust name not given NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/16 June 1951  
\(^{42}\)NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/13 December 1952
views as to what we mean by the use of the words “social work” for the purposes of this report.’ There ensued a discussion on an operational definition of social work.

Social work could be seen to be that covered by the broad definition contained in the AASW’s constitution or it could generate from examples of those engaged in social work (Rev. Fr Roberts SA Branch Representative). Members were encouraged to examine what they do and arrive at a conclusion, on what it is about their current positions which requires a social worker to be employed.

In some other situations we might believe that professional social workers are required but the employer would not be really aware of the necessity for training for the job and will be employing people who are not trained social workers in positions which could be filled by our male social workers.43

The debate that followed included arguments that a social work position would be one where social work qualifications were recognized by employers as essential; recognized by the profession as essential but there was a shortage of qualified personnel and, those areas where qualifications were seen to be desirable.44

Miss Norma Parker (NSW AASW Federal President), said that the difficulty is not in those jobs where social work qualification are required but in those jobs where although the qualification is not called for, it is necessary in the view of those who appreciate the full possibilities inherent in them. Norma Parker encouraged the Association to engage in an examination of the industry and begin to identify the training needs. 45

Norma Parker further recommended, that the investigation should start with casework and at a later stage move to group and community work. While this limited the scope of the study, it was probably easier to define and locate case workers and case work positions than group and community work positions since the latter were, at that time, seen to be less significant forms of social work. Miss Katherine Ogilvie (NSW Branch Representative), argued that the study should concentrate on casework and administrative positions to begin with46.

---

43Rev Fr Roberts, NLA MS6202/12/ Minutes Federal Council/13 December 1952
44NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/13 December 1952
45ibid
46ibid
Casework and administration were the areas of social work practice where the profession believed they could hold strongest claim to professional status. The whole development of the university social work courses, was to supply services with highly trained personnel who could effectively deliver and administer, a broad range of social welfare services (Lawrence, 1965). University graduates were expected to move into senior positions within government departments and non-government agencies.

Miss Parker appeared to be promoting the idea that knowledgeable or informed employers, who could employ the ‘right’ people, were needed. On one hand, she was concerned with competence levels related to task requirements and best practice based on theoretical and practice knowledge. She was also setting up a construction where social workers with qualifications, would be advantaged in terms of employment opportunities because those ‘in the know’ would advise the employer to only engage qualified social workers.

In this discussion Miss Blackall (Qld Branch Representative), 47 asked whether the term ‘social worker’ could be registered in some way. She stated,

In Queensland there are various jobs being filled by so called social workers designated social workers. Advertisements appear for social workers with no demand for training.

This is the first recorded statement on the question of registration of the occupational title ‘social worker’. The recurring questions would be the definition of social work; the qualification of people to practice in the profession; and, the registration of the title.

The debate resolved that the poor employment prospects for male social work graduates be investigated in all states where there was a Branch of the AASW. All positions where social work course training was necessary; thought to be necessary by the AASW but not required; and, finally, those positions where training was seen by the AASW to be desirable but not necessarily essential, should be examined. At that time there were only 60 male members of the AASW nationally and of these only three had attended meetings. In the returns from the states, reported at the Federal Council meeting on 2 October 1953 48, it was discovered that there were only 18 male social workers in Australia who replied to the survey, not enough to carry out the study.

48 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/2 October, 1953/121

94
The men who responded, perceived that advancement in social work was very limited, salaries were poor, social workers were not regarded in line with other professions and, that social work qualifications alone were not sufficient for advancement. They believed that other qualifications were needed in areas such as industrial issues. There appeared to be good prospects for advancement in the NSW Public Service and that only three male social workers were employed by the Commonwealth Public Service.

The proposed identification of positions where social work qualifications were essential or desirable was never completed. There was therefore no data to inform submissions and discussion with the Commonwealth Ministers for Education and Industry, to increase the numbers of places in educational institutions for social workers and, no ability for the Association to identify the current and future training needs. People could not see what constituted legitimate social work activity. Some qualified social workers in a position not titled ‘social worker’ could not be regarded as ‘currently working in the field’. This depleted the full membership of the Association instead of broadening it to encompass qualified members. Some of those, not in designated jobs, began to perceive themselves as belonging to other occupational groups.

At this distance, it can only be left to conjecture whether the issue of male social workers masked the goal of the study of the profession; to identify the scope of the profession and gain a measure of the need for trained personnel. Or, did the problem lie in the documentation directing the states in the investigation?

On 11-12 April 195949, for example, it was reported that there were vacancies for social workers but these were not attracting male social workers. Average job occupancy for women at that time in the profession was 2 years and salaries were £900 - £1000 p.a. This level of salary was said to be unattractive to men and, that the best-paid male social workers were in jobs that did not require a social work qualification. The response was to press for higher occupational status which would flow through to higher levels of salary, attractive to men.

49NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/11-12 April 1959/21
Student Social Worker Issues

From 1951 onwards, there was an awareness that the social work student population had a number of people aged over 25 and that the social welfare industry had numerous people over 25 who were interested in study. Study was only offered on a full-time basis and Commonwealth Scholarships were only available for people under 25. On 21 June 1952, Students of the University of Melbourne submitted a proposal to the AASW for assistance to establish a fund for people over 31 not eligible for scholarship. A scholarship was never established but representations were made to the Commonwealth to consider extending the limits of Commonwealth Scholarships to the benefit of mature-age students.

Students were not permitted membership to the AASW although over the years the question of their eligibility for Associate Membership was raised. On 3 December 1952, Miss Parker stated that according to the Constitution all members should be working. Qualified people not working were able to take out Associate membership which was limited to people with professional qualifications. Students had no voice within the Association, their lack of membership status put them outside the Association’s formal functions. Therefore, the Association felt no obligation to provide or improve educational opportunities by engaging in discussion and action related to specific student concerns. The Association eventually discussed and acted upon some issues related to students (see Chapter 8) but rarely responded to direct requests from students for assistance.

Aboriginal Student Scholarship

Discussion on the need for a Scholarship Fund for an Aboriginal person to undertake a social studies course occurred on 13 December 1952. A representative from Western Australia raised this matter. The statement was made that a ‘suitable Aborigine could receive a Commonwealth Scholarship to undertake the course and suggested that the Association could consider supplementation of such scholarship’. This was ‘stood over’ and Ms Hills (WA Branch Representative) was asked, whether there were any suitable applicants. It appears that, the Federal Council members failed to appreciate the degree of difficulty an Aboriginal Australian
would be experiencing in achieving a matriculation level. The policy of the Association towards Aboriginal people would appear to be assimilation, consistent with prevailing attitudes at the time.

**Australian Association of Almoners (AAA) - Amalgamation**

Australian Almoners usually completed their study in the United Kingdom and regarded themselves as a specialist group. Although they were eligible for membership of the AASW they did not join. People with social work qualifications from the universities could undertake a one-year course for hospital almoners. On 13 December 1952, the AASW Federal Council began investigating amalgamation with the AAA. By June 1953, three Australian universities were offering a course in social work (Sydney, Queensland and Melbourne) where students could then complete the third year through the AAA. On 2 October 1953 the motion to assimilate the AAA into the AASW was carried.

The AASW became the professional Association for both the almoners and social workers on 23 April 1961, when the AAA’s surplus funds were transferred. The hospital social workers, became a special interest group within the AASW. As Social Work courses had a significant component of medical knowledge and a section on the Australian health care system all students graduated with the capacity to work in a hospital environment without additional years of study.

**Registration**

The 2 October 1953 meeting was the beginning of a concerted exploration into the issue of registration of the title ‘social worker’. Miss Smith from Queensland stated that in smaller cities, a number of untrained people are known as social workers.

Queensland hospitals are employing people who are termed ‘social workers’. These untrained people are damaging the prospects of opening up the field of professional social work in that state.

Here then, is the first set of workers who were actively derided by senior members of the professional Association in a formal way. These workers in Queensland hospitals, people who in

---

53 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/13 December 1952/109
54 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/2 October 1953/123
55 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/2 October 1953/125
1953 would be living in rural and remote communities (even though the townships were considered provincial cities by Queensland standards), had no access to formal professional education. Social work education was only offered in the capital city, to a select group of students who had matriculated. Miss Smith’s comments were probably intended to encourage increased effort by Federal Council to negotiate with governments for designated social work positions. They were instead hostile towards people who were providing a service to the community without adequate resources and support. Her comments failed to appreciate the work carried out by these people. It failed to identify their needs or to encourage the Association to reach out and provide educational opportunities for them to be able to up-grade their qualifications.

Miss Smith saw these unqualified people as locking out qualified workers and working for lower salaries. There was no ‘manpower’ analysis or attempt to address the needs of rural and remote areas for qualified personnel; how to train local people or, how to encourage qualified city dwellers to transfer to the country. The AASW did not use their networks on this occasion to seek policy change or to meet with the Minister.

There was a brief pair of statements on licensing or registration following the NSW Psychological Society’s registration as a company and the statement that they were moving towards Royal Charter within the next decade. Miss Norma Parker said, there were studies in the Continent and in California on the registration and licensing of professions. She suggested that one of the smaller branches of the Association might care to make a similar study in Australia. There is no record of any study.

... Or Unionization

In February 1955, the Association did, however, register under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904-1955 as ‘An Organisation of Employees in and in connection with the industry of professional social work’. The terminology ‘the industry of professional social work’ is significant and powerful. It is revisited in the 1970s when the Association had a major rift resulting in the establishment of the Australian Social Welfare Union. For the Association in 1955, the ‘industry of professional social work’ was deemed to be that work undertaken by persons who have a tertiary qualification that makes them eligible for membership of the AASW.
It therefore absolved the Association from any responsibility to industrially represent people who were less qualified and doing the same work, the numerous case aides who were trained by social workers; the untrained hospital social workers; the minimally trained probation, parole and corrections workers or, the child welfare officers. If the definition of Associate Member had meant more than just non-working fully qualified social workers, the Association could have incorporated many groups which are now seeking independent professional and sometimes specialist status. This interpretation by the Association was different from the understanding of the Industrial Commission but this difference was not identified until the turbulent period in the 1970s.

Liaison with the Schools of Social Work

The Association took the view that it had a limited role in working with the Schools of Social Work in Australia to provide adequate standards of pre-service education and training. In April 1959, for example, a sub-committee was established in Queensland to liaise with the Association of Schools of Social Work on the provision of educational material on the profession’s code of ethics. The Association of Schools of Social Work was a loosely organized body that promoted information exchange between the educational institutions providing courses. The AASW believed that they had no power to require a School to comply with a request about the content of courses.

Representatives from Victoria had met with the Schools of Social Work on the issue of modified courses of training. These were shorter courses which did not lead to a professional social work qualification but were being provided through the university-based schools for the welfare sector. The Schools were meeting a need, attempting to maintain educational standards and opening opportunities that could lead to full education (through Cadetships, night courses etc). The Victorian Branch, wanted Federal Council and the Schools of Social Work to discuss the demand for training in social work in the community with reference to, (a) provision of in-service training; (b) provision of modified courses and, (c) enabling more students to take full professional courses.

References:
56 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/2 October 1953/126
57 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/11-12 April 1959/19-20
58 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/31 July 1948/25
59 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/11-12 April 1959/30-31
60 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/11-12 April 1959/31
In 1959 the Association therefore turns again to the issue that too few people were being educated and trained. Again there was no commitment to research the community need and establish a coherent case for an increase in training positions or to examine a range of levels of qualifications provided by non-university centres of education. Nor was the Association in a position to consider providing courses themselves, especially for the full-time employed or rural and remote workers. It is therefore in 1959 that the AASW ratified that they had a role in influencing education and training for the profession and that they could legitimately be engaged in discussions related to almost all levels of education within the discipline, that is, all of social welfare.

**The Distinction between Professional Social Workers and Welfare Officers**

At the April 1959 meeting was a discussion on the difference between welfare officers and professional social workers. Mr. Grey, the Minister for the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, was unaware of the distinction between professional social workers and welfare officers. Members of the Executive had spoken with Mr. Grey because his lack of understanding could, they said, have affected the employment of social workers within the Commonwealth.

Earlier, the Australian Council on Social Services passed a resolution ‘that ACOSS should compile a report for the Public Service Board on the question of the employment and contribution of social workers in the Public Service’. ACOSS, the AASW and the Professional Officer’s Association were pooling information to protect the positions of social workers employed by the Commonwealth and to ensure that the provision of professional training had an impact on government bodies with respect to their employment decisions. The main concern about ‘the difference’ was to ensure social workers had preferred access to Commonwealth Public Service positions.

---

61 [NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/11-12 April; 1959/28](#)
62 Letter from Mr Grey, the Minister for the Commonwealth Department of Immigration to Mr Sutcliffe Commissioner of the Commonwealth Public Service Board.
63 [NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/ 11-12 April 1959/Report on ACOSS AGM 1959/29](#)
64 [NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/11-12 April; 1959/28-29](#)
A Closed Conference to Increase Status

In April 1960, preparations were being made for the national conference. The conference theme ‘The Role of the Association in the Development of Professional Social Work’ was selected from a choice of four. The other three were, ‘Evaluating Professional Development in Australian Social Work’, ‘Are Social Workers Fulfilling Present Day Community Needs?’ and ‘Stocktaking of Professional Social Work. Is It Meeting Community Needs In Australia?’ This choice reflects the Association’s primary interest in the process of professionalization and in the ideology of professionalism.

The discussion on the issue of who should attend the conference resulted in the articulation of two major and competing views. The first was that closing the conference could result in a loss of potential members or, that limiting the conference may raise ‘the prestige of the Association’. The motion was passed that only financial members and students of social work may attend. Hence registrations for the conference were vetted, primarily on the ground of protecting perceived levels of status.

Planning to Meet with the Schools of Social Work

The AASW were planning a meeting with the Schools of Social Work. During the discussion on the Association’s interpretation of ‘courses in social welfare work’, Ms Norton (SA State Representative) said she thought that the interpretation might be too narrow. There was an attempt to identify those courses which constituted training for social work. Ms Thomas (Vic State Representative) contributed the suggestion, that the criteria should be ‘would a social worker occupy this position were it not for other training?’ Unfortunately, the rest of this discussion is not recorded in detail in the minutes of the meeting. That these issues were raised demonstrates that there were senior members of the Association who appreciated the reality of service provision and staffing within the business of social work. They appreciated that some of the people currently occupying positions were or had been, unable to gain access to courses. This line of questioning could have lead to a discussion on the recognition of non-university based courses as contributory to social work education. It did not. Rather the discussion moved

---

65NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/9-10 April 1960/33
66NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/24-25 September 1960/Queensland p47
67Ms Mills - one of the Conference Planning Committee
swiftly on, without resolution, to concerns from Ms Pearce and the Tasmanian Branch of the Association relating to a Certificate Course in Social Welfare, Hobart Technical College, that began in March 196069.

The Tasmanian Branch had met with the College. It was the Association’s view that the proliferation of these non-university lower level and short courses would undermine the quality of professional practice and enable employers to engage sub-standard workers for less salary. Ms Pearce commented that in two year’s time these people will use the title social worker and asked for the Association’s ‘guidance and direction’. ‘It was agreed, that this course was a matter of concern to the profession. Miss Pearce was asked to send full details so that the Federal Office bearers could study and take appropriate action.70.

In the period April to September in this year, the Association examined non-university social work courses.71 The examination was not aimed at allowing membership of these newly trained people but was to identify whether these shorter and sometimes specialist courses would pose a threat to the profession and siphon off potential applicants for the social work courses at universities. In NSW the examination found that in-service courses run by departments to train their employees were of no concern to the Association. Courses however run through Technical Education, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Marriage Guidance were deemed to be open and could result in loss of social work students. Courses for Housing Officers and Play and Recreation leadership were not seen as appropriate for further consideration.

Approximately half those taking modified courses were not matriculated hence they were not eligible to enter a social work course.72

Eligibility for entry to a University based social work course rested on matriculation. In the Australia of 1960, matriculation was primarily for the middle class and male student. The women who progressed to achieve this qualification, and were able to attend a university course for which scholarships and bursaries were few, were primarily from families of professional men in the largest urban centres.

---

68NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/9-10 April 1960/37
69ibid
70NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/9-10 April 1960/43
71Mrs J Aitken-Swann (member for NSW 24-25 Sept 1960 p44) and Ms McLelland (Sydney University)
72NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/24-25 Sept 1960/45
The Ban on Teaching ‘Method’

Mrs Rayner from Queensland, at the September 1960 meeting, asked Council’s opinion on social workers being invited to lecture in modified courses like a three-year childcare course. There was discussion and strong statements about the function of qualified social workers in teaching people in modified courses. Ms Ogilvie (Sydney) ‘thought it wrong for method to be taught outside a full professional course’ but she was happy for the social workers to teach about social issues. It was formally resolved at this meeting that in order to formulate some policy in regard to lectures and educational contributions by social workers to other professional groups and to groups undertaking training to equip people in fields related to social welfare, Council recommends that members give their Branch details of any such invitation and their decision in regard to it and that this information be passed on to Federal Council.\(^{73}\)

This resolution demonstrates the effect of Flexner’s definitional requirement of a unique method of practice (1915) on the mind-set of the Association. Social work claimed casework, group work and community work as its unique methods. Therefore, the teaching of these methods to people in non-professional courses was, in the minds of the Association, the same as teaching them the secret and arcane arts of the profession, without them having been adequately prepared for this honour. It takes a deeply developed understanding of the subtleties of this profession to imagine how child welfare workers, youth workers and marriage guidance personnel would be able to carry out their duties without some basic training in case-work, group work, the processes of community action and community organization. This is especially so when most of these agencies were in the non-government sector. This resolution also indicates a centralized and highly regulated organization, that could be seen as attempting to proscribe members’ behaviours.

\(^{73}\)ibid
Delegation to Minister for Education, Tasmania

The sequel to the Tasmanian Technical Education course saga was outlined to Council. The Tasmanian delegates reported on a successful contact with the Minister for Education in Tasmania.\(^{74}\) He had made a press statement in support of the course at the Technical College and had not been aware that there were university courses in Social Work in Australia. The branch reported that they planned to write to the Public Service Commission in Tasmania.

School of Social Studies for University of Western Australia and Cadetships in South Australia

Two other matters were raised at this meeting. First, the University of Western Australia had received a Commonwealth grant for a proposed School of Social Studies. Delegates reported that the foundation of this School has a high priority within the university.\(^{75}\) Second, the South Australian Government had developed a system of Cadetships for the Child Welfare, Hospitals, Education and Aborigines Departments. The opportunities for expansion of social work education began to grow.

Ways and Means of Recruiting More Members and Meeting with the Schools

The Association had a meeting with the Schools of Social Work\(^{76}\) scheduled for 23 August 1961. Their Preamble Statement (see below)\(^{77}\) shows the Association’s ambivalence. It was, on one hand, concerned about equity for students and workers and quality of service for the community. On the other hand, it had a clause in the constitution tying schools of social work to minimum educational requirements unattainable by colleges or institutions that did not confer degrees. They were also concerned about status and salaries.

\(^{74}\) NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/24-25 Sept 1960/54
\(^{75}\) NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/22-23 April 1961/65
\(^{76}\) ‘Schools of Social Work’ relates to the name of a particular set of representatives of all the schools primarily in a meeting, whereas ‘schools of social work’ is the more general collective term.
\(^{77}\) Presented to Federal Office Bearers NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/12 December 1961
This meeting was first suggested in July, 1959 when the Victorian branch expressed concern about short-term courses in social welfare instituted in some Government departments, because of the shortage of social workers. At the Council Meeting of September, 1959 it was agreed not only to invite the Schools of Social Work to meet with the Association but, in preparation to look at courses in social welfare in Australia, other than those offered by University Schools of Social Work: and to examine what effect such courses were having on the development of professional social work.

Results of this study were rather inconclusive but it appeared that these ad hoc courses were no great threat to professional social work and the initiating State no longer considered as acute the question of sub-professional courses.

However, the promotion of recruitment of the profession has continued to exercise the mind of members of the Council. It has been discussed as an important priority in establishing some kind of secretariat. The phrase, promotion of recruitment, has been used in the sense of developing the contribution of professional social work in the community. Related to this, has been consideration of such aspects as the dearth of experienced social workers, men and women, the need for social workers to be used at higher administrative levels, the number of vacant positions unfilled and inadequate salaries.

There have been two other meetings with the schools. One was held in September 1956, another in August 1957. At both meetings the shortage of social workers and the potential demand were main items on the agenda.

In preparation for the meeting, the AASW had set up a committee to investigate recruitment issues called the Ways and Means Committee. All branches were surveyed about all levels of courses in social welfare.

The Ways and Means Committee had been most concerned about ways of strengthening membership; recruitment to the profession had been basic to this. The Association was concerned not only with building up its membership but with raising the status of the profession. The Victorian Branch had raised the question that in-service training courses might have an adverse effect. The establishment of such courses as the Social Welfare Course at Hobart Technical College was a matter of concern. It had been thought desirable to discuss the whole question of modified courses with the Schools of Social Work.

Ms Norton added, that Schools in South Australia had been actively concerned in trying to provide a part-time course to meet the needs of some migrants. Her concerns included the availability of financial support for students undertaking courses, whether scholarships and Cadetships are available and, what losses there are among applicants because of problems taking full-time courses. She indicated that Schools would not be able to run multiple specialist courses. She also acknowledged that

78 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/22-23 April 1961/58
79 ibid
the needs of many people are apparently being met by untrained workers. The survey should seek to uncover the existence of unsolved problems so that the need for and appropriateness of trained workers in these situations can be assessed.

The other side of the dilemma was raised by Ms Mills (NSW). She pointed out that the problem concerned not only the Schools but also the status of members in the field would be seriously affected ‘if we extended eligibility of membership to those who have taken short-term courses’. The examination of courses and needs was re-focused to identify whether these shorter and sometimes specialist courses would pose a threat to the profession and sip on off potential applicants for the social work courses at universities. It was even moved that a Fulbright Scholar should be engaged to find out what other professions had done in this situation. No action was recorded.

There was considerable discussion of the point of what our priority should be in this - is it to be firstly to upgrade our Salaries and Status claim or is it to admit people to membership who are capable of a reasonable degree of competence in the field of social work.

While the minutes reported that the second of these two should be the prime concern, there was also recognition that the Association was re-looking at minimum standards, with a view to raising those same standards later. The Constitution of the AASW requires that the school from which a potential member had graduated be one approved by the Association in order for eligibility for membership be granted. This was the mechanism by which competence was judged.

Ms Katherine Ogilvie (NSW) reported the results the AASW’s survey of branches.

300 [students] were taking part in ad hoc courses throughout Australia in 1960 but only a very small number of these were eligible for University courses. However, the salient point is that many of these people will be working in professional fields.

Approximately half those taking modified courses were not matriculated hence they were not eligible to enter a social work course.

The meeting between the AASW and the Schools of Social Work on 23 Aug 1961 was attended by academics from the Universities of Queensland, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and

80 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes/Minutes Federal Council/22-23 April 1961/58-59
81 NLA MS6202//Minutes Federal Council/22-23 April 1961/60
82 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/22-23 April 1961/61
83 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/24-25 September 1960/45.
84 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council and Schools of Social Work/23 August 1961/1-4 plus Addendum
Western Australia. In the case of Western Australia where a course was in the proposal stage, the meeting was attended by the Acting Vice Chancellor. Heads of Schools and senior academics involved in the Social Work Courses represented other universities. Many in this latter group were also senior members of the AASW and some served on Federal Council.

All states reported a great shortage, especially in medical social work and the statutory agencies. It was claimed that some employers had given up trying to get trained staff and even when the supply is available, filled positions with non-social workers. Since supply of social workers was so limited, the wisdom of continuing to look at potential demand was questioned. The Association was told that its focus should be on ‘the job to be done, - on social work, not on social workers’.

Social work’s movement beyond casework in Australia was recognized. The Association was told that it needed to re-examine its priorities in light of the growth of community organizations involving work with groups and communities. ‘We need to know what are the expanding fields and where we fit in.’ The meeting highlighted various studies which showed that personnel were needed in areas that challenged social work to expand.85

The Association was also told at this meeting that it was unduly concerned about sub-professional courses and had ‘placed too much emphasis on the need to protect the profession.’ The meeting with the Schools of Social Work addressed the nub of the problem.

Rather it seemed that we should, as a professional group, help as much s possible towards any improvement in social welfare work. Modified courses could be a means to this improvement; if by active participation in such courses we create a desire for more learning this is all to the good.86

This clear direction for a change in the core purpose of the AASW, to include social welfare had to be mediated by those Association members present at the meeting with the Schools. If not, the Association would have had to either reject the views of the Schools of Social Work or make fundamental changes to its organization. The median position was as follows:

It was agreed ‘that the Association supports courses of training in specific fields of welfare work provided that there is a clear differentiation in the minds of the community and in the minds of its students that it is not a qualification in professional social work.’ 87

85NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council and Schools of Social Work/23 August 1961/2
86ibid
87ibid

107
By this statement, the AASW could agree that the field of social work is much larger than that being represented by the Association and that the AASW had over-played the threat from the sub-professional courses. At the same time, the AASW could reassert their formula for what constitutes a profession (university qualifications) which the universities would not dispute; they could maintain that only those with that qualification can be eligible for membership of the AASW and, hence be called professional social workers. They avoid opening up the Association to embrace all those who work within the discipline.

Having made their statement of closure the AASW joined with the Schools to re-assert:

‘The most important point is the need of the individual and the community.’

This grand statement of principle of the Association did not comfortably mesh with the push for professionalization at the time. Some members of the Association would have seen this as a considerable shift in the focus of the Association.

The meeting moved on to examine the means of increasing the supply of social workers. It firstly consisted of a list of scholarships, designated social work positions and government departments who were targeting male social workers as employees and Cadetships.

The issue of the difficulty in setting up student placements was raised. Student placements were required by the AASW. The student had to work in an agency where they supervised by a qualified social worker. Placements were difficult to find, as agencies were frequently over-worked, under resourced and could not accommodate a student. In 1961, three states (Qld, Vic and SA) had as many student as they could take. They therefore had reached their limit of ability to supply qualified social workers to the community

There was discussion on the development of part-time courses to meet the needs of mature students who could not afford to undertake a full-time course. Similarly, evening courses were discussed. The Schools were unable to provide part-time study options except to a handful of students and asserted that evening courses were educationally unsound.

---

88 NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council and Schools of Social Work/23 August 1961/3

108
In the community, people were studying engineering and science in part-time evening courses. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology had been supplying part-time and evening courses from its beginning. Many of these courses had elevated to Diploma level and included university subjects taught by academics from Melbourne University. The universities joined with the AASW in supporting the notion that Technical Education and its methods of teaching constituted poorer quality education. Both the university and association delegates avoided examining Technical Education as a resource, that with co-operative relationships could assist in meeting the needs of individuals and the community as the highest priority.

The Schools and the Association recognized the need for social work to play 'a more vital role in the broad field of social welfare.' This need was seen to be 'increasingly obvious' and 'cannot be expected of younger workers'. Older students, therefore, must be drawn in so there will be workers available for administration and consultation roles.90

There was discussion about current negotiations and arrangements with the Commonwealth Public Service and study leave. It was asserted that administrators in the Public Service see social workers as 'highly specialized people working in a small area; they do not reach a big proportion of the clients'. This resulted, it was suggested, in a limited view by the administration of the contribution social workers made to the functioning of a department. Given the shortage of qualified social workers, the Public Service assessment more closely reflected reality than an inadequate understanding of the potential role of the social worker.

The Schools and the Association developed a list of actions that might be taken jointly or separately. The first of these was a statement that reflected the indifference the Association paid to its members who were doing more than just their paid work. This included those who supervise students on placement unpaid and for no status increase and those who do research or post-graduate study. There was (and is) no salary increase on receipt of a Masters' Degree in Social Work.

One of the weaknesses of the profession is the amorphous nature of the Association; some stimulus such as the formal recognition of supervisors, research workers etc is needed. Members should have greater opportunity for post-graduate study.91

89ibid
90ibid
91NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council and Schools of Social Work/23 August 1961/4
109
Post-graduate study, the meeting was told, attracts married women back to the field. Their recruitment is a neglected area. These people could do valuable part-time work. Although in the AASW’s purposes the education of its members is outlined clearly, in 1961, there were no efforts being made in continuing education and no assistance for graduates who had been out of practice for some years to complete up-dating courses.

The low level of social work salaries was seen to be a deterrent to new students. In 1961 Victoria recruited the highest number of men and had the highest salaries. This was partly due to the State Government Welfare Department’s policy to employ male graduates. The Schools and the Association agreed, that the way to get higher salaries was to complete a study of ‘the job that has to be done’. The meeting believed this to be the soundest approach. Such studies in the past, they stated, had lead to the employment of specialized staff and opened up positions for professional workers.92

The meeting acknowledged that ‘a lack of sense of direction in the profession is limiting - we should be developing new philosophies and addressing ourselves to the main problems of social work - many wish to do so but have not the skill.’ The cause of this problem was seen to be the shortage of senior social workers. It was not seen to be a problem for the Association, the academics or the workers to identify and write about current social and practice problems. It was not framed as indicating the need to reflect on their actions and/or seek information and guidance from people in other countries who may have experienced similar problems. It was not seen to be a problem of preparation for practice or networking and support for current professionals. Rather, it was seen as a structural - industrial issue: the need for more people at the top.

The report proceeded to list those matters for which the meeting held concerns but for which there was no analysis or proposed action. Issues concerned heavy case-loads of workers which kept them unavailable for supervision of students, involvement in social change projects or research, the need for greater selectivity of students so they can rise to senior management and research, frequent refresher courses and more opportunities for research.

92ibid
The Federal Council Minutes summarized the meeting with the schools as having reached general agreement that 'we must widen our horizons. The objective being to create a demand for Social workers with a broader point of view and not just focus on improved salaries'.

The most striking thing about this meeting with the Schools of Social Work is the low level of critical analysis applied to the problems confronting both the Schools and the Association at this time. The most senior members from every Social Work School in Australia at that time were together and apparently, if the report of the meeting can be believed, were in agreement over central points. Yet there is no compact to work with the Association, no agreement to enter joint projects, no commitment of the Association to the Schools or the Schools to the Association. The result is vague, direction-less and fragmented. There is no sense of solidarity and shared purpose for the social good.

At the Federal Council meeting on 7-8 April 1962, the discussion about the schools of social work resolved that there is a need for closer liaison between Association members and schools. Delegates were made aware that there was no organized Association of schools and no liaison at the federal level between schools. It was suggested that this was a job for the AASW Branches. Delegates from NSW commented that they had regular contact. It was agreed that a study was needed. No action was recorded.

**Summary**

The early years of the AASW can be neatly summed up by those last two sentences. ‘It was agreed that a study was needed. No action was recorded.’ The threefold function of the Association to provide educational opportunities for its members, to take action on their behalf on social issues and to protect their employment standards in this period clearly suffered. Educational opportunities for members continued to be constrained by full-time university based courses with no procedure for up-grading the qualifications of people who were mature, currently working in the field with no qualifications or, who had engaged in ‘sub-professional courses. Continuing education and refresher courses for women returning to the work force were not available and, as a result many women graduates worked only a short time in the profession.
Membership of the Association was not open to those in the business of social work because social work was defined with reference to educational qualifications and not in terms of the work being undertaken. Social welfare workers, although working alongside social workers and sometimes holding more senior positions, were not eligible as members. Nor were students of social work. The definition of professional social work clung to Flexner’s 1915 definition and did not allow for movement out of 19th Century conceptions of profession. As a corollary, standards in training and status were hampered. The broad range of activities which constituted the business of social work, could not be adequately identified.

If only those activities undertaken by university trained people were deemed to constitute social work, provided they were in designated social work positions, the scope of the examination of social work would be limited. Male social workers, for example, who gained promotions and moved beyond designated social work positions had their job functions lost to the Association’s definition of social work.

The Association recognized that the issues of the low supply of social workers, male social workers, untrained people, the definition of social work, sub-professional courses and the protection of the profession were all areas that needed study. These studies when conducted were in the form of simple surveys out to the branches, relying on branch members to contact local members, collate the findings and send the material back. This is an inadequate and inefficient process leading to confusing results.

Any action taken by the Association was focused on talking to someone or some body that the Association sought to influence. This included Ministers, Commonwealth Public Service, Unions, ACOSS and the Universities. It was told clearly at the meeting with the Schools of Social Work that informed Australians did not perceive a difference between social work and social welfare. Since there were so few social workers, the government had to appoint people who could do the job. They were also told that the profession was too concerned with the perceived threat of sub-professional courses and should get on with examining the work of social work not the status of social workers. Examining what social workers do and not their status, would be for the good of individual clients and the community.
To this the profession’s response constituted ‘Yes but...’ Their central focus was on the definition of what constituted a profession and not wavering from the ideal case: all members are university qualified. It was a young profession, emulating older professions. The focus on professional qualifications that are the equivalent to university level continued as a key focus of the profession from 1962 onwards.