

Episode 66 - Dr. Michael Reisch: How Did Social Work Get Here?: The Historical Narratives That Shape Social Work Research and Practice (part 1 of 2)

[00:00:08] Welcome to LIVING PROOF. A podcast series of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work at www.socialwork.buffalo.edu. We're glad you could join us today. The series Living Proof examines social work research and practice that makes a difference in people's lives. The University at Buffalo School of Social Work is making a difference every day through the generation and transmission of knowledge promotion of social justice and service to humanity. We offer MSW and PHD programs continuing education programs and credits online courses licensure exam preparation professional seminars and certificates and much much more. To learn more about the UB school of social work please visit www.socialwork.buffalo.edu. Hi from Buffalo where we celebrate February with an international pond hockey tournament on our downtown waterfront and sled down our skyway ramp. I'm Peter Sobota. In this first episode of a two part podcast Dr Michael Reisch begins by describing how the past is the present and how master narratives about history have come to frame how social work research has been done and how its been implemented. He describes how truth is formulated and parenthetically who's doing the formulating and how that narrative affects construction of what comes to be known as the status quo. Dr. Reisch point is that the profession needs to apply a critical perspective to these narratives in order to understand their impact on the development of the dominant theories and underlying unacknowledged assumptions that have shaped social works research agenda education and practice.

[00:01:58] In addition Dr. Reisch provocatively argues that unexamined narratives have maintained the status quo and gives voice to the profession's tension in negotiating social works mission of at one time changing society while at the same time being dependent on that society for its resources. In episode one Dr. Reisch starts with the Progressive Era of the early 1900s and the New Deal period that followed. Dr. Michael Reisch is the Daniel Thiers distinguished professor of social justice at the University of Maryland. He's held a number of faculty positions including at the University of Michigan University of Pennsylvania San Francisco State University and SUNY Stony Brook. His appointments include a Fulbright senior scholar at the University of Queensland in Australia. Dr Reisch is the author or editor of over 20 books and numerous articles and book chapters and he has lectured widely all over the world. Dr Reisch was interviewed by Dr Hilary Weaver professor here at the School of Social Work. Dr Weaver interviewed Dr Reisch by telephone. We'd like to mention that this episode contains some background distortion that is due to technical problems we experienced while recording thanks and we hope you like the podcast. Well I am Hilary Weaver. And today I have the distinct privilege and pleasure to be interviewing Dr. Michael Reisch. He is the Daniel Thurst distinguished professor of social justice at University of Maryland. He is one of the preeminent scholars in social work today. Dr. Reisch you've been involved in so many interesting projects but today I'd like to focus our discussion on a project that you're currently working on the past the present use of history to shape social work research history in the words of the distinguished British historian PP Thompson.

[00:03:49] It's the discipline of Context context is a multilayered concept that exists across space time not only explains why certain types of research were prioritised to particular areas but also why the role and importance history and historical research was acknowledged were ignored as a social force. Social work attempts to cultivate long view of the issues it address seen through this lens historical perspectives reflects ideas and values shaped the profession not merely to conditions which can be measured. Assessing the social and individual problems of contemporary society requires an understanding of how the meaning of key terms such as social justice wellbeing and

responsibility evolved. To summarise this recent work of yours examines how the use of the past and the future social change to influence the focus of social research. Additionally you explored the tension between historicism and the belief in human agency and self determination. These are reflected in Social Work Scholarship. How did you come to explore these topics. Well I think there are two sources of first during the past two decades the number of social work scholars have drawn attention to the gap between the professions rhetorical emphasis on social justice and social change and the increasingly conservative features of its practice. Some have attributed it to a betrayal of social work. The original mission such as the work of Speck and Courtney Somnath the consequences of professionalization or the impact of the market economy some as the result of conscious political and ideological choices. So while there is widespread agreement addressing the gap between the mission of the profession and the reality is a critical issue. There has been no clear resolution of how that is to occur.

[00:05:42] I've been interested in this issue for a long time based both on practice and research and it's been reflected in a lot of the work that I do. I've also long been interested in the evolution of social work and social welfare in the United States. The historical and ideological forces that shaped that and continue to shape it. For example my work on the development of the social work profession the radical tradition within social work the impact of economic globalization and other historical and contemporary issues as reflected the interests more recently with a colleague at the University of Maryland. Using the lens of critical theory we've been looking at the impact of social work master narrative on the development of its underlying theories and unacknowledged assumptions about practice and research. So I believe that understanding the dimensions and impact of history views of history and of this master narrative are critical steps in developing policies and practices to achieve social work social justice mission because how we construct and reproduce conceptions of truth is critical to our view of what the status quo is and what aspects of the status quo must be changed. So this would include the ways we construct knowledge and define what constitutes them and areas of inquiry and legitimate means of obtaining explaining and disseminating the data we collect. Our understanding of history therefore is a critical component of all of these phenomena. It reflects the ideology of the culture that we embrace and the sum of all culturally available narratives within the dominant discourse of our society. So both features of history and other forms of scholarship within social work have certain common features. They incorporate views of causation and change both at the individual and societal level. They contextualize and explain current conditions through how they define problems how they sequence events.

[00:07:53] The language and vocabulary that they use they reflect ideas about society and its institutions about the purpose of government. The non-profit sector about human nature and the role of social relationships. So as a result they have implications for the choice of theories the researchers make they determine who gets studied and what gets studied and how because they incorporate implicit and often unstated social political and ideological goals and purposes to be very specific regarding the purposes of research. Views of history help frame the research questions posed. They guide scholars choices regarding methodology and potential samples to be investigated. They determine what types of evidence are considered valid. They shape how we interpret the findings of our research and the ways in which they're disseminated and to whom. And finally particularly in the case of policy or intervention research they have a direct results on how research is implemented or how it's translated into initiatives by defining what constitutes feasible solutions to the problems being investigated. This occurs because the views of history are a form of narrative as a form of narrative. They have special power because they reflect human experience and engage people at the level of their imagination and as the realm of their lived experiences because of this power I believe it's important to analyze history and current narratives by applying a critical perspective to look at their underlying assumptions to look at the language that they use their conceptions of power how they construct core concepts such as need and helping and service

and how they define the potential role of clients and communities in the process of individual and societal change.

[00:10:00] Now this relates to history in the following way all narratives are dynamic they reflect ongoing tension between thought and action between dominant perceptions of the past and present reality. But they are never however neutral they always have a purpose. So it's always important therefore to inquire who is telling this particular story. Why is it being told the way it is and what emerges phenomena have required that this particular narrative be constructed in the way it is. So this is particularly important for social work because views of history as embodied in our master narrative also reflect conceptions of society and how institutions should work. They define rights and duties. They incorporate values of dominant social and political groups. They often also contain unexamined assumptions and they acquire therefore the power of universal truth. They develop a relationship of mutual reinforcement with the institutions that they produce and in which they embody so of particular significance for helping profession like social work. Views of history shape our perceptions of the populations with whom we work. Of the problems they're experiencing and of the issues which become the focus of our practice and that our policy and program agendas. There are lots of examples of that. You know our narratives about the causes of poverty have changed for example our view of the relationship between individual and societal responsibility for addressing social and individual needs has also changed. In addition particularly as it relates to research these views these master narratives influence our ideas about reason about science and about values through their construction. They define what constitutes normal behavior and they produce expectations for individuals groups and institutions including researchers to conform to that behavior.

[00:12:12] They reflect therefore an internal logic which is very difficult to refute within the boundaries of the narrative itself. Now for most of the past century. For most of its modern history social works narrative has been dominated by perspectives derived from modern liberalism which reinforces the professions self-image as a benign instrument of social progress and human amelioration. The mission statement of not only to NASW but of other U.S. and global social work organisations reflects this. But despite the emphasis within the profession on the rhetoric of individual and societal change the presence of this largely unacknowledged master narrative and view of history has often served as a major bulwark of the status quo and the reason for that is that we are in a very contradictory relationship we want to change society and its institutions. At the same time we're dependent on that society and its institutions for connection and resources. Sometimes this is reflected in how we integrate concepts derived from this view of history into our vocabulary and philosophy of the profession and so it becomes perhaps inadvertently then a means of justifying the profession's status aspirations which includes the embrace of certain models of social work research. That is the current emphasis on positivism and empiricism. So I know that was a long answer but that is kind of all of the factors that have contributed to my interest in this particular topic. You recently conducted a study in which you reviewed numerous conference papers and articles you interviewed many social work scholars. Can you tell us a little bit more about your specific study. Be glad to.

[00:14:08] This study is part of a broader exploration that I've been doing for quite some time on the multicultural history of Social Work and Social Welfare in the United States. I'm particularly interested and will give credit to my students for inspiring this interest in developing alternative perspectives on this history which illuminates the contributions of groups that have largely been overlooked in most accounts and in tracing the dynamic interaction between mainstream and somewhat marginalized groups. So in the course of doing this research I have examined a lot of archival material. I have looked at papers presented at national conferences since the late 19th century. This the National Conference on social welfare system we were. I've looked at the types of articles published in leading journals and monographs written by university faculty and as part of a

broader study I've interviewed about a hundred social work scholars and conducted oral histories of 20 senior scholars and policymakers whose careers spanned the 1940s to the present. So I'm interested in seeing how that historical context shaped their scholarship and practice and the extent to which their ideas reflected dominant or alternative perspective. So I've analyzed this data through a combination of qualitative and historical graphical methods. For example through the use of triangulation which is a common historiographical method. Particular attention was paid to the following factors. How these individuals referenced the importance of history or the historical context what great historical events or patterns of historical change might have framed the research questions that they investigated and the explanations they present for the purposes of this research. What were the implicit or explicit acceptance or criticism of the institutional or ideological status quo.

[00:16:14] What were their assumptions about the problem causation of whether or not they emphasize individual or structural change in how they expressed the belief in the possibility and desirability of change. And finally reflections of the connection between past and present conditions and their impact on the focus of the research. So these were some of the ways in which I looked at all this material and your study goes back to the beginning of our profession years the 70s to the 1920s for the social work profession was really just beginning. How would you characterize social work. Research during this era. Well let me give you a little bit of just a brief background about the forces that shaped it and then I'll give you three examples of the kinds of research that was being done because there are different kinds of examples and those of you studied the history of social work or read about the forces that shaped the emergence of the social work profession at the end of the 19th century were you know the impact of a civil war rapid industrialization and urbanization immigration and the increased ethnic and racial diversity that it produced. So during the Progressive Era which begins approximately around 1890 the researchers within the emerging social work field synthesized what we now would refer to as a modernist perspective influenced by the beginning of positivism on evidence and causation. They synthesize that with elements of a philosophy that could be called a corporatist philosophy and also on the persistent cultural emphasis which has been dominant in the United States on individualism and there since this has occurred in the language of science order and efficiency.

[00:18:06] So their ideas then contained a linear view of history which had existed in Western society probably since the 18th century and this is reflected in their notion of inevitable progress hence the name progressive era. But at the same time they had a somewhat static view of people. So society was dynamic but people particularly cultures were somewhat fixed. This is reflected in specifics regarding how they view human conditions and human nature. Social Darwinism a popular pseudo philosophy which unfortunately in some forms is still with us is perhaps the clearest expression of this synthesis although it was applied somewhat differently by the major branches of social work such as the Charity Organization Society and the settlement. So let me give you a few examples. In the Charity Organization Society they have they examined conditions such as poverty especially among European immigrants by focusing on the role of morally driven individual behavior and the seemingly immutable cultural influences that shaped it over time their research investigations produce the form of social work practice that emphasizes individual diagnosis and note here the influence of the allopathic medical model which was also just emerging at this time in the United States rather than a more social assessment or a more public health model as developed to some extent by their counterparts in the Settlement House Movement. So what were some examples within the COS. There was a shift from say the 1890 to the 1920s. From research which focused on environmental factors perhaps best reflected in Amos Warner's 1894 study on American charities to an emphasis on the individual psyche and the origins of what is now termed Intervention Research and the social work field.

[00:20:11] This was part of an effort to transform the subjective process of charity work into so-

called scientific philanthropy and ultimately casework based on so-called objective research and the assessment of evidence found in case records and agency interviews with clients. What this transformation did was to create a rational scientific framework for social work practice which although it wasn't fully adopted during this period obviously continues to be influential today. In the 1920s the Child Guidance movement with the assistance of funding from the Commonwealth Fund took individual Intervention Research another step further by incorporating emerging psychodynamic theory into studies such as the delinquency studies of Delinquency Prevention. Now this shift was influenced by several developments. One was the growing desire for social work to establish itself as a viable profession. Another was the impact culturally societal and perhaps psychologically the carnage of the First World War on Western ideas about social progress and the role of reason. Hence the search for irrational or non rational sources of change within individuals and communities. This gets repeated again after the Second World War by the way. The third was the need for social workers from the dominant culture who were increasingly threatened by the social change that was occurring around them. To use the instruments of scientific research to establish and maintain control over a demographically diverse client population Lesley Marville and in his book *Under the cover of kindness* has kind of looked at this and if so no application of ideas derived from Fuko about the role of power institutions in controlling a diverse population. A second example which is in partial contrast occurred within the settlement house movement of the settlement house workers use scientific methods to compliment their broader goal to explore the underlying causes of poverty and to address what Jane Adams euphemistically referred to as the social question. Their research combined synthesize the scientific method.

[00:22:41] Emphasis on explanation and prediction with the emerging corporate focus on efficiency and the use of technology to control society. One goal of this research was to produce policies which would manage the seemingly inevitable societal change so they didn't have a fixed view of society that a dynamic view of society but that this change would be managed in an orderly manner and their investigation of social conditions such as slum housing child labor juvenile justice therefore was initially designed to do two things to illuminate the extent of these problems and educate elites about them but also to use this illumination to restore what they regarded as the lost organic community of the past. And I think that's a significant thing because that's one way in which their perspectives on the past shaped their research so studies like Robert Hunter's ninth you know for research on poverty provided new insights into the nature of poverty the impact of low wages and unemployment the effects of immigrants cultures and the limitations of existing social services and addressing that research at the Consumers League and National Consumers League by Pauline Goldmark and Florence Kelley and by Mary Van clique of the Russell Sage Foundation on the effect of industrial conditions on women and children was influenced by their view of history as change as well as a belief that understanding the forces that produce this change could ultimately lead to social reform. They also began to challenge the historic link between poverty and morality which had impeded the progress of social reform for centuries. At the same time and again here's where the settlements have a somewhat different path.

[00:24:39] The social science oriented programs at Harvard which had sort of a social work program at the time and the University of Chicago which obviously still does and where Edith and Grace Abbott were on the faculty and key leaders in social work. They focused on the novelty of urban conditions. How many of them were unprecedented and the importance of investigating these new or intensified urban problems there. The interest in history at the University of Chicago and even to some extent within COS sponsored training programs like The New York School reflected the recognized value of historical knowledge and informing research and practice and reflected at the time the openness of the field to different approaches. But in contrast and this is just the kind of summarize this piece in contrast to the focus of most schools of social work in the early 20th century. The policy oriented research at Chicago relied heavily on the use of statistics. The researchers there including Edith and Grace Abbott so often it so often is Breckenridge and others

internalize the belief in scientific expertise as neutral and the power of certain immutable historical laws and the people who propose immutable historical laws range ideologically at the time from social Darwinist to social work. But where the researchers at the Chicago school differed was that their goal was to create a society free of class conflict rather than one in which class conflict was either inevitable or desirable.

[00:26:20] The importance of this in the history of social work was that this approach influenced the training of social work researchers in settlement houses such as Frances Perkins the first secretary of labor and the studies conducted by the Children's Bureau which appeared shortly before the First World War and a generation later these researchers produced the policies of the New Deal and it could be argued have shaped social welfare policy for the last 75 years as well. So to summarize this piece. So while research in the settlement recognize the role of the environment in historical and social change it rarely reflected except among certain radicals in the settlement movement and understanding of the structural changes that were occurring in the US economy or its social and cultural institutions. So the views of history that settlement workers possess included a belief in change and progress but ironically they hope that the changes produced by their research would restore allegedly lost conditions rather than move society forward into uncharted cherished territory. So with a few notable exceptions such as the work of Mary Van Kleek their research may have enhanced the awareness of social problems and their environmental causes but they largely viewed adaptation assimilation and adjustment as solutions to those problems rather than systemic change and the Russell Sage Foundation played a very critical role here in supporting research and when it began to recognize the radical consequences of some of the work. For example by Mary Van Clake it began to become increasingly critical of this research of the settlement's role and substantially reduced its support. Let me just give you one more example there by contrast and also to reflect my interest in trying to point out the role of groups that have traditionally omitted from most histories and that's a look at the role of history in shaping research in the African-American community. There were similar differences and similar split about the role of history and the role of research during this period among African-American social work.

[00:28:41] I know this was somewhat of an oversimplification but let me divide those into two camps scholar and more mainstream scholars like George Edmund Haynes who was the first African-American to get a doctorate in social work and director of the social work program at this university and organizational leaders like Forster Washington at the National Urban League focused on describing the distinct obstacles in law and institutions which confronted African-Americans in their efforts to achieve social equality. And here's the key point to assimilate into mainstream society. They regarded racial inequality as an aberration in US history. By contrast scholar activists like W.E.B Du Bois Franklin Frazier and Chandler Owen had a very different view of American history. They link the persistence of racial inequality to the structural and ideological imperatives of capitalism and they viewed institutional racism as an inherent component of U.S. history rather than an aberration and the echoes of this are reflected in the differences today between proponents of critical race theory and more liberal views of race relations. So I know this is a lot because this is a very critical period and a long period in American social welfare history. So let me just summarize so in sum two forms of research appeared in the social work field. By the end of the First World War influenced by two different views of history. On the one hand the research sponsored by mainstream organizations such as the community at the Red Cross the YMCA the Charity Organization Society and as it became increasingly conservative the settlement movement focused on community integration under the control of the business sector. It focused on the search for solutions to the problems of individuals and families and the assimilation of ethnic immigrants but not African-Americans or Native Americans or Latinos or Asians into American society.

[00:30:54] By contrast the research that was emerging within the new community centre movement by such scholars as Edward Lindemann and Mary Parker it and the ongoing investigations from a

radical perspective into industrial conditions by Mary Van Kleek emphasized the creation of a new form of society which could be called Industrial Democracy emphasizing enhanced civic participation and what we would now term community empowerment and the development of what Mary Parker called a so-called new state. These diverse perspectives in sum reflected very different views of history one being top down and individual leadership focus versus another being bottom up and collectively focused and they were based on fundamentally different ideas about social change to a certain extent although it often gets buried in our attempt to achieve consensus. This split still exists within the social welfare field in the United States. I think as you have described this era for us you have given us some really important information about parts of our profession's history that we are not comfortable acknowledging or examining. For instance you said that some early social workers truly believed that scientific research was neutral while on the other hand you know the need for social workers from the dominant culture to use the instruments of scientific research to establish and maintain control over a demographically diverse client population. So I think one of the most important contributions that you have brought forward from this era is your discussion of culturally and racially diverse populations that social workers interact with that time and in fact our interactions were not neutral. Is there anything else that you would like to say about that. Before we move on in some other areas just very briefly.

[00:32:59] I think there are several factors. If you remember the title of the memoir that Charles Loring Brace the founder of the Children's Aid Society wrote he refers to the populations with whom he worked the dangerous classes. I think this idea that not only new immigrants from Europe from Latin America from Asia and the Pacific islands but also the migrating population of African-Americans from the south particularly at the beginning of the 20th century were dangers they were threats to society. We like to think that social work embraces diversity. But if you look at the archival material in the papers that were given sometimes it was explicit and sometimes that was more subtle. But there was a real fear of all of this change. There was a belief that these populations represented inferior cultures that were going to undermine through their alien values and political ideologies and their alien cultural norms. The existing American civilization and this is not by some crackpots within the field of social work. These ideas were reflected by many people who were mainstream leaders of the profession including heads of schools and organizations. So I think that the research that they tried to do with obviously influenced by this particular perspective on these populations and how they define the problems what they looked for in terms of interpreting social conditions.

[00:34:24] And I think you can't ignore the fact that we see reflections of it today in its own way not necessarily within social work but within other social forces in the United States that there was rapid changes in demography culture the physical nature of cities for example the economy produced a profound sense of insecurity among elites and at least for the first generation or two social workers by and large came from those elite. So those who controlled the research process who not only did the research but who funded the research could therefore despite their benevolent intentions control the social and political agenda by determining what questions were worth investigating and the means by which problems were defined and addressed. And I think this was a more subtle aspect of the desire to maintain the institutional and social status quo I'd like to move us so short beyond its formative years into the 1930s and the 1950s. This time a new deal goes through the McCarthy era. This is a time when our profession is more solidified. Can you give us illustrations of what social work research looks like in this timeframe. Well I think we have to begin by going to a couple of years before the depression actually struck. You know we tend to think of the Depression as starting with the collapse of the stock market in 19 October of 1929. But some social workers for example Helen Hall and the National Federation of settlements were aware that the economic crisis of which we know as the Great Depression was already emerging. By the mid and late 1920s in 1928 and 29 she conducted a study of joblessness which demonstrated that the problem of unemployment was much more widespread and its source is much more systemic

than would generally acknowledge. At the same time the research of Social Work. Ally Professor Paul Douglas of the University of Illinois who later became Senator Paul Douglas demonstrated that the vast majority of American families lack a personal safety net.

[00:36:43] Something like almost 80 percent of the population had virtually no aggregate savings or assets as we now refer to them and that many households struggled to maintain a minimally decent life. If I sound like I'm saying things that could come out of today's headlines. I think the irony is obvious. So the awareness of the systemic forces that were producing the economic crisis was in nascent form already beginning within the field as the effects of the Depression spread. Historical perspective and historical research took on growing importance perhaps for the first time in the field of social work research. They were regarded maybe for the only period in US social welfare history as complimentary to the statistical analysis of socioeconomic conditions that faculty and agency based researchers were doing. Now part of this is due to the terrible social and economic conditions which were in place. And part of it was due to the growing radicalization of the political climate. One reflection of this is that you see the emergence of what was then called a new history. Maybe a major example of that is the book that I don't think is read much anymore but the time was very controversial and very very influential. Charles Beard's economic interpretation of the United States Constitution which gives a totally new set of insight that has sometimes been picked up by more contemporary and like Howard then in a people's history of the United States of the forces that shape the legal framework of the American government what these perspectives did was place increased emphasis on economic explanations of well-known historical events including those that were happening contemporaneously.

[00:38:28] It's clear that because of the radicalism that was emerging in society and then the social work profession that there was the growing influence of Marxist ideas about history here both among academic historians and within the social work profession. This is most clearly reflected in the work of researchers like Mary Van Quee but also in the leadership of the rank and file movement within social work which was a radical movement that by the mid 1930s actually had more members than the American Association of Social Work. So what was going on as a result of these changes in historical perspective in terms of social work research. Let me give you a couple of examples. First within the field of public welfare which of course exploded in size as a result of the New Deal stemming from a dialectical perspective on historical change social work scholars believe that part that the government's response to the depression would ultimately produce a better organization of society and a more equitable distribution of its resources with the support of money from the government the federal government. They use new research methods not just statistical analyses but ethnography begins to be used as a form of research. The WPA study for example. Other than that the National Youth Organization and women's organizations illuminates social conditions. They develop innovative ways also to disseminate their findings. They began to use popular magazines and the radio and cultural performances and as a result of this they proposed alternative solutions to persistent problems of unemployment and low wages. They not only research but promoted the formation of industrial agricultural housing and community and consumer cooperatives for example. This reflected an acceptance of the emerging social welfare system that the New Deal created.

[00:40:28] At the same time another branch of social work in the family serving agencies of family service agencies of America. The descendants of the direct descendants of the COS. They began to conduct research abetted by faculty and schools of social work which focused also on change but emphasized primarily the effects of intergenerational change and conflict within families especially immigrant families. These studies continue to emphasize the primacy of the individual and family as opposed to institutions of structural forces. But they did reflect a more dynamic view of history and social and cultural change largely inspired by the tumultuous events of the 1930s by the changes in such things as family structure childhood marriage and divorce patterns. And this

produced a more insightful perspective on the effects of cultural differences get ironically and it's particularly ironic given our current attitude they impact of these changing social and cultural conditions on women and racial minorities continue to be largely overlooked. It's interesting that they were aware of the changes that had occurred between the first and second world war on things like childhood the emergence of adolescence as the field of study family life but also how they interpreted it because they began to interpret these phenomena in a frame that looked at the role of context and how that context shapes their theoretical assumptions about people's needs and the developmental task they created. They began to investigate such issues as the causes of intra family conflict changing parental roles changing attitudes about childhood changing attitudes about sexuality marriage and so forth. Now at the end of the depression comes the second world war and that has a profound influence on both forms of research.

[00:42:31] There had been a focus in social work research on issues of adjustment as I just suggested. Even before World War 2 in the mid and late 1930s particularly regarding immigrant families and immigrant youth. But the trauma of the war promoted increased concern about the effects of dramatic change on individuals and families. The war also led many social workers to reject prevailing historical views about change such as those that emphasized nationalism or Marxism. Because many people believe that those views about history and change had laid the founding nation for the events that produced the war. Influential social work scholars such as Karl Schweidnitz asserted that as a result of World War II and the Cold War which followed that social workers had to and this is a quote. Give up the privilege of fanaticism. This view of history and its implications for contemporary event was reflected in the wider field of history to one of the leading historians in the United States Crane Brinton of Harvard University wrote a very famous book called *The Anatomy of Revolution* which he links social and individual deviance to the prophecies of revolutionary change and by implication sort of defined revolutionaries as microbes. As a result of all this there was a huge shift in the research focus within the social work field. The emphasis now is on family conditions restoring family stability service effectiveness rather than investigation of structural social or community problems. The aftermath of the war also encouraged because of the trauma that the war had created through our society.

[00:44:22] The search for a restoration of social equanimity and the emergence of consensus histories of the American experience though in the broader historical field the histories that are produced in the 40s and 50s trying to look for the common thread consensus attitudes about American history downplay or ignore the conflict that existed within American history and certainly ignore the role of minorities and women and radicals in the history of the United States in the social work field. Again because these things are closely linked. This view on trying to reach common ground was reflected in the popularity of theories of human behavior which reflected universalist assumptions and stressed common human need to use the title of Charlotte Tolles famous book. There was a belief among researchers that their research and the expertise that underlie it could be used to remedy social ills and shape the future of society. Similarly to the view that existed within the progressive era. So they began to do a lot of research particularly in families serving agencies and in United Way type organizations on the behavioral problems of children and youth juvenile delinquency became a very big subject to study here and there broader societal implications. Yet they made two very serious errors in doing this which affected the outcomes of their research. One was they had what might have been innocent what might have been a benign view that certain forms of behavior were normal and that any variation from them was therefore deviant. So it led to a somewhat superficial examination of cultural and social differences. They compounded this fallacy which I would call a universalists fallacy by focusing in their research solely on the needs of so-called normal young white Anglo-Saxon males. Issues involving girls or women were virtually ignored and this is true in the medical field as well.

[00:46:29] Unless these girls were sexually active and therefore deviant and issues that affected

immigrant families differently from those of native families were largely regarded as pathological in terms of research. This period also produced narrower conceptions of what was appropriate methodology which largely excluded historical research which had been popular in the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s in the mid 1940s the American Association of Social Workers the predecessor to the National Association of Social Workers called for social work researchers to engage in more quantitative research and to emphasize social scientific approaches to research for ethically greater use of statistics and Social Welfare Research Group in its documents placed greater emphasis on the methodology of social work research rather than the goals of social work research and it specifically stated that historical research did not qualify as an appropriate form of research. Now one way that this had an effect was that by the end of the 1940s the connection between research and social policy the contextualisation of research had largely disappeared because of the primacy given to quantitative methodology. In fact ten years later in his influential study of social work education in a bomb omitted any specific concept on social work history from his curricular recommendations proposing instead that history should be infused through the curriculum rather than taught separately. In addition the increased specialization of social work practice and Social Work Education reflected a view of history that was anchored in a structural dysfunction misinterpretation of society which was an interpretation that aided social work in its goals of increased professional aspiration. You've been listening to Dr. Michael Reisch discuss how historical narratives have shaped social work research education and practice and are living proof. Be sure to follow our series and look for part two of our discussion with Dr. Reisch.

[00:48:53] Hi I'm Nancy Smith Professor and dean at the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. Thanks for listening to our podcast. For more information about who we are our history our programs and what to do. We invite you to visit our Web site at www.socialwork.buffalo.edu. at UB we are living proof that social work makes a difference in people's lives.