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TITLE

The Organisational Context of Human Service Practice

Elizabeth Ozanne & David Rose

South Yarra, Australia: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

290 pp

ISBN 9781420256390

(\$NZ89.95) (pbk)

Ozanne and Rose offer an accessible addition to the growing number of texts addressing organisational issues relevant to human service and social work practice. The authors' target audiences are undergraduate/postgraduate students and new frontline human service workers. The text's eleven chapters are not set out in discrete sections, but for this reviewer broadly address three themes. The first focuses on the human service organisation (HSO)—its context, environment, structure, theoretical constructs, leadership and technology. The second section addresses the human players: clients, workers, and change. The third section, a single chapter, examines evaluation tools for assessing the organisation's performance and contribution to outcomes.

The authors acknowledge their debt to the well-recognised work of Hasenfeld (1983) and Australian authors Jones and May (1992). The text offers Ozanne and Rose's analysis on how to work effectively in HSOs and how practitioners shape, and are shaped by, HSOs. Its undoubted contribution to the field emanates from its writing clarity, useful exercises and case studies for undergraduate courses, and excellent layout. That said, Ozanne and Rose's conventional treatment of their themes largely misses Gardner's (2005) innovative critical theory and associated conceptual lenses through which HSO management practice may be assessed. Whilst not necessarily a detracting quality, their straightforward, predictable style places Ozanne and Rose

in the undergraduate and new practitioner level rather than in a postgraduate programme.

Discussion of organisational change is largely reliant on Lewin's force field analysis—articulated over 60 years ago—a limiting factor when complex change is a practice reality. That limitation however is more than favourably balanced by the excellent chapter on limits of decision-making autonomy by HSO workers. In the same chapter, the authors also analyse contributing factors to stress and burnout—useful reflective material for students on practicum and early career practitioners.

The text is clearly aimed at an Australian audience. For a social work academic in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Australian perspective does not offer the cultural dimension located in indigenous biological thinking about organisations. The connections between these indigenous approaches and the emergence of Western complex adaptive systems thinking are not developed. A multicultural diversity perspective in social work management and leadership would add significant strength to the text. Such diversity approaches are relevant to HSOs in the United Kingdom as much as New Zealand. This reviewer also suggests that an organic lens adds a valuable dimension to a social work organisational diagnosis.

Given the lack of an indigenous perspective, it is not surprising that the profession's commitment to social justice and marginalisation of populations is insufficiently addressed in this text as a critical field in HSO policy, management and leadership.

With those observations in mind, this text is nonetheless an appropriate introduction to organisation and management for undergraduate students and early career practitioners. Future editions might usefully address themes of organic complexity, workforce and client diversity, and organisational responses to social justice issues. At the other end of the spectrum to social justice, a more rigorous treatment of the impact of neoliberal thinking on HSO management would be equally valuable.

## References

GARDNER, F. (2005) *Working with Human Service Organisations: Creating Connections for Practice* (South Melbourne, Oxford University Press).

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JONES, A. and MAY, J. (1992) *Working in Human Service Organisations: A Critical Introduction* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire).

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