Professional Development:
The International Journal of
Continuing Social Work Education

Social Policy Advocacy Evaluation: A More Complete Model for Social Work

Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	*Social Policy Advocacy Evaluation: A More Complete Model for Social Work*
Author(s):	*Gerald Cochran*
Volume and Issue Number:	*Vol. 13 No. 1*
Manuscript ID:	*131027*
Page Number:	*27*
Year:	*2010*

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is published three times a year (Spring, Summer, and Winter) by the Center for Social Work Research at 1 University Station, D3500 Austin, TX 78712. Journal subscriptions are $110. Our website at www.profdevjournal.org contains additional information regarding submission of publications and subscriptions.

ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org **Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact**

Social Policy Advocacy Evaluation: A More Complete Model for Social Work

Gerald Cochran

Background and Purpose

Professional Context

As a master's level social worker, my research training focused on evaluation methods for professional practice. However, when I began working as a children's public health policy analyst and advocate, I was surprised when I attended a national training on evaluating policy advocacy in which the presenters discussed the professional community's struggle to measure policy advocacy interventions. It was then I decided to synthesize a model which could be easily applied by policy advocates—in particular those within the social work profession—to evaluate their professional practice of policy advocacy intervention. The following paper reviews the literature and presents a composite model to evaluate policy advocacy for social work practice.

Policy within Social Work

Since Jane Addams began serving immigrants and low-income minorities at Hull House in 1889 in Chicago social work has been engaged in macro practice—and more specifically—policy practice. Addams' activities included local and national public policy advocacy efforts on behalf of those whom she served (Jansson, 1999, 2001). In today's arena of social work practice, the ways in which social workers interface with macro systems and policy practice have evolved (Axinn & Stern, 2001; Jansson, 1999, 2001). Much of this evolution has come due to changes in the administration and operation of state and federal human services in the last 20 years (Axinn & Stern, 2001; Jansson, 1999, 2001), which have thrust public policy work squarely onto the shoulders of social workers (Sanfort, 2000). Prior to 1996, many of the largest and most expansive human service programs were administered at the federal level. However, since the reform of welfare in 1996, social workers have been compelled to become more involved in the policy process than heretofore experienced as significant program responsibilities were delegated to states from the federal government (Sanfort, 2000).

Social Policy and Advocacy

Within social work policy practice, there are many roles in which social workers can be involved. One specific role that receives insufficient attention is the policy advocate. In addition to professional heritage and federal decentralization, social workers have an obligation to engage in political advocacy for their clients (Allen-Meares, 1996; Jansson, 1999). Social workers who practice as advocates purposefully attempt to facilitate change on behalf of client systems, regardless of whether the client is an individual, organization, or community (Hoefer, 2006). Social workers practicing as policy advocates seek to influence policies, legislation, and program service delivery in order to provide greater access to goods and services within society.

In the United States, political advocacy often assumes the form of the professional lobbyist. This generally involves lobbying efforts directed towards political processes, lawmakers, legislative staff members, or public agency administrators and officials (Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Jansson, 1999, Hoefer, 2000). The advocate's role has become increasingly important in light of the far-reaching impacts policy changes have on individuals and organizations and due to the increased competition for public funds from local, state, and national sources (Corvo, Zlotnik, & Wan-Yi, 2008; Motenko, 1995; Patti and Dear, 1975). However, social policy advocacy cannot be considered successful unless there is a measurement of change (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). As advocates endeavor to influence policy,

Gerald Cochran, MSW is a Doctoral Student at The University of Texas at Austin.

they must answer to those who will be impacted by their efforts (Jansson, 1999).

Program Evaluation

In order to connect the work of advocates and measuring policy outcomes, program evaluation becomes necessary. Evaluating policy advocacy enables lawmakers, administrators, and citizens to know if these efforts and their resultant social policies and programs have accomplished what was intended (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007; Berk & Rossi, 1990; Wholey, 1994). Nevertheless, while evaluation research and associated literature for direct service programs are abundant, peer-reviewed social work research literature and professional publications are limited in addressing the topic of political advocacy evaluation (PAE). PAE is a research concept that focuses on evaluation principles and practices which specifically examine policy interventions carried out by professional policy advocates. Certain academic authors (Dear & Patti, 1981; Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Hoefer, 2000, 2005, 2006; Hoefer & Ferguson, 2007; Patti & Dear, 1975) and professional/foundation researchers (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007; BOND, 2005; Fine, 2006; Innovation Network, 2005) have begun bridging this gap. Yet, despite these positive efforts, authors infrequently speak directly to the evaluation of political advocacy—particularly with respect to the evaluation of social workers operating as political advocates. Much work still must take place to establish models/ methodologies to measure goals, processes, and outcomes of political advocacy interventions in a direct, complete, and integrated manner. Therefore, the following literature review and synthesis was carried out in order to generate a model for evaluating political advocacy.

Methods

The following PAE framework was developed in a three-phase process. The first phase consisted of a rigorous literature search of numerous academic databases and political advocacy related websites. This search focused on locating scholarly or professional literature which contained keywords related to the constructs of political advocacy and policy advocacy evaluation, such as lobbying, policy outcomes, and policy evaluation. From this, sixty-nine (69) peer-reviewed academic, textbook, and professional publications which referred to models/methodologies of advocacy intervention and evaluation were located. The publications were then examined more thoroughly a second time, and from those, thirty-seven (37) publications were eliminated because their scope or topical focus did not relate closely enough to the theme of PAE. The 32 remaining publications were then reviewed in order to extract all contents applicable to PAE. The items extracted from the 32 publications were based on their discussion of principles of evaluation which were directly related to PAE, or the content of the evaluation model therein could be straightforwardly applied to PAE. The second phase categorized those principles and methods which were extracted from these publications. This categorization was carried out through a thorough review of notes taken from the literature which identified emerging themes and topics. The categories selected in which the principles and methods were organized were based on a logic model framework. Logic models were selected as the organizing element due to the fact that they are commonly used in program evaluation literature and practice, both inside and outside of social work, to guide the structure and content of evaluation research (Engel & Schutt, 2009; Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Weiss, 1998). In light of this, the logic model framework fit the findings from this review well. The third phase synthesized the information into three pre-evaluation considerations and four PAE subdivisions.

Results and Discussion

The literature analysis yielded two primary results. The first was the recognition of three pre-

evaluation considerations as well as four components of PAE. The three pre-evaluation considerations are: (1) will the evaluation be conducted concurrently with the intervention or retrospectively; (2) what research method will be used to evaluate the intervention, and (3) what are the time constraints that may impact data collection? The four components of PAE are: (a) policy agenda formulation, (b) advocacy processes, (c) short-term outcomes, and (d) long-term outcomes. The second result from the analysis was the synthesis of a composite model of PAE that integrates the four evaluation components. In conjunction with the formulation of an evaluation model, practical and appropriate social work measurement tools were also generated along with innovative approaches for measuring short and long-term impacts of advocacy interventions. These pre-evaluation considerations and evaluation components of PAE are subsequently discussed to assist evaluators appropriately in assessing policy interventions and/or to act as a guide for social workers practicing as policy advocates.

Pre-Evaluation Considerations

Conducting the evaluation concurrently or retrospectively. The first consideration that must be taken into account before an evaluator begins to frame or organize the evaluation is to determine where the evaluation will begin—from the front or back end. Does an evaluator want to be involved in the design of the intervention in order to build evaluation protocols and measures into it, or does the evaluator prefer to examine the program retrospectively (The California Endowment, 2005). While external evaluators may not have the luxury of such choices, internal evaluators certainly can address these considerations.

Selecting the research method. The second consideration before an evaluation can begin has to do with which methodology will be selected to best answer the research question. Specifically, evaluators must determine if the advocacy evaluation will be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed in its methodological approach. An evaluator familiar with the program or intervention should feel free to organize a quantitative evaluation. With a firm understanding of the intervention, evaluators can accurately judge what to count, how to count it, and how to interpret/analyze data collected. If the evaluator is not familiar with the advocacy intervention or if observable facts are not readily discernable, choosing to examine the intervention and its results qualitatively is likely to be a more effective method (Weiss, 1998; Yin, 1992). A qualitative approach provides room within the method for evaluators to investigate various components of the intervention—not being locked into searching for one particular set of indicators. If the evaluator feels moderately familiar with the intervention, a mixed method approach may be the best choice (Weiss, 1998). A mixed method approach allows flexibility in the evaluation of areas of the intervention with which evaluators are not acquainted while simultaneously providing objective and more concrete descriptors of accomplishments. Such mixed evaluations may yield some of the most accurate and richest descriptions of political advocacy interventions (Shadish, 1992). Regardless of the method chosen to monitor and measure interventions, the methodological approach must be practical and purposeful (Annie E. Casey, 2007).

Time constraints. A third consideration that must be anticipated prior to PAE is ensuring the data collected are taken as close as possible to the point of intervention, delivery of service, or outcome (Innovation Network, 2006). With measurements taken shortly after interventions occur, valuable details can be more easily captured. This in turn enhances analyses thereafter because evaluators have accurate information from which to conclude results and report. The more time that elapses after interventions have occurred the more room there is for additional errors within an evaluation—which then may dilute results and conclusions.

Four Evaluation Components

Policy agenda formulation. If the evaluator is prepared to begin designing the evaluation, the first step is policy agenda formulation. In cases where the evaluators come to the advocacy intervention after it has begun or has been completed, the team must understand what the agenda has heretofore been. Policy agenda formulation begins with framing the vision of the advocacy intervention. The vision of the intervention will ideally be based upon the mission and values of the advocating agency (Kluger, 2006). In order to be able to conceptually grasp the agenda, evaluators must be familiar with and understand the problem the advocacy intervention seeks to resolve (Innovation Network, 2005; 2006). Upon grasping this vision, evaluators should carefully consider the surrounding environment, specifically the policy environment. The reason for considering the policy environment is that evaluators must understand that the information they produce as a result of their analyses will have an impact on that environment (Mark, Henry, & Julnes, 2000), which could vary from favorable to volatile.

Once evaluators begin to grasp the problem at hand, the vision of what advocates want to undertake, and the potential impacts on the environment, the next step is to establish a theory of change. Theories of change define how advocates anticipate the change will occur. These theories provide general information about the level of activities in which advocates will engage or have previously engaged, the depth of outcomes experienced or expected, and the agreement about the impact which advocates seek to realize (Annie E. Casey, 2007). Also when decisions are made about the theory of change, evaluators must keep in mind that the more succinct a theory is the easier the evaluation and reporting will be overall. In the case of establishing theories of change for political advocacy, lobbying and education of policymakers are often the primary means by which changes in policy occur.

Next, evaluators can commence to conceptualize the more tangible goals of the advocacy intervention. Goal identification is paramount for evaluators because programs and policies which do not contain goals cannot be evaluated (Berk & Rossi, 1990). This is the time when evaluators must seriously consider the implementation of theories and why advocates believe that their efforts have accomplished or can accomplish the desired results (Annie E. Casey, 2007; Weiss, 1998). Intervention goals must remain simple and straightforward; if not, evaluations may become too complicated as they proceed (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007). Due to the fact that a variety of goals may be selected, creating weighted priorities for goals can facilitate work as the evaluation moves forward (Cain & Hollister, 1972). For instance, meetings with elected officials and agency executives are activities of high value (as these are the decision-makers that advocates must seek to influence), but these are somewhat rare in day-to-day advocacy work. On the other hand, a more easily accomplished activity is handing out literature on chamber floors. Therefore, if evaluators assign a greater value to the rarer in-person meetings than the handing out of materials, evaluation results will yield richer depictions of advocacy accomplishments. With an understanding of priorities and purposes of the policy agenda, evaluators can examine the processes of advocacy work.

Advocacy processes. The second step within PAE is the measurement of the intervention's processes. Process measurement examines the delivery of services (Scheirer, 1994). These measures are those most examined in PAE. Evaluators must choose process measures wisely because the more appropriate the measures are for the intervention the better the end results will be (Berk & Rossi, 1990). Process measures test the success of the combined resources focused on a theory of change (Scheirer, 1994). Examination of these data is important in light of the fact that evaluators can determine what activities are supposed to

have happened in the intervention and if those activities actually were completed. Results of process measurement also provide feedback to evaluators concerning the quality and consistency of intervention processes (Scheirer, 1994) and if interventions actually reflect an agency's or organization's core competencies (Kluger, 2006). A strength of process measurement is that the accomplishment of process indicators is largely in control of the advocacy agency or organization because processes are frequently the day-to-day tasks of staff involved in the intervention (The California Endowment, 2005). In the case of PAE, instead of examining direct services, evaluators monitor the delivery of the advocacy intervention through activities such as conversations with legislators, meetings with legislative staff or agency administrative staff, and the creation and distribution of materials to elected officials and staff.

In order for advocacy evaluations to be effective, activities must be framed as observable behaviors that can be documented and/or counted in some manner. This is most effectively done through creating and listing activities that are distinct and separate—not easily mistaken one for another. Activities should also each be founded upon the evaluation's theory of change. This list of intervention activities should be as exhaustive as possible allowing the most comprehensive picture of the program to be illustrated. Within the list of activities, two divisions should be recognized. The first are those activities that are intended to be carried out as they exist without alteration or modification. The second list consists of those activities that may be carried out with alterations (Scheirer, 1994). The two divisions within the list of activities will allow the evaluator to create measurements that appropriately measure both types of activities, which effectively minimizes anomalies.

For direct service evaluations, a strong measure for process outcomes is how many individuals received services (Fine, 2006; Scheirer, 1994). For PAE, a strong process measure is how many individuals were lobbied during the intervention and how many committed to support the policy action proposed by the advocate. Effective and detailed tools used by national and state level advocacy groups separate efforts into various sub-classifications. The sub-classifications on spreadsheets and/or tables detail the frequency and different types of lobbying or education efforts that have been undertaken with targeted audiences, such as federal, state, and local policy/lawmakers. Advocates either can fill out these documents as the interventions occur, or they may fill out the documents at predetermined reporting intervals. If possible, advocates should record the information as close to the time of intervention as possible.

In addition to the measurement of direct lobbying efforts, there are other valuable indicators of program implementation within the evaluation process. Website traffic is one such method (The California Endowment, 2005). Web analytics can be run to see how often sites were visited from within a geographic area, what pages were viewed, and what information may have been downloaded. These analyses allow evaluators to determine whether or not online advocacy resources and information are being effectively utilized and dispersed through electronic means.

Other methods to measure delivery of an advocacy intervention are written questionnaires, individual interviews, or case studies (Annie E. Casey, 2007; Applied Research Center, 2004; Cheadle, et al. 2005; Mark, Henry, & Julnes, 2000; Mulroy & Lauber, 2004; Scheirer, 1994; Weiss, 1998) regarding the involvement of advocates, policymakers, and coalition members in interventions and in support of interventions (Cheadle, et al. 2005). Questionnaires and/or interviews provide answers to a variety of questions, ranging from where interviewees received their political information (Fine, 2006) to how influential the information received was in their decision making process. While these particular methods of measurement may increase the sub-

jectivity of process measures collected, if combined with more objective measures they become mixed methodological approaches to the evaluation, which can lead to informative results (Annie E. Casey, 2006; Innovation Network, 2006).

Observation is another method within PAE that can provide evaluators the opportunity to assess intervention outcomes (Cheadle, et al., 2005; Weiss, 1998). Policy advocates have frequent opportunities to speak in hearings, attend meetings, and converse with influential people. In any one of these situations, evaluators can accompany advocates to observe proceedings and interactions. Situations like these have the potential to illustrate for evaluators an advocate's influence on individuals and groups. If evaluators cannot directly observe advocates, interviews of others who have observed advocates will draw out details to assess advocacy performance. However, if evaluators choose to observe advocates or interview others who have observed advocates, researchers must attempt to control biases associated with such methods (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Evaluators can also examine the development of messaging tools as a measurement of PAE. Creating strategic messages intended for key stakeholders as part of advocacy (BOND, 2005) is challenging, and rightly should be, as they are packed communications targeted toward specific groups or individuals with the objective of deliberately influencing. Deciding what the objective of the message will be and to whom the message will be directed is a function of the agenda-formulation component of the evaluation. Actually creating, drafting, and delivering the message are clearly measurable process components.

In many evaluations, process data are over collected and can overburden agencies of any size. As a result, agencies may benefit from evaluating more concise and strategic aspects of their efforts. For that reason, instead of evaluators trying to capture too many pieces of information within an agency for PAE, they should only collect information that is specifically pertinent to the evaluation by creating and using measurement tools that are simple, calculated, and to the point (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007). To effectively focus evaluation efforts on those most important processes, evaluators should also choose indicators of best practices of political advocacy. Carrying out and monitoring best practices are more likely to produce measureable longer-term and meaningful results for client populations and will aid the explanation of the level of success gained by the intervention.

Some of these best practices for advocacy interventions include the following: involvement in electoral advocacy (elections); participation in coalitions; community and grassroots pressure on legislators or agency administrators; early drafting and introduction of legislation; multiple legislator, majority party, bipartisan, and/or influential legislator sponsorship of bills; open committee hearings on bills; public testimony within hearings; prepared contingency amendments for bills to ensure successful passage; support from the executive branch of the government (Dear & Patti, 1981); presentation of data about programs to policy/lawmakers in brief and concise frameworks (Jenson, 2007); influencing rule-making authorities before the publication of regulations; and working to increase individual advocate access to policy/lawmakers (Hoefer, 2000; Hoefer & Ferguson, 2007).

Since advocates frequently have too many goals and attempt to accomplish too much with policy interventions (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007), when their work concludes, they feel they have achieved little. Political advocacy often times is not about trying to change an entire system, but, rather, it is about carrying out day-to-day activities of lobbying, information production and distribution, testifying in committee hearings, and/or participating in meetings. Therefore, seemingly insignificant daily activities not only can be counted as PAE process successes, but they must be viewed as the foundations of short or long-term outcomes (Harvard Family Research Project,

2007).

Short-term outcomes. The formulation and measurement of short-term political advocacy outcomes is the third step of PAE. Short-term outcomes are those which are direct results of process activities. In contrast to the accomplishment of process indicators, short-term outcomes often are not totally within the control of the implementing agency or organization (The California Endowment, 2005). Examples of some ideal short-term outcomes within policy advocacy efforts are actual policy adoption, implementation, or enforcement; ballot measures; funding/ concrete resources; or "holding-the-line" when important pieces of legislation come under attack (Annie E. Casey, 2007, Mohr, 1995). In addition to passing a piece of legislation intended to help a client, alterations in social policies and procedures often signify changes in systems—which alone represent significant wins (Cheadle, et al., 2005).

Pre-experimental designs are appropriate for short-term measurement of PAE in light of their adaptability and capability of implementation within various aspects of political advocacy. Results of pre-experimental designs can yield data sufficient to draw tentative conclusions regarding success of political advocacy interventions. For instance, pre/post designs are effective approaches to PAE because they can test groups against themselves, not requiring groups for comparison. These designs are also flexible enough to allow for changes that may need to happen during advocacy interventions while being sufficiently rigorous to generate thorough descriptions and results. Pre/post measurement of the actions of legislators, constituents, or agency officials can easily be carried out through key informant interviews or surveys (Applied Research Center, 2004; Putt and Springer, 1989) conducted in person or through web-based surveying applications.

One effective method of short-term outcome data analysis for PAE is casual analysis (not to be confused with *causal* analysis). Casual analysis examines the relationship between the actions of the advocacy team and the policy outcomes achieved (Mark, Henry, & Rossi, 2000). Casual analysis departs from nominal descriptive analysis in that it begins to rule out extraneous variables which may impact short-term outcomes of interventions by casually asserting effects of intervention efforts (Mark, Henry, & Rossi, 2000).

If evaluators choose to utilize qualitative methods and data to assess advocacy intervention effectiveness, interventions can be effectively examined through ethnographic analyses, case studies, individual interviews, focus groups (Annie E. Casey, 2007; Applied Research Center, 2004; Weiss, 1998), and qualitative analysis of agency documents (Weiss, 1998). If ethnography is the chosen evaluation tool, investigators must become involved in the intervention at the participant level in order to gather data (Weiss, 1998). Using this method, the evaluator has an excellent opportunity to paint a rich image of the work carried out by advocates through telling the story of the intervention process, which in turn provides insight regarding the success of intervention efforts (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007; Sherraden, Slosar, & Sherraden, 2002; Talbott, 2007).

Case studies can describe in-depth phenomena or results of advocacy efforts. Case studies can produce data with the richness of ethnography; however, rather than a researcher describing what he or she has experienced, case studies synthesize various components of data gathered (Weiss, 1998). Furthermore, it is not requisite that case studies be conducted in concert with advocacy interventions, but instead can occur retrospectively. If informal interviewing and/or focus groups are applied in PAE (Applied Research Center, 2004; Weiss, 1998), these have the potential to draw responses out of individuals who have been or are involved in interventions but who are less interested in being formally involved in evaluation efforts.

Lastly, a qualitative analysis of agency docu-

ments is an appropriate method of data collection for many types of evaluation projects (Weiss, 1998) and could be aptly applied to PAE. This method can be conducted as soon as documents are ready to be examined—during and/or after interventions. However, if evaluators choose to employ qualitative document analysis or other qualitative means for PAE, they must triangulate data with other sources to allow for a clear illustration of the policy's effect on the targeted population (Jansson, 1999) and to forestall criticisms that may arise with respect to weaknesses within results (Abbatangelo-Gray et al., 2007).

Sampling of these data can take place through a variety of methods; nevertheless, two non-probability methods standout. The first method is convenience sampling (Weiss, 1998). This approach is suited for PAE as evaluators simply go where informed individuals might be located and begin asking questions about the intervention. Because advocates contact and converse with large numbers of individuals each day in a variety of locations, evaluators can create a list of potential data collection sites and then scour these locations for information. However, while convenience sampling may be appropriate for PAE, caution must be taken with findings reported due to biases based on the selection of participants by researchers (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

The second method is snowball sampling. This approach is similar to convenience sampling in that evaluators locate a person to interview or a site to observe. However, after the research concludes with the subject or at the location, instead of immediately going to a subsequent predetermined interview or site, the evaluator inquires from those interviewed where another similar opportunity for interviewing may exist (Weiss, 1998). Snowball sampling is effective for PAE as advocates work from location to location on a daily basis, and they may not keep track of where all their work has occurred. Therefore, evaluators can be directed by the snowball sample to where key points of an intervention may have transpired. When initiating either a convenience or snowball sample, evaluators can begin their search for subjects or sites from within existing intervention records (Applied Research Center, 2004; Berry, 1985). However, evaluators likewise must take caution in this method as it may result in limited representativeness of findings (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Many times when an agency undertakes an advocacy intervention, not only is policy impacted, but the advocacy organization increases in capacity or becomes stronger in some respect. Therefore, short-term measures for PAE also can focus on impacts upon the agency which carries out the advocacy intervention (Annie E. Casey, 2007; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007; Kluger, 2006; Mulroy & Lauber, 2004). Increased organizational capacity can be manifested in many ways; some examples are newly created/strengthened coalitions (Cheadle, et al., 2005), increased listserv membership, improved relationships with legislative and executive offices, or increased credibility and influence with stakeholders.

Long-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes of political advocacy are frequently the results of the short-term political advocacy outcomes and are where decisions made by policy/lawmakers are assessed (Berk & Rossi, 1990). Long-term outcomes differ from the short-term in that the former are the results of the policy change, and, subsequently, are the improvements manifested within the lives of recipients (Beresford, 2005; Rossi et al., 2004). Notwithstanding this, causal relationships between interventions and outcomes are difficult to measure in the realm of long-term outcomes as they generally are outside the control of the advocate due to the broad societal and far reaching impacts of outcomes (Berk & Rossi, 1990; Rossi et al., 2004; Weiss, 1998). Despite long-term outcomes being outside the control of the advocate, outcomes can and must be anticipated and strategized in the initial phase of the advocacy intervention and positioned as the ulti-

Table 1. Impact analysis for assessing efficacy of long-term political advocacy outcomes (Mohr, 1995).

Name	Function
Counterfactual	C
Reality	R
Planned outcome	P
Program impact	C-R
Effectiveness ratio	(C-R)/(P-C)

mate goals of agency staff (Weiss, 1998). What is fortunate about long-term measurement in political advocacy is that social policies usually are intended to affect people in some manner, and by using human-centered social science tools of measurement, evaluators can test the impacts on people of social policies.

There are several examples of long-term outcomes that evaluators may monitor and examine to determine if the short-term achievements have resulted in long-term successes. Examples of these are improved social, economic, and physical conditions; shifts in social norms within communities; changes in awareness of an issue; increases in knowledge about the severity of an issue and about what actions must be taken to resolve it; amplified salience of an issue; heightened willingness to support an issue; and changes in voting behavior (Annie E. Casey, 2007).

Data relative to these indicators can be collected from a number of federal and state sources, such as the Census Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services, and Centers for Disease Control. Federal and state sites such as these contain a wealth of valuable information for establishing baseline and comparison group data or for providing information that can be used to establish and triangulate findings (Chelimsky, 2005). Furthermore, in view of the fact that national statistics are not published frequently, it may be helpful to use state-level data which are published more often.

If data have been located and collected, analysis becomes the next challenge. Impact analysis is an especially helpful method social workers can use in PAE. In order for impact analysis to be utilized appropriately, it requires there be some method to quantify a program or the efficacy or accomplishment of an intervention. The initial task in analyzing impact for PAE is to determine the *counterfactual*. Counterfactual is a concept within an impact analysis that quantifies how much of something would have happened if the intervention or program for which the advocate worked had not have been implemented (Mohr, 1995; Rossi et al., 2004). With the counterfactual data, evaluators must determine the *reality*. The reality is what actually occurred as a result of the program or policy (Mohr, 1995). That reality pertains to the number of people affected or helped as a result of the passage of the policy. The counterfactual then converges with the reality as evaluators subtract the quantity of the reality from the counterfactual to derive the *program impact* (Mohr, 1995).

By knowing the program impact, social workers can further estimate the success of the advocacy intervention through an *effectiveness ratio*. To calculate the effectiveness ratio, evaluators must know the *planned outcome* of the policy intervention. The planned outcome is the total number of individuals anticipated to be aided by

the policy or program. With this figure, the effectiveness ratio is derived by dividing the program impact by the planned outcome minus the counterfactual (Mohr, 1995). The effectiveness ratio is valuable in that it creates a quotient that is not only descriptive of outcomes, but it is also easy to discuss, report, and graph (See table 1).

Even if specific legislation is not passed during a particular congressional or legislative session, long-term impacts may still be measured. The goal to change a policy is not confined to one session or one year of work. Often times, political advocates work for small incremental steps to accomplish much larger goals. Steps to change a policy frequently include education through messaging to legislators or constituents of legislators. Polling can determine whether a message has resonated with individuals or groups and if attitudes have changed (Annie E. Casey, 2007). As such, if legislative changes are unlikely to pass or do not pass, intervention resources can be diverted for polling in order to test audience internalization of messaging.

An additional approach to long-term outcomes of PAE is original research on client populations. These anticipated effects can also be measured through pre-experimental research designs (Jansson, 1999; Rossi, et al., 2004). Examples of measures which would be applied to individuals are financial stability questionnaires, mental health surveys, or physiological surveys and/or tests. However, evaluators may wish to be cautious when including target populations in outcome research because these individuals may view research participation as further intervention in their behalf instead of as a tool for assessing program and intervention effectiveness (Beresford, 2005).

Conclusions

Social work has been involved in policy advocacy since the foundation of the profession. Social workers have been given the recent opportunity through the decentralization of governmental social services to become more involved in large-scale human service programs which are legislatively guided and executively administered. Furthermore, due to social workers' insight and sensitivity to the needs of underserved populations (Sherraden, et al., 2004), and as public policies are set forth to serve these individuals, social workers must stand and advocate for services to aid the reduction of disparities and inequality. In light of the importance of these activities, social workers must exert efforts to evaluate the outcomes of their advocacy actions (NASW, 2008). To facilitate this evaluation of political advocacy, 69 publications were identified that are relevant to political advocacy and evaluation, of which 32 were reviewed to extract principles, methods, and components of PAE. The results produced pre-evaluation considerations and actual evaluation components to guide PAE for social work.

As social workers evaluate interventions of political advocacy utilizing the pre-evaluation considerations and evaluation components, they will be able to produce finer descriptions of interventions undertaken. More informed and systematic evaluations of advocacy efforts will then empower social workers to plan more effective advocacy interventions resulting in meaningful sustained impacts. Outcomes such as these, in turn, better accomplish social work's mission of facilitating systemic changes to improve the lives of diverse client populations.

References

Abbatangelo-Gray, J., Cole, G.E., & Kennedy, M.G. (2007). Guidance for evaluating mass communication health initiatives [Electronic version]. *Evaluation & the Health Professions, 30*(3), 229-253.

Allen-Meares, P. (1996). The federal role in education and family services: Goal setting without responsibility [Electronic version]. *Social Work, 41*(5), 533-540.

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2007). *A guide ad-*

vocacy and policy. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Applied Research Center. (2004, April). *Power, participation and state based politics: An evaluation of the Ford Foundation's collaborations that count initiative*. Oakland, CA: Author.

Axinn, J., & Stern, M.J. (2001). *Social welfare: a history of the American response to need* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Beresford, P. (2005). Service-user involvement in evaluation and research: Issues, dilemmas, and destinations. In D. Taylor and S. Balloch (Eds.), *The Politics of Evaluation* (77-86). Bristol, UK: The Policy Press University of Bristol.

Berk, R.A., & Rossi, Peter, H. (1990). *Thinking About Program Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Berry, S.H. (1985). Field sampling problems in data collection for evaluation research. In L. Burstein, H.E. Freeman, and P.H. Rossi (Eds.), *Collecting Evaluation Data: Problems and Solutions* (107-119). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

BOND. (2005). The how and why of advocacy. Retrieved on March 6, 2008 from http://www.innonet.org/index.php?section_id=101&content_id=453

Cain, G.C, & Hollister, R.G. (1972). The methodology of evaluating social action programs. In P.H. Rossi and W. Williams (Eds.), *Evaluating Social Programs: Theory Practice, and Politics.*

Cheadle, A., Senter, S., Procello, A., Pearson, D., Nelson, G.D., Greenwald, H.P., & Beery, W.L. (2005). The California Health Foundation's health improvement: Evaluation findings and lessons learned [Electronic version]. *American Journal of Health Promotion, 19*(4), 286-196.

Chelimsky, E. (1985). Program evaluation and the use of extant data. In L. Burstein, H.E. Freeman, and P.H. Rossi (Eds.), *Collecting Evaluation Data: Problems and Solutions* (181-206). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Corvo, K., Zlotnik, J., & Wan-Yi, C. (2008). Organizational and Institutional Factors Associated With National Institutes of Health Research Grant Awards to Social Work Programs. *Research on Social Work Practice, 18*(5), 514-521.

Dear, R.J., & Patti, R.B. (1981). Legislative advocacy: Seven effective tactics [Electronic version]. *Social Work, 26*(4), 289-296.

Engel, R.J. & Schutt, R.K. (2009). *The practice of research in social work* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Figueira-McDonough, J. (1993). Policy Practice: The neglected side of social work intervention [Electronic version]. *Social Work, 38*(2), 179-188.

Fine, A.H. (2006). *Momentum: Igniting social change in the connected age*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey –Bass.

Harvard Family Research Project. (2007, Spring). *Using and evaluating social media for social change, 8*(1). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Hoefer, R. (2000). Making a Difference: Human Service Interest Group Influence on Social Welfare Program Regulations. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, 27*(3), 21.

Hoefer, R. (2005). Altering state policy: Interest group effectiveness among state-level advocacy groups. *Social Work, 50*(3), 219-227.

Hoefer, R. (2006). *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books

Hoefer, R., & Ferguson, K. (2007). Controlling the leverages of power: How advocacy organizations affect the regulation writing process. [Electronic version]. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 34*(1), 83-108.

Innovation Network. (2005, October). *8 steps to develop a policy evaluation plan*. Washington, DC: Innovation Network.

Innovation Network. (2006). Evaluating advocacy: A model for public policy initiatives. Retrieved on March 6, 2008 from http://www.innonet.org/client_docs/File/advocacy/aea_pres_2006.pdf

Jansson, B.S. (1999). *Becoming an Effective Policy Advocate: From Policy Practice to Social Justice* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Jansson, B.S. (2001). *The Reluctant Welfare State* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Jansson, B.S. (2001). *The Sixteen-Trillion-Dollar Mistake: How the US Bungled Its National Priorities from the New Deal to the Present*. Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press.

Jenson, J.M. (2007). Research, Advocacy, and Social Policy: Lessons from the risk and resilience model [Electronic version]. *Social Work Research, 31*(1), 3-5.

Kluger, M.P. (2006). The program evaluation grid: A planning and assessment tool for nonprofit organizations [Electronic version]. *Administration in Social Work, 30*(1), 33-44.

Mark, M.M., Henry, G.T., & Julnes, G. (2000). *Evaluation: An integrated framework for understanding, guiding, and improving public and non-profit policies and programs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mohr, L. (1995). *Impact Analysis for Program Evaluation* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Motenko, A. K., Allen, E. A., Angelos, P., Block, L., DeVito, J., Duffy, A., et al. (1995). Privatization and Cutbacks: Social Work and Client Impressions of Service Delivery in Massachusetts. *Social Work, 40*(4), 456-463.

Mulroy, E.A., & Lauber, H. (2004). A user friendly approach to program evaluation and effective community interventions for families at risk of homelessness [Electronic version]. *Social Work, 49*(4), 573-586.

NASW. (2008). Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. National Association of Social Workers. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Patti, R. J., & Dear, R. B. (1975). Legislative advocacy: One path to social change [Electronic version]. *Social Work, 20*(2), 108-114.

Putt, A.D., & Springer, J.F. (1989). *Policy research: Concepts, methods, and application*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rossi, P.H., Lipsey, W.L., & Freeman, H.E. (2004). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2008). *Research Methods for Social Work* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Sanfort, J.R. (2000). Developing new skills for community practice in an era of policy devolution. *Journal of Social Work Education, 36* (2), 183-186.

Scheirer, M.A. (1994). Designing and using process evaluation. In J.S. Wholey, H.P. Hatry, & K.E. Newcomer (Eds.), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (40-68). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Sherraden, M., Slosar, B., & Sherraden, M. (2002). Innovation in social policy: Collaborative policy advocacy [Electronic version]. *Social Work, 47*(3), 209-221.

Shadish, W.R. (1992). Theory-driven metaevaluation. In H. Chen and P. Rossi (Eds.), *Using Theory to Improve Program and Policy Evaluations* (29-45), Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Talbott, M. (2007). Grow your own: Improving Illinois schools from the inside out [Electronic version]. *Social Policy, 37*(3), 7-12.

The California Endowment. (2005, October). The challenge of assessing policy and advocacy activities: Strategies for an effective evaluation approach. Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Weiss, C.H. (1998). *Evaluation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Wholey, J.S. (1994). Assessing the feasibility of likely usefulness of evaluation. In J.S. Wholey, H.P. Hatry, & K.E. Newcomer (Eds.), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (15-39). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Yin, R.K. (1992). The role of theory in doing cases study research evaluations. In H. Chen and P. Rossi (Eds.), *Using Theory to Improve*

Program and Policy Evaluations (97-114).
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.