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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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THE BIRTH OF SOCIAL WORK: REFLECTIONS OF SETTLEMENT HOUSES ON TODAY'S CULTURE OF COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

Sosyal Hizmetin Doğuşu: Yerleşim Evlerinin Günümüzün Toplumsal Dayanışma Kültürüne Yansımaları

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the emergence of settlement houses in late 19th-century America and their impact on modern social work and community solidarity. With rapid industrialization, urbanization, and mass immigration, American cities faced challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality. Settlement houses, notably Hull House founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889, addressed these issues by fostering social justice, providing education, and enhancing cultural integration. Settlement houses not only supported impoverished immigrant communities but also played a pivotal role in advancing workers' rights, reducing child labor, and empowering women. Their community-centered approach redefined social work as a profession focused on both individual and societal well-being. By integrating diverse ethnic and cultural groups, these houses promoted tolerance and multiculturalism, leaving a profound impact on American social and cultural fabric. The article highlights how settlement houses pioneered social work practices and established professional standards through vocational training and ethical frameworks. These principles laid the groundwork for modern social work policies and nonprofit organizations. Their legacy persists in contemporary community centers, which continue to provide educational, cultural, and social services while fostering solidarity among diverse populations. Finally, the study underscores the relevance of settlement houses today, suggesting their practices as a model for addressing contemporary social challenges. By exploring their historical contributions and lasting influence, the article sheds light on the enduring principles of community-oriented service and social justice in shaping a more equitable society.

Keywords: Settlement houses, social work, community solidarity, cultural integration, social justice

ÖZ

Bu makale, 19. yüzyıl sonlarında Amerika'da yerleşim evlerinin ortaya çıkışını ve modern sosyal hizmet ve toplumsal dayanışma üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Hızlı sanayileşme, kentleşme ve kitlesel göçle birlikte Amerikan şehirleri yoksulluk, işsizlik ve sosyal eşitsizlik gibi sorunlarla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Başta Jane Addams ve Ellen Gates Starr tarafından 1889'da kurulan Hull House olmak üzere yerleşim evleri, sosyal adaleti teşvik ederek, eğitim sağlayarak ve kültürel entegrasyonu geliştirerek bu sorunları ele aldı. Yerleşim evleri yalnızca yoksul göçmen toplulukları desteklemekle kalmadı, aynı

zamanda işçi haklarının geliştirilmesi, çocuk işçiliğinin azaltılması ve kadınların güçlendirilmesinde de önemli bir rol oynadı. Toplum merkezli yaklaşımları, sosyal hizmeti hem bireysel hem de toplumsal refaha odaklanan bir meslek olarak yeniden tanımladı. Farklı etnik ve kültürel grupları bir araya getiren bu evler, hoşgörü ve çok kültürlülüğü teşvik ederek Amerikan sosyal ve kültürel dokusu üzerinde derin bir etki bırakmıştır. Makale, yerleşim evlerinin sosyal hizmet uygulamalarına nasıl öncülük ettiğini ve mesleki eğitim ve etik çerçeveler yoluyla mesleki standartları nasıl oluşturduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu ilkeler, modern sosyal hizmet politikalarının ve kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşların temelini oluşturmuştur. Mirasları, farklı nüfuslar arasında dayanışmayı teşvik ederken eğitim, kültür ve sosyal hizmetler sunmaya devam eden çağdaş toplum merkezlerinde devam etmektedir. Son olarak, çalışma yerleşim evlerinin günümüzdeki geçerliliğinin altını çizmekte ve uygulamalarını çağdaş sosyal zorlukları ele almak için bir model olarak önermektedir. Tarihsel katkılarını ve kalıcı etkilerini inceleyen bu makale, daha adil bir toplumun şekillendirilmesinde toplum odaklı hizmet ve sosyal adaletin kalıcı ilkelerine ışık tutmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerleşim evleri, sosyal hizmet, toplumsal dayanışma, kültürel entegrasyon, sosyal adalet

INTRODUCTION

The late 19th century was a period when industrialization rapidly increased in the United States, intense immigration occurred, and urbanization became central to society. With this change, poverty, unemployment, poor living conditions, and deepening inequalities between different segments of the society in large cities have become striking (Carson, 1990; Addams, 2006). While the immigrant population had difficulty adapting to their new lives, class differences led to the emergence of new communities and social justice. Settlement houses emerged as a movement aimed at supporting individuals living in low-income neighborhoods.

The first settlement house in America, Hull House, was founded in Chicago in 1889 by the social reformers Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr. Hull House pioneered the American social work movement by providing educational, cultural, and social programs for poor and immigrant neighborhoods (Davis, 1973). According to Addams (2006), settlement houses contribute to the solution of social division by bringing together different segments of society and encouraging solidarity. These structures not only helped the weaker segments but also strengthened social ties by bringing people from all segments of society together.

Settlement houses aimed to provide collective solutions to societal problems and prevent social reform movements. For example, the workers of Hull House contributed to social reforms, such as the enactment of child labor laws and changes in workers' rights (Carson, 1990). Settlement houses also have an important role in the practice of social workers. Social workers working in these houses contributed to the formation of modern social work policies (Trolander, 1987). The importance of providing services to the world using a community-oriented service approach has been emphasized.

The contributions of these regular settlements to American society are wide-ranging. Settlement houses have left deep traces in many areas, such as social solidarity, education, health, and cultural development in American existence; they have laid the foundations of the modern concept of social works. This article aims to reveal the relevance and present legacy of these structures by examining the impact of settlement houses on American culture and society.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENT HOUSES

Origins of Settlement Houses

The origins of settlement houses in America continued to spread rapidly with industrialization and expansion of the country. Individuals living in low-income neighborhoods of large cities, in particular, have difficulty adapting to a new country, only meeting basic needs and suffering (Carson, 1990). Under these conditions, various social reform movements began to ensure social justice, and settlement houses were at the center of these movements. The first settlement house in America, Hull House, was established in Chicago in 1889 by social reformers Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr (Davis, 1973).

Hull House encourages community solidarity by providing education, culture, health, and social work support in poor neighborhoods. Addams and Starr aimed to bring different segments together. The Hull Services provided at the House included daycare centers for children, language classes for immigrants, and informational meetings on workers' rights (Addams, 2006). These services increased the scope of settlement houses by providing practical solutions to the community and became a cornerstone of social work.

Settlement houses not only provide social works, but also bring people from all walks of life together, enabling the integration of different cultures. Addams helped to break down prejudices in society and reduce the gap between classes. The Hull House became a social center where people living in low-income neighborhoods gathered and shared, thus contributing to socialization (Knight, 2005).

Addams, settlement houses were an important step in alleviating social injustices in society. These houses not only provided material support to the disadvantaged segments of society but also provided opportunities for their betterment. Addams defined the mission of Hull House as "to create a world in which every individual in society has equal freedom" (Trolander, 1987). The Hull House quickly became a model and pioneered its spread in many countries. This structure also serves as an example of the formation of social reform movements and social changes (Carson, 1990).

The Rise of Settlement Houses

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, settlement houses became widespread in the United States, England, and other European countries. The success of the Hull House encouraged the expansion of similar settlement houses, and these structures became an important part of social reform movements. Settlement houses, especially in neighborhoods with a high concentration of young people, contribute both to the support of individuals and to the development of society as a whole (Carson, 1990).

The Hull House served the purpose of reducing injustice in society. These structures, which contributed to the formation of basic policies for social works, also paved the way for long-term changes in

society (Addams, 2006). Settlement houses ensured the sustainability of support for disadvantaged segments of society, and thanks to the programs offered by these houses, solutions were developed to meet the basic goals of society. In addition, these houses played a critical role in the formation of modern social work policies by encouraging social solidarity in low-income neighborhoods (Knight, 2005). In addition, social reform movements led by settlement houses have led to permanent changes in areas such as education, health, and workers' rights.

In the early 20th century, settlement houses guided the spread of social works not only in America, but also around the world. Thanks to the education and health services provided by the settlement houses, important steps have been taken to solve social problems. The influence of today's settlement houses continues, and the values that form the basis of social works are nourished by practices in these houses (Trolander, 1987).

CONTRIBUTIONS OF SETTLEMENT HOUSES TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The Emergence of Community-Based Social Work

Settlement houses have played an important role in the emergence of community social work. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they introduced a community-centered approach to combating the social inequalities brought about by industrialization (Trattner, 1999). In this vein, settlement houses address the social aspects of individual problems, supporting individuals not only at the individual level, but also at the community level (Muncy, 1991).

The settlement houses encouraged the participation of the public in the process of solving societal problems. The social works in these houses collaborated with local leaders and organizations to identify the problems that would be experienced in society and to develop solutions. With this approach, they pioneered the shaping of the social work profession as a profession aimed at the reintegration of society (Carson, 1990). This service approach provided by settlement houses paved the way for the evaluation of social works from a perspective focused on society rather than the individual.

Settlement houses have adapted the mission of social work to society and adopted a universal service concept of justice. The work done in these houses increased the expertise of social workers towards disadvantaged groups in society and ensured the spread of the concept of social work (Axinn and Stern, 2001). In addition, the settlement houses emphasized that social works are not only about individual assistance but also about increasing social welfare. The mission of the settlement houses to bring different groups in society together developed the principle of "service to the society" of the social work profession (Lissak, 1989).

Finally, community social work-oriented settlement houses provide social workers with skills such as determining core values, developing solution proposals, and ensuring resilience, thus enabling them to establish the basic principles of the modern social work profession (Leiby, 1978).

Vocational Education and Formation of Standards

Settlement houses played a critical role in the formation of professional education and standards by contributing to the professionalization of the social work profession. Social workers working in these houses have acquired solution-oriented practical knowledge and developed community-oriented approaches. Settlement houses, such as Hull House, provided a practical environment for social work education and contributed to the professionalization of workers (Lubove, 1965).

Social workers working in settlement houses have observed societal problems and developed intervention methods and professional ethical standards. They worked especially with immigrants and low-income individuals, emphasized the importance of providing services with cultural diversity, and contributed to the determination of standards in terms of professional ethics. This process pioneered practices in which social work could be realized as a profession with the focus of ensuring universal justice, freedom, and welfare (Poppo and Leighninger, 2010).

The environment provided by the settlement houses for vocational training enabled the institutionalization and professionalization of the social work profession. These structures have led to new developments in the field of social work, expanded the scope of the profession, and pioneered vocational training approaches (Reisch and Andrews, 2002). Settlement houses also played an important role in determining the basic principles of the social work profession. In addition to providing community-oriented services, settlement houses, which have also made efforts to determine ethical and professional standards, formed the building blocks of the modern social work profession. The training provided in these houses helps social workers meet society's needs more effectively (Specht and Courtney, 1994).

Finally, thanks to the professional experiences gained in the settlement houses, social work was accepted as a profession and the function of social work in society was clarified. This pioneering role played by settlement houses in society was an important step in the institutionalization of social work as a profession. These contributions contributed to the development of social work as an indispensable profession in the modern world and to the strengthening of the foundations of professional standards (Trattner, 1999).

ITS EFFECTS ON AMERICAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Socialization and Solidarity

Settlement houses emerged as an effective model of social solidarity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the struggle against socioeconomic problems brought about by industrialization and intense immigration in America. Settlement houses, especially the Hull House, brought together different ethnic and cultural groups, and encouraged tolerance, solidarity, and cultural integration within society (Addams, 2006). These structures support communication between immigrants and the

native population, allowing different cultures to get to know each other. They also contributed to the consolidation of America's multicultural structure and paved the way for strengthening relations among ethnic groups (Knight, 2005).

The social works implemented in the settlement houses aimed to improve social welfare as well as to improve cooperation. Through the various activities provided by centers such as Hull House to the residents of the neighborhood, the effectiveness of social solidarity was ensured, these activities were increased, and the establishment of stronger ties was encouraged (Davis, 1973). For example, the social activities organized in these houses allowed the residents of the neighborhood to communicate and discover the common points of people from different cultural backgrounds.

The impact of settlement houses in terms of socialization and solidarity was not limited to individual representations but also strengthened the demand for social justice and freedom worldwide. The services provided by these structures increased opportunities to benefit from social rights, especially by supporting regional and socioeconomic integration (Carson, 1990). By encouraging social solidarity, settlement houses created the ideals of social justice and freedom to take root in America.

Another important effect of the American settlement houses was that they changed their perspectives on social work. Settlement houses made it possible to find solutions to social problems and increase solidarity with disadvantaged groups in society. This understanding has contributed to the formation of the modern social work profession and made it necessary to provide social solidarity as a professional service (Trolander, 1987).

Finally, the impact of settlement houses on socialization and solidarity helped strengthen America's multicultural structure and contributed to the harmonious living of different ethnic backgrounds, thus nourishing the cultural richness of American society (Axinn and Stern, 2001). This impact played an important role in supporting the principle of "diversity within unity", one of the cornerstones of American culture.

Impact of Educational and Cultural Programs

One of the effects of settlement houses on American society was that they led to long-term social transformations through the educational and cultural programs they offered. Hull houses and similar settlement houses provided programs specifically aimed at meeting the educational needs of immigrants, leading to an increase in the level of education in society (Addams, 2006). Language education, literacy classes, and vocational training have facilitated the integration of immigrants into American society and improved their socioeconomic status (Carson, 1990).

These educational and cultural programs increased the ability of individuals to express themselves and enabled them to integrate into American society while preserving their cultural identities. For example, cultural activities such as music, dance, and handicrafts are held between different ethnic

groups, and cultural exchanges are encouraged (Muncy, 1991). These programs have made it easier for immigrants to remain attached to their own culture and adapt to American society.

Another effect of educational and cultural programs is their potential for economic support. Vocational training provided in settlement houses increases the workforce and allows people to become economically independent (Axinn and Stern, 2001). Thanks to this training, many immigrants were able to move from low-income jobs to more comprehensive jobs and the economic structure of society expanded.

The social impact of education provided in settlement houses was not limited to economic independence but also strengthened social freedom. Education has provided international gains in realizable social rights claims and increased the demand for universal justice. This effect contributes to the perception of education as a social right in America (Poppo and Leighninger, 2010).

As a result, the educational and cultural programs offered by settlement houses have led to long-term social and cultural transformations in American society. These programs have increased the general well-being of society and strengthened the core values of American culture by promoting cultural diversity. Thus, settlement houses left a lasting legacy in terms of education and cultural development in American society (Specht and Courtney, 1994).

Contribution to Social Reforms

Settlement houses were at the forefront of social reform in America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Settlement houses were at the center of social reforms, such as the prohibition of child labor, campaigns for workers' rights, the struggle for social freedom and rights for women and immigrants, and the establishment of social justice (Davis, 1973). Settlement houses made important efforts, especially regarding the issue of child labor. The activities and educational programs organized in the settlement houses were aimed at stopping children from working at an early age and led to the emergence of legal regulations on this issue (Carson, 1990).

In terms of workers' rights, settlement houses fought for workers to work in a safe and fair environment. Meetings and training held in settlement houses allowed workers to learn about their rights and organize. These effects have contributed to the deepening of workers' rights in American society (Knight, 2005).

Settlement houses played an important role in women's social freedom and the struggle for rights. Settlement houses, such as the Hull House, allow women to take a more active role in society and have social rights. The educational programs and social activities organized in these houses supported women to express themselves and have a greater say in society (Muncy, 1991).

For immigrants, settlement houses provide critical support for the socioeconomic adaptation process. The language courses and cultural training provided in the settlement houses have contributed

to immigrants' easier adaptation to American society. The opportunity for immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds to maintain their own cultures supports cultural diversity in American society (Addams, 2006).

The contribution of settlement houses to social reform movements was that they provided an environment in which social justice and human rights could be achieved in American society. Providing educational support, especially to children from low-income families, and defending their rights developed awareness of protecting the rights of diversity. These effects have led to the perception of social work as a profession by combining it with social reforms (Trolander, 1987).

As a result, settlement houses made significant contributions to social reform movements in American society by strengthening social justice and freedoms. Studies on child labor and workers' rights have contributed to the formation of the concepts of justice and freedom in the American card (Trotter, 1999).

THE LEGACY AND IMPACT OF SETTLEMENT HOUSES TODAY

The effectiveness of settlement houses is strongly felt in social work practices and nonprofit organizations in today's society. Settlement houses were among the first structures to provide education, health, culture, and social support in low-income neighborhoods. This approach forms the core mission of many community centers (Smith, 2018). These centers, which are a different extension of America, continue the legacy of settlement houses by providing solutions to social problems through their programs.

Modern community centers also adopt the principle of supporting multiculturalism and social diversity initiated by settlement houses. The programs in these centers bring together individuals from different ethnic backgrounds and pave the way for cultural exchanges. For example, community centers in New York City provide many services, from language training to vocational training, for various immigrants (Johnson, 2020). This shows that the work of settlement houses to integrate society and promote social solidarity continues through community centers.

Social work practices were also influenced by the structure of the settlement houses and continued to adopt comprehensive social approaches. The programs offered by the settlement houses for the community contributed to the implementation of social works rather than individual services (Parker, 2019).

Contemporary reflections of settlement houses can be seen in nonprofit organizations, such as community centers and social works. Nonprofit organizations, especially those providing services in areas such as education, health, social support, and housing, are developing programs for individuals and communities that are inspired by the use of settlement houses (Brown and Clark, 2021).

The contribution of housing settlements to social solidarity continues in modern American society. Programs that promote solidarity among different segments of society continue to live out of the ideal of social integration initiated by settlement houses. For example, in America, non-profit organizations offer programs to ensure social justice and equality, similar to the mission of settlement houses (Lombardo, 2021).

The impact of social welfare and social justice distribution continues to exist today, as an important part of American culture. Social works, especially for low-income families and immigrants, are a continuation of the principles that support social welfare in housing settlements. The support programs offered by settlement houses have contributed to an increase in social harmony by facilitating integration (Smith and Evans, 2021). Similar programs today also show that the solidarity and social justice ideals of American society remain alive.

Finally, the distribution of settlement houses in the American structure continues social work practices. The adoption of social work as a community-oriented profession shows that the mission of settlement houses to serve the community remains valid today. Settlement houses have been a continuing source of inspiration for increasing social solidarity and well-being. This legacy also supports values such as service to society, social justice, and solidarity in the American culture (Johnson and Parker, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Settlement houses have had a deep and lasting impact on American society and the concept of social work. These houses played an important role in immigration issues, cultural diversity, social solidarity, and social justice, and formed the foundations of the social work profession by providing support to disadvantaged groups in society. The education, health and cultural services provided by the settlement houses improved living conditions and strengthened the social opportunities of the society. At the same time, the contribution of the settlement houses to social reform movements was that they provided the ground for the establishment of social justice and freedoms in society. These structures made great contributions to the establishment of modern social work as a community-oriented, solidarity and libertarian profession.

For future studies, it would be useful to examine the similarities and differences between settlement houses and contemporary community centers and non-profit organizations. In addition, it could be investigated how settlement houses can inspire modern practices and how the basic principles of these structures can be integrated into today's social work practices, and in this direction, new methods can be introduced to the social work profession. It is thought that examining the impact of settlement evolution, especially in multicultural societies, will contribute to social work becoming a more inclusive and culturally sensitive profession, and that such studies will be important steps in preserving the legacy of settlement houses and continuing social works.

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