

Abolitionism, Curb Cutting, and Professional Integrity: A Meta-Model for Advancing Social Work Ethics, Values Education & Research

Danté D. Bryant
Sonyia Richardson

Abstract: *This article presents curb cutting as an abolitionist approach capable of organizing and guiding social work's efforts to better ensure professional integrity across its public pronouncements, research, ethics, values, and educational practices. As an abolitionist approach, curb cutting remains unfixed in its application, which allows it to be applied to a wide range of topics and professional domains. This includes but is not limited to, issues of race, gender, ability status, economics, pedagogy, practice, research, and service delivery. Conversely, this essay explores how curb cutting, as a form of abolitionism, can be incorporated into social work to better support the identification and amelioration of contradictory practices and ideological assumptions while simultaneously encouraging the development, implementation, and assessment of potentially more effective conceptualizations and processes.*

Keywords: *Abolitionism, curb cutting, social work education, social work practice*

The Call to Action?

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black male resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was unlawfully killed by a local law enforcement officer (Hill et al., 2020). While this tragedy was initially understood as part of a history of state-sanctioned violence against unarmed Black and Brown citizens, the videoed killing of Mr. Floyd incited a distinct and powerful social and political response (Yale University, 2020). As a result, during the summer of 2020, the United States bore witness to arguably the most significant racially informed demonstration of social unrest since the 1960s. In the months that followed, protests demanding racial justice and an end to what many progressives classified as institutional racism and White supremacy swept the nation (Taylor, 2021).

With the rise in national unrest, social work programs across the country were being challenged, by those internal and external to the profession, to publicly identify and denounce (anti-Black) racism and White supremacy as institutional realities determinant of the lives of racialized populations (Reid, 2020; Sato, 2020; Tedam & Came, 2022). What quickly followed was social work's public identification and denunciation of White supremacy coupled with a commitment to adopt, develop, and publicly promote explicitly anti-racist statements, curriculum materials, and pedagogical approaches (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2022; Grand Challenges for Social Work [GCSW], 2020).

In 2020, the GCSW, which had historically avoided the categorical identification of racism or White supremacy as primary social work concerns, offered its first, intentionally explicit public commitment to address them, while the CSWE (2022) strengthened its

Danté D. Bryant, PhD, MSW, MTS, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC. Sonyia Richardson, PhD, MSW, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC.

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commitments to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (GCSW, 2020; Lubben et al., 2018; SSWR, 2020).

While the sincerity of these commitments has been debated, what is clear is that the legitimacy of their pronouncements will, like all public decrees, be intimately and eternally tied to their pragmatic articulations in the material world (James, 1907/1975; Peirce, 1940/1955). Unfortunately for social work, the same nation that gave rise to these commitments now stands in direct opposition to them. Put differently, just as the socio-political conditions of 2020 provided significant support for these initiatives, the socio-political conditions of 2025 have sought to dismantle them (Bryant & Kolivoski, 2021).

However, no matter the political context, in the absence of a concrete import, social work's most recent proclamations will stand as little more than institutional mantras espoused to assuage professional accountability while insulating social work from the full weight of public criticism. However, if social work is to avoid such outcomes, it must identify, develop, and institutionalize practices that can help support its efforts to more fully and effectively align its educational and professional practices with its ethical and public commitments despite shifting political winds and federal resistance (GCSW, 2020; NASW, 2021).

To support this process, the following presents curb cutting as an abolitionist approach capable of advancing the dissolution of educational, professional, and institutional barriers that inform discrepancies between social work's contemporary vows and its educational and professional operations.

A History of Conflict

The history of social work is riddled with professional and ethical conflicts (Snowden et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2021). For instance, although social work has traditionally assumed the role of advocating for marginalized and neglected populations, it has also been known to animate efforts to suppress and exploit them (Duhaney & El-Lahib, 2021; Gregory, 2021; Snowden et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2021; Yearwood et al., 2021). However, to be fair, the identification of historical contradictions within a given discipline is not uncommon, particularly when judged retroactively. Like all human endeavors, social work is bound by time, space, prevailing ideologies, and the conceptual models of a given epoch (Dennett, 1984/2015). As a result, social work, along with those who enliven it, is circumscribed by the problems of framing (Dennett, 1984/2015).

However, although issues of framing contribute to the persistence of professional and ethical conflicts over time, the reality of genre-specific conceptual limitations does not fully exonerate social work from its history of ethical contravention. That said, identifying and acknowledging these limitations does help to manage certain types of expectations and criticisms. In either case, while it is reasonable to attribute a portion of social work's ethical and professional inconsistencies to era-specific determinants, there continue to be potential points of conflict that rest outside these historically demarcated provinces.

For example, authors such as Duarte (2017), Snowden et al. (2021), and Freire (Moch, 2009) have suggested that one of the points of significant ethical tension within social work

can be attributed to its limited ability to consistently criticize how the profession has situated itself within the existing public sphere (Moch, 2009). According to Kim (2025), and the licensed social work workforce analyses of 2024, in 2024 roughly 41% of social workers are employed by federal, state, or local governments, 33% by private non-profit, or charitable organizations, and 22% by for-profit institutions (Kim, 2025). Conversely, fewer than 4% of social workers, assuming their continued participation in the field, remain professionally independent (Kim, 2025).

While on the surface this data may seem innocuous, when considered alongside social work's commitment to individual and community empowerment, as well as its stated stance on institutional racism and White supremacy, potential tensions begin to emerge

(GCSW, 2020; NASW, 2021). For instance, in social work, empowerment is most commonly understood as the process of aiding in the activation of communities' or individuals' abilities to positively impact or control their own life (Virginia Commonwealth University, n.d.). However, 98% of social workers are nested within institutions that primarily deploy programmatic-based approaches to social problems, many of which have been heavily criticized for being improperly constructed, ineffective, or contributing to creating social dependency on state or local services (Sowell, 2011; Mead, 1986; Murray, 1985; Tanner, 2003). Still, despite controversies circumscribing such programs, social work educational departments require students to obtain between 400 and 900 supervision hours - depending on university classification - which are often obtained via students' participation in the very programs that are being called into question (CSWE, 2024; Mead, 1986; Murray, 1985; Sowell, 2011).

Additionally, social work students are likely to engage in the pursuit of these hours never having taken a course that fully integrates or explores propositions put forth by scholars who, as far back as the 1950s, have argued that social services and welfare programs are not only frequently ill-constructed, but too often undermine acts of empowerment by creating social, cultural, and political conditions of dependency (Mead, 1986; Murray, 1985; Sowell, 2011, 2023; Tanner, 2003).

To the extent to which these or similar ideas have been omitted from full incorporation into course curricula, critical discourse regarding the legitimacy of social work's perceptions, approaches, and participation in service programming remains relatively unchallenged and unexplored. Conversely, how social work situates itself in the public sphere, via programmatic efforts, remains insulated from criticisms that could aid in further ensuring a more ethically congruent approach to social issues. In addition, in the absence of institutionalized practices of critique, social work increases its susceptibility to, and the likelihood of, uncritically aligning itself with varying forms of epistemological hierarchy, and problem delineation that run counter to the professed goals of social work practice and education (CSWE, 2022; GCSW, 2020; NASW, 2021; Mead, 1986; Sowell, 2011; Tanner, 2003). However, if social work is sincere about its more recently professed commitments, then it will need to identify, develop, integrate, and institutionalize practices and pedagogical models that ensure the symphonizing of critical feedback from neglected and affected voices, perspectives, criticism, and ideas.

To this end, this article presents curb cutting as an abolitionist approach capable of supporting social work's efforts to determine, curate, and concretize practices that can better ensure integrity between its public pronouncements and professional and educational practices. The identification of curb cutting as a viable and effective resource is heavily influenced by its tendency to remain unfixed in its application, which allows it to be deployed across a wide range of professional domains. In this way, if properly implemented, curb cutting can play a significant role in the identification and amelioration of contradictory elements within the profession, while simultaneously supporting the development, implementation, and assessment of potentially more effective conceptualizations and approaches to factors contributing to social inequalities and professional incongruence.

Abolitionism as Method

Beginning in 2023, a growing body of scholarly research has examined the possible efficacy of incorporating abolitionist principles into the fields of social work education and practice (Detlaff & Copeland, 2023). However, despite this more recent interest, abolitionism runs the risk of being misidentified as a fixed objective rather than a wide range of potential practices. The tendency to misidentify abolitionism can be partially attributed to challenges related to grasping the conceptual models that underpin its fundamental practices and ideas. For example, as a conceptual practice, abolitionism is not a single *thing*. Rather, abolitionism is the process of exploration, identification, divestment, cultivation, and transformation of society and its social, political, economic, and institutional systems (Du Bois, 1935/2017; Folter, 1986).

As such, abolitionism as a practice tends to resist more traditional forms of categorization which frequently rely on pre-defined sets of established behaviors (Heidegger, 1975/1982). More specifically, the practice of abolitionism tends to embody Heidegger's (1975/1982) conceptualization of methodology. According to Heidegger (1975/1982), a true method cannot be comprehensively understood as a mere technique, nor can it be unthoughtfully applied to a given reality. Instead, as a genuine method, it is inherently intertwined with the process of application. As such, the pragmatic form abolitionism takes, at any given time, can and will only be fully ascertained through and during the act of implementation itself (Heidegger, 1975/1982).

In this way, abolitionism is applicably pluralistic. As such, it can be utilized in both restrictive and expansive contexts. For instance, abolitionism can be applied to a specific problematic behavior or practice within a given system, or it can be used to contextualize and prioritize the system itself as the central issue of concern. In either scenario, abolitionism posits that the transformation or amelioration of the entity in question is the only satisfactory resolution (Alexander, 2010; Butler, 2020; Du Bois, 1935/2017; Karakatsanis, 2019; Mathiesen, 1974).

However, despite the absence of a single set of concretized practices, there are three primary conceptual assumptions that undergird all abolitionist efforts. Clarifying these components and their functions can help support social work's efforts to more fully identify

abolitionist-informed activities competent enough to advance the profession's efforts to better ensure continuity across its pedagogical, practice, and ethical domains.

Abolitionism and Social Change

According to Lorde (2020), McKittrick (2015), Mathiesen (1974, 1980), and others, a social problem emerges when a practice or system fails to align with its intended objectives (Baldwin, 2010; Du Bois, 1935/2017; Fanon, 1965; McKittrick, 2015). This failure of alignment can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Examples include, but are not limited to, a lack of adherence to its justifications, an inability to fulfill the needs of individuals, the occurrence of unnecessary harm, the perpetuation of inequality, or a failure to positively impact those directly affected (Baldwin, 2010; Du Bois, 1935/2017; Lorde, 2020; Mathiesen, 1974; 1980; McKittrick, 2015). Conversely, individuals such as Davis (2003), Gilmore (2007) and Kaba (2021) have argued that when a thing is identified as a social problem, abolitionists are compelled to champion a set of practices that terminate the existing "thing" while concurrently identifying and articulating a more just alternative (Gorz, 1967; Prison Research Education Action Project [PREAP], 1976; Mathiesen, 1974). To this end, the act of abolishing necessitates that the system or practice adheres to three fundamental pillars of corporeality: localized, impermanence, and subjection to resistance.

The 3 Pillars

Localization

The concept of abolitionism can be applied to an infinite number of social and personal spheres (Folter, 1986). However, despite its range of applicability, each instance of abolition possesses a distinct set of characteristics (Folter, 1986). The uniqueness of each abolitionist instance can be partially attributed to the fact that the validity and applicability of an abolitionist method depend on its connection to an identified goal, condition, and timeframe (Folter, 1986; Sinha, 2016). As such, abolitionism requires that a subject be positioned within a certain geographical context and socio-political condition. Void of this positioning, the object of critique lacks the essential attributes that enable it to be identified, evaluated, or altered. According to Folter (1986) and Sinha (2016), to engage in an interaction with an object, said object must possess identifiable characteristics and be confined within temporal and spatial boundaries. This is largely attributed to the fact that an entity lacking boundaries, per its description, is inherently ungraspable (Pageau, 2018). Moreover, when constraints are absent, an entity becomes ubiquitous, and that which is ubiquitous is not merely a social problem; rather, it is a fundamental aspect of being itself (Nietzsche, 1886/1966). Given the aforementioned, the utility of an abolitionist approach rests heavily on the demarcation and localization of the behavior, practice, or institution of interest/concern.

Impermanence

Abolitionism assumes that all social systems and practices are malleable and thus subject to change (Alexander, 2010; Ben-Moshe, 2020; Folter, 1986; Foucault, 1961/1965, 1969/1972; Hulsman & Bernat de Célis, 1982/2023; Vitale, 2017). This idea of impermanence holds irrespective of how long a given practice or system has been in place (Alexander, 2010; Ben-Moshe, 2020; Foucault, 1961/1965, 1969/1972; Hulsman & Bernat de Célis, 1982/2023). Deploying this particular conceptualization of behaviors, activities, and social systems allows the individual to re-classify current practices as one of a multitude of ways of defining, apprehending, and responding to a social concern. Furthermore, assuming this position allows one to move beyond the subject of conflict in their attempts to re-determine definitions, practices, procedures, and ways of engaging (Foucault, 1961/1965, 1969/1972; Hulsman & Bernat de Célis, 1982/2023).

In addition, acknowledging the impermanent nature of existing practices empowers abolitionists to engage in what Heidegger (1975/1982) refers to as *phenomenological deconstruction*. According to Heidegger (1975/1982), the phenomenological deconstruction of existing activities assumes that all routines are socially constructed and thus deconstructible. Conversely, when the individual begins to deconstruct an existing phenomenon, they then become aware of, and more sensitive to, alternative ways of engaging (Heidegger, 1975/1982; Hulsman & Bernat de Célis, 1982/2023). In this way, abolitionism is a *sensitizing-theory* (Hulsman & Bernat de Célis, 1982/2023). According to Hulsman and Bernat de Célis (1982/2023), a sensitizing-theory can enable one to move beyond the perceived permanence of current responses, re-engage with the true nature of the problem, and give rise to new and potentially more effective solutions (Davis, 2003; Vitale, 2017).

Resistance

Although the practice of resistance is generally agreed upon among abolitionists, how it is understood and articulated varies widely across practitioners. For example, according to more antagonistic forms of abolitionism, resistance cannot emerge from nor be nested within existing or established orders (Butler, 2020; Du Bois, 1935/2017; Fanon, 1965; Floyd-Thomas, 2006; Mathiesen, 1974; McKittrick, 2015; McLeod, 2019; Spade, 2012). When this occurs, all actions that violate the established order are subject to being transformed by the current systems (Newton, 1973, 2009, 2011). This inherent subjection renders these efforts ineffective or at best, marginally impactful. In addition, once transformed, or embraced by an existing structure, these efforts, although appearing effective at inducing a new order, simply soften criticism of the old system while failing to demand any substantially comprehensive structural changes (Butler, 2020; Du Bois, 1935/2017; Fanon, 1965; Floyd-Thomas, 2006; Karakatsanis, 2019; Mathiesen, 1974; McKittrick, 2015; McLeod, 2019; Newton, 1973, 2009, 2011; Spade, 2012). Conversely, scholars such as Lorde (2020), McKittrick (2015), Floyd-Thomas (2006), and others suggest that in such cases, what appears as progress is little more than an adaptation that leads to the development and deployment of new ways of producing old outcomes (Butler, 2020; Davis, 2003, 2005; Karakatsanis, 2019; McKittrick, 2015). According to Mathiesen

(1974), co-opting resistance and transforming it into a component of the existing system is a common strategy for obscuring the inadequacies of existing institutions or practices while continuing to perpetuate harm.

To prevent this from happening, some abolitionists argue that resistance must be radical enough to transcend the boundaries of traditional political action (Butler, 2020; Davis, 2003; Mathiesen, 1974; McKittrick, 2015; Myers, 2023; Newton, 1973, 2009, 2011). However, this type of resistance can only happen “...when we break with the established order...” while at the same time willingly turning our attention toward what Mathiesen (1974) refers to as the *unbuilt ground* (p. 78). According to Mathiesen (1974), the unbuilt ground is the place of undeveloped language, ideas, and conceptualizations that only exist in contradiction with the prevailing system. Therefore, the identification and cultivation of this ground parallels the abolishing of the established order. The idea of antagonistic resistance is captured in Hulsman and Bernat de Célis’s (1982/2023), claim that when abolishing a particular institution, the language and standpoint of that institution must also be deemed infertile. As infertile, its successor requires the development of a distinctively new and independent language, logic, and pattern of conceptualization. As a result, the old cannot be permitted to persist, nor can it be conserved within the new (Butler, 2020; Davis, 2003; Lorde, 2020; Mathiesen, 1974; 1980; McKittrick, 2015; Myers, 2023; Newton, 1973, 2009, 2011).

However, in contrast to attrition-based models of reform, writers such as Foucault (1969/1972) and Harney and Moten (2013) argue that the point of conflict between the new and the old is far from impotent (PREAP, 1976). Moreover, the point of conflict with and within a given system is a place of power, life, and thriving (Foucault, 1972). For instance, Foucault (1961/1965, 1969/1972) and Harney and Moten (2013) do not attempt to resist or comprehensively reject the attack of the old, but they attempt to use the force of the old against itself. This is commonly understood as a *tactical reversal*. However, although differing from others, Foucault’s (1961/1965, 1969/1972) oppositional model is not limited to a single mode of resistance, nor does it reject the possibility that some systems must be fully abandoned or ameliorated. On the contrary, Foucault (1969/1972) posits that resistance is a network of ever-changing power relations.

As such, there is no a priori need to stand in permanent coordination with, or in contradiction to, a given system; particularly when either approach may yield more profitable results than its alternative (Foucault, 1969/1972). In this way, Foucault (1961/1965, 1969/1972) argues for the opening up of possibilities, thoughts, and actions rather than their termination. This opening up, or freeing of ideas, is most evident in the quotation, “What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things...” (Bouchard, 1977, p. 142). For Foucault (1969/1972), abolitionism should be the process of expansion. From this vantage, one should not always fight for the removal of the system proper, but one should always fight for the removal of conceptual and linguistic barriers that are used to sustain the status of the existing system. In doing so, the activist can engage in efforts that can potentially open the door for something new to emerge.

Curb Cutting and Abolitionism

Coined by Angelia Blackwell (2017), *curb cutting* attempts to identify and dismantle fundamental structures that produce inequitable and unnecessary barriers that contribute to the marginalization of minority populations (Jones, 2000). The concept emerged during the 1970s among University of California, Berkeley (UCB) students living with physically disabling conditions. Referring to themselves as the Rolling Quads, these students began to advocate for their accessibility rights based on the challenges they faced when attempting to successfully navigate primary campus infrastructures (Danforth, 2025). For example, as persons who primarily use wheelchairs, these students were heavily reliant on the aid of more ambulatory individuals to help them physically transfer between the street and sidewalks. The reality of such not only placed an undue and unnecessary burden on their colleagues, but it impeded their abilities to maintain autonomy by unnaturally restricting their capacity to independently navigate the campus environment.

Although accounting for a notably small percentage of the university population, these students were able to redress the ideological assumptions that contributed to the structural barriers they faced. Put differently, these students recognized that current architectural assumptions of mobility not only produced unnatural challenges for persons with disabilities, but were only one of a multitude of ways of conceptualizing and developing institutional structures. By assuming the impermanence of current practices, the Rolling Quads were able to challenge, resist, and fundamentally alter patterns of conceptualization that contributed to the persistence of unequal barriers to institutional access. The result was the exploration of the unbuilt ground and the emergence of the *curb ramp*.

Today the curb ramp is a taken-for-granted and standard means of sidewalk construction within the United States (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). However, prior to the Rolling Quads' 1970s initiative, the idea of the curb ramp had not been seriously considered as a needed or beneficial way of constructing/organizing the material world. The emergence of the curb ramp can be heavily attributed to activists' abilities to properly assess the importance of mundane and specialized knowledge, assume institutional malleability, and broaden the discourse regarding problem and solution demarcation (Sowell, 2011).

The comingling of the aforementioned resulted in the identification and development of a resource whose felt impact extended benefits to those beyond the initially identified population of focus. For example, the collaborative actions of UCB and the Rolling Quads established the foundations for the 1990s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Blackwell, 2017). Like its UCB predecessor, the ADA followed the assumptive abolitionist logic of the Rolling Quads, and would require, among other structural amendments, curb cuts to sidewalks nationwide. While initially focused on the inequities impacting a relatively small percentage of the population, curb cuts, along with other structural modifications noted in the ADA, have and continue to result in expanded benefits for others, e.g., runners, skateboarders, individuals pushing strollers, shopping carts, rolling luggage, etc. (Blackwell, 2017). This particular type of expanded beneficence is known as the *curb-cut effect* (Blackwell, 2017).

The curb-cut effect is possible because curb cutting assumes that equity is not a zero-sum game (Blackwell, 2017). To this point, it is maintained that eliminating barriers for a single marginalized population can increase accessibility and opportunity for all populations (Blackwell, 2017). Because of the generalizability of its impact, curb cutting has been adopted and applied to other advocacy movements such as seatbelt requirements, bike lanes, non-smoking ordinances, closed captioning, alternative text, and gender-neutral bathrooms. However, despite the continued success of this particular abolitionist approach, there are few documented efforts of individuals applying this practice within social work. More specifically, there are minimal, if any, examples of how the practice of curb cutting can advance social work's efforts to more fully align its educational, institutional, and professional practices with its ethical and professed obligations and commitments (GCSW, 2020; NASW, 2021).

The Practice of Curb Cutting

Curb cutting harbors the capacity to support social work in its efforts to ensure educational, professional, and ethical continuity. In addition, because of its malleability, curb cutting can act as a meta-model that can be applied across a range of social and institutional concerns. However, deploying curb cutting as a meta-model requires a clear understanding of the curb cutting process.

The initial import of the curb-cutting process assumes a three-phase approach. The utility and viability of a three-phase approach is its simplicity and capacity to provide practitioners with a basic structure that is reliable, flexible, readily applicable, and consistent with social work's professional values and ethical commitments. Additionally, given its structural simplicity, curb cutting's three-phase approach can be applied to any aspect of the social work profession, e.g., education, social, cultural, political, etc. See Table 1.

Table 1. *Curb-Cutting Process*

Phase(s)	Activity
I. Planning	• Identify/define curb-cut initiative • Champion, promote, and advocate
II. Implementation	• Funding • Initial labor accommodation • Research
III. Post-Implementation	• Legislation and institutionalization • Extension of benefits

Phase I: Planning

The first phase of the curb-cutting process is planning. While this is typical of all change efforts, curb cutting resists more traditional notions, which prioritize the specialized knowledge of researchers or others located in socially identifiable positions of authority. Conversely, curb cutting centralizes the voices and standpoint-epistemologies of those who are most adversely impacted by the issues in question. By centralizing the mundane

knowledge, i.e., knowledge acquired via direct experience, of those immediately affected, curb cutting restructures power relations (Foucault, 1961/1965, 1969/1972; Sowell, 2011, 2023). As a result, less affected and more privileged populations are reclassified as supportive rather than determinant of the change process. However, even as supportive change agents, curb cutting does not relinquish or lessen their accountability to the abolitionist process. On the contrary, curb cutting re-allocates their accountability by tasking them with efforts such as insulating affected populations from opposition, reducing the affected populations' need to educate non- or less-impacted groups, identifying areas of interest convergence and allies across group types, advocating for change among more-privileged populations, designing plans and responses to potential acts of resistance, and developing consist messaging designed to increase support while minimizing contention (Bell, 2004).

However, unlike many current planning activities, those most affected are expected to not only sign off on all related actions but to define the nature of the problem, its impact, and possible solutions. Once clearly articulated, both the affected and less affected groups are expected to center these ideas and vantages while working collaboratively to identify solutions that can meet the needs of the affected while extending benefits to less-affected persons. The identification of extended beneficence is an essential component that contributes to increasing support, interest convergence, and sustainability (Bell, 2004). That said, it is important to remember that the identification of converging interests may rest outside shared moral commitments, extending themselves into perceived financial, reputational, or social benefits for those with majority power.

The restructuring of the power dynamic allows practitioners to leverage the mundane knowledge and skills of those most negatively affected, in coordination with the specialized knowledge of those trained in relevant areas. Doing so provides the structural dynamics that support the two parties collectively engaging in a process of problem determination, solution identification, and advocacy (Sowell, 2011, 2023). The result is an unrelenting collaborative dialectic of identification, development, implementation, and evaluation of the most consequential, task-related knowledge. For example, as noted in Table 1, the planning process requires data collection. However, the type of data that is collected, the questions that are asked, and the conditions of acquisition should be informed by, and best support the expressed agenda of, the most affected population. However, those with specialized knowledge in research fields should direct the development and implementation of proper methodological processes and analytics.

Resultantly, the data that is collected should serve to reflect the true nature of the problem, as defined by those most affected, while its acquisition, validity, and solution-oriented capacity are emblematic of the specialized knowledge of others. The reorganizing of power relations, coupled with a more comprehensive assessment of what constitutes consequential knowledge, allows practitioners to develop evaluative materials that not only capture the lived experience of the problem but do so in ways that ensure their utility as long-term assessment measures.

Ethical Alignment

Curb cutting's planning process of redistributive power, collaborative strategizing, education, advocacy, and social engagement aligns with social work values of Service, Social Justice, and Competence as well as its ethical commitments to Clients 1.01, Self-Determination 1.02, Competency 1.04, Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity 1.05, Public Participation 6.02, and Political Action 6.04 (NASW, 2017, 2021).

Phase II: Implementation

The second phase of the curb-cut process is implementation. Although building on phase one, the implementation phase shifts from a more antagonistic form of abolitionism to a more collaborative/reformist approach. For example, phase two of the curb-cutting process suggests, if possible, that the implementation, cultivation, and suitability of the unbuilt ground be informed by the collaborative engagement between the old and the new. Put differently, once the appropriate abolitionist actions, advocacy efforts, and allies are identified, advocates are expected to not only implement the determined activities but justify and secure political and social support from both affected and less-affected communities. This is done, in part, by appealing to each group's already-determined political, personal, and social interests.

These efforts are best understood within the context of Bell's (2004) *interest convergence*. According to Bell (2004), the most effective way to secure support for an initiative is to identify, articulate, and engage beneficence from each participant party. However, doing so requires that enacted curb-cuts resist an a priori position of comprehensive antagonism. In contrast to direct forms of opposition, which are utilized in phase one, phase two draws on Foucault's notion of counter-transference to increase collective investment, which is assumed to be needed to ensure the full implementation and stabilization of the desired changes over time (Bouchard, 1977).

During the implementation phase, stakeholders are expected to engage groups that were identified in phase one as potential antagonists, resources, and allies. The intent of this engagement is to advocate and secure adequate support for the implementation of the curb cuts. It is assumed that in the absence of sufficient partnerships, efforts will dissolve over time. Additionally, phase two assumes that the initial accommodations and resources needed to initiate activities will be higher during the infancy of the project. However, the curb-cut process also maintains that, over time, as efficiencies are explored, and more innovative strategies are collaboratively developed and implemented, costs will, comparatively speaking, subside. To this point, it is reasonable to assume that as time passes, and proficiency increases, the initial cost will be minimized while beneficence is extended while old strategies are redressed.

Given these expectations, phase two requires that advocates gather both baseline and outcome data related to benefits, investments, expenditures, and outcomes. This information is also intended to support advocacy and expansion projects noted in phase three.

Ethical Alignment

The process of Implementation, as a means of institutionalization and measurement, aligns with the social work values of Service, Social Justice, Competence, and ethical Commitments 1.04, to Public Participation 6.02 (NASW, 2017, 2021).

Phase III: Post-Implementation

During phase three, advocates work to identify modes of sustainability while broadening the scope of implementation. To this end, advocates should push to develop and promote viable policies, practices, and procedures that can advance the institutionalization and long-term sustainability of recommended changes. The practice of advocacy, institutionalization, and promotion also includes the demonstration of beneficence to the larger community. Properly communicating generalized beneficence can help to engage and sustain the invested interest of individuals less affected by the initial problem. The strength of this practice hinges on the supposition that any curb-cut that can demonstrate a benefit for the larger or dominant population is more likely to be funded, sustained, and proliferated.

Lastly, during phase three, the data that was collected and assessed during phase two should be organized and presented to those who may be affected by or in contact with similar challenges and concerns. This can take the form of conference presentations, peer-reviewed publications, social media, national or local advocacy efforts, etc. In either case, the primary objective is to provide evidence-based processes, activities, and outcomes capable of supporting and encouraging increased local, national, and international participation.

Ethical Alignment

The *Post-Implementation* process of advocacy, expansion, and sustainability aligns with social work's values of Service and Social Justice, and its ethical Commitment to Clients 1.01, Cultural Awareness, Social Diversity 1.05, Public Participation 6.02, and Political Action 6.04 (NASW, 2017, 2021).

Discussion

As a form of abolitionism, curb cutting possesses a set of qualities that can support social work's efforts to identify, reduce, or eliminate ethical discrepancies within the profession. For example, by utilizing cooperative and oppositional models, curb cutting can work with existing institutions while maintaining that said institutions' ideological, pedagogical, and practice-related behaviors are malleable, as are the epistemological practices and assumptions that initially established their legitimacy. Curb cutting does this by decentralizing or disrupting more traditional assumptions regarding who holds what Sowell (2023), refers to as *consequential knowledge* (p. 72). According to Sowell (2011, 2023), consequential knowledge is the body of information that is most relevant when attempting to identify, respond to, or solve a given problem.

Throughout history, progressives and social reformists such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762/1968), George Bernard Shaw (1928), and Karl Marx and Fredric Engels (1934/1942), have suggested that consequential knowledge is most heavily concentrated among the intellectual elite. Interestingly, throughout the greater part of the social work profession, it has also operated under a similar set of unexamined suppositions. Assuming an 1889 origination, researchers like Needham (2011), Washburn and Grossman (2017) have argued that despite the historical persistence of the framework, social work did not fully adopt the principles of client-centered care, i.e., the prioritization and incorporation of information acquired by clients via lived experience, culture, and informal education, until the early 2000s. As a result, for more than 100 years, social work operated under the unexplored assumptions that the most meaningful information related to the identification and resolution of social ills was more substantively consolidated among the intelligentsia, e.g., social workers, educators, researchers, scientists, and others with specialized educational training. In doing so, social work, intentional or otherwise, established a patterned history of muting, minimizing, or excluding the consequential voices of those whose knowledge was not rooted in the academy but in the lived, everyday, mundane encounters with social issues.

According to Hayek (1960/1978) even unarticulated forms of mundane knowledge are “... as much an indispensable foundation of successful action as is our conscious knowledge...” (p. 26). Similarly, Sowell (2023) argues that when attempting to identify and resolve a social problem, the most important decision one makes is “...who makes the decision” (p. 71). To this point, curb cutting offers social work the ability to formally highlight and critique the 100-year process by which it has and continues to determine who defines what is a problem, who makes the decision, who determines what information is consequential, and who possesses it.

Additionally, the malleability of curb cutting allows for it to be deployed at any point within a pedagogical, institutional, or practice process. This includes, but is not limited to, problem identification, program and practice development, assessment, and knowledge dissemination. Additionally, its cyclical nature and demand for proliferation help to ensure that social work continues to assess existing activities, promote effective ones, abolish those that are counter-productive, and identify/develop new ones. In this way, curb cutting is not only consistent with social work’s ethical and professional obligations, but it provides a reasonably applicable, evidence-based support model that can span all aspects of the social work profession.

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Author note: Address correspondence to Danté D. Bryant, School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC 28223:
Dante.Bryant@Charlotte.edu