

# Social Work and the Environment

## Understanding People and Place



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UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE and PLACE

Michael Kim Zapf

#### Subjects

Professional Practice  
Social Work  
Indigenous Studies

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This ground-breaking new work provides a detailed and extensive comparison of how the physical environment has been conceptualized in social work and other professions, and offers a new and attractive foundational metaphor for social work. The author acknowledges the need for greater awareness and action regarding environmental impacts and the book promotes more comprehensive notions of responsibility, identity, and stewardship that lead to a dynamic metaphor of 'people as place' as the foundation for relevant social work practice in the early 21st century.

**\*\*Why is that a profession with a declared focus on "person-in-environment" has been so silent on the environmental crisis?\***

Mainstream social work theory has narrowed the understanding of environment to include merely the social environment, but this approach is no longer sufficient for participation in multi-disciplinary efforts to tackle urgent environmental issues.

Transformative notions of responsibility, identity, and stewardship have been developed on the fringes of our professional community: rural/remote social workers, Aboriginal social workers, and international and spiritual social workers. They must now move to the core of the profession.

#### Author Information

Michael Kim Zapf

**\*\*Michael Kim Zapf\*\*** is a Professor Emeritus of Social Work with the University of Calgary. Building on his early practice years in the Yukon Territory and three decades in academia, his research and writing have focused on social work practice and education in rural, remote, and Aboriginal communities.

#### Reviews

"This book is a must read for all social workers. It challenges us to rethink our traditional 'person-in-environment' practice framework. It highlights the criticality of engaging with contemporary environmental destruction and its multiple effects on people and other species, on our place and our world."

Bob Lonne, School of Social Work and Human Services, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia; National President, Australian Association of Social Workers  
"This is a paradigm-breaking book that overturns a foundational metaphor and confronts the boundaries of dualistic thinking, thereby enabling social work to engage in the significant social/environmental issues facing the planet today. Building from Zapf's rethinking of the important of 'place' in social work theory and practice, the profession can break from the constraints of tradition and finally move forward to respond effectively to the pressing issues of environmental destruction, sustainability, and spirituality."

John Coates, Department of Social Work, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

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## Related Books

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Reimagining Anti-Oppression Social Work Practice  
Samantha Wehbi, Henry Parada  
Reimagining Anti-Oppression Social Work Research  
Henry Parada, Samantha Wehbi