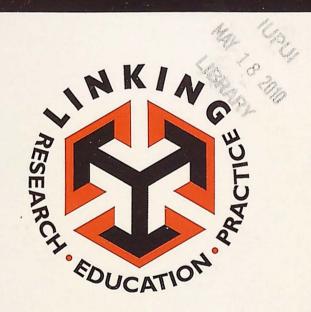# Advances
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Advances in Social Work

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Editorial

James G. Daley

This issue of *Advances in Social Work* marks a significant transition for the journal. Simply, this issue is the last hard copy issue that the journal will produce, as we become an electronic journal. The subsequent issues are all free-access and can be found at http://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork. Past and future issues are now available to any library or person that wants to tap into the rich diversity of top-quality articles that span the full range of social work topics. Instructors can now have full-length articles as easy-access links to our website. No subscription fees. No charge to students. Check us out!

As is typical of our journal, this issue has a wide range of fascinating articles to whet your appetite. Professor Johnson-Butterfield outlines a powerful partnership between a U.S. university and a university in Ethiopia, describes their lessons learned, and the uniqueness of an international educational collaboration. Dr. Hostetter and colleagues explore the development of a learning community in higher education settings as a way to empower students. Drs. Lay and King focus on a rarely researched area of substance abuse, older adults with prescription abuse, and important unique factors to address in that population. Professors Sherr and Jones tackle a neglected issue of the perspective of the family and significant others during the faculty recruitment process. Dr. Epple gives an in-depth discussion of her qualitative study on the potent use of journal writing in personal development and the theoretical underpinnings of this activity. Professors Jang and LaMendola explain an intriguing retrospective study on people in Taiwan who faced natural disasters and the role of spirituality in posttraumatic growth. Professor Levy offers a fascinating discussion of viewing homophobia through the lenses of social justice and lesbian feminism. Dr. Hall emphasizes the importance of better understanding Arab families, while Professor Shears and colleagues describe a qualitative study on Mexican American men and how they perceive their roles as fathers. The issue offers nine articles that cover different cultures, different methodologies, and a span from educational technology to personal growth to clinical settings.

We hope that each reader enjoys the breadth and depth of this very special issue. We also invite other fabulous authors to submit manuscripts and for scholars to seriously think about becoming a reviewer for the journal. We need BOTH to keep this journal going strong. And remember, you need to submit manuscripts or sign up to be a reviewer at our website.

See you in cyberspace!

The Internationalization of Doctoral Social Work Education: Learning from a Partnership in Ethiopia

Alice K. Johnson Butterfield

Abstract: *What does it mean to internationalize doctoral education by working abroad? What does it mean to internationalize doctoral education in one's home country? This article offers a perspective based on the Social Work Education in Ethiopia Partnership, which established Ethiopia's first-ever master's degree in social work in 2004. To ensure sustainability of the MSW program, a doctoral program in Social Work and Social Development was launched in 2006. This article describes the development and research base of the doctoral program. Beginning in the first semester, teams of doctoral students join with poor communities in action research. Overall, these efforts lead to an emerging model of university-based development. Through engaged action research, faculty and students use human capital resources and the educational process to function as "development actors." Some ideas for internationalizing doctoral education are offered. Deans and directors in the United States and Canada are challenged to expand doctoral education within a developing country and to prepare doctoral students to include international perspectives in their teaching and research.*

Keywords: Doctoral education, international, community development, higher education partnerships, action research

INTRODUCTION

International social work is a two-way street. This phrase illustrates that there is much that social workers in the developed world can learn from social work in developing countries (Midgley, 1990). This idea guides my work internationally and represents what I believe should be the ultimate goal of international social work. But, how do we and others cross the intersections of the world and bring each other to our side of the world in ways that promote mutual learning and development? In translating these words to the theme of internationalizing doctoral social work education, two questions emerge. What does it mean to internationalize doctoral education by working abroad? What does it mean to internationalize doctoral education at our home universities?

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   In the history of international social work, there are critiques of Western models that have been imposed on curriculum in developing nations, such as Africa, and earlier in India and elsewhere (Healy, Asamoah, & Hokenstad, 2003). I would like to posit, however, that we are in a new global environment defined by the information age—a concept articulated by Thomas Friedman (2006) as "the world is flat." In a world with fewer trade and political barriers, billions of people are instantly "connected" to one another through the Internet and advances in digital communication. In this environment of horizontal relationships, global collaboration takes on new meaning: International social work education partnerships can be ways of sharing methods, skills, models, and innovative practices without imposing them on developing countries in a fashion reminiscent of colonialism.

   To provide an example of what it means to internationalize doctoral education by working abroad, I will share experiences and involvement at both the master's and doctoral levels in Ethiopia. What I have learned about the internationalization of doctoral education has been learned through this practice. My thoughts are based particularly on my work and that of my colleagues at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Graduate School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia through our university-to-university partnership. Based on a formal agreement committing our two universities to joint efforts in teaching, service, and research, we envisioned that our partnership could become a "development actor." Holding fast to the idea that international social work is a two-way street, we imagined that the major efforts of our development, which occurred through our partnership, would occur *in* Ethiopia. Over time, its deliverable products—new degree granting programs, a professional workforce, and applied research—together would build the overall capacity of the host country to deal more adequately with its social and health problems.

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA PARTNERSHIP (PROJECT SWEEP)

The story starts with an e-mail message inviting me to travel to Ethiopia with a group of medical faculty. In May 2001, I went to Ethiopia as a member of a delegation led by former Ambassador to Ethiopia David H. Shinn. The purpose of our visit was to identify specific needs and opportunities for collaboration with university and government officials and leaders of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in community health and social service delivery (Shinn, 2001). I was particularly interested in the role of social work in Ethiopia. What was the need for social work? Did the profession exist? I found that the previous military regime had ended social work education. Prior to 1976, there was a vibrant school of social work offering a bachelor's degree. Some 30 years later, only a remnant of social work education remained. Two former deans, Dr. Seyoum Gebre Selassie and Dr. Andargatchew Tesfaye, both whom received their Ph.D. in social work and sociology from the University of Michigan in the early 1970s, had "hidden" six courses in macro social work within the undergraduate curriculum at Addis Ababa University (AAU). In the practice field, less than 50 social workers with bachelor's degrees remained where they had practiced social work in Ethiopia for approximately the last 30. Although most were ending their careers through retire-

ment and several were recently deceased, these social workers were leaders in NGOs and had mentored many graduates of sociology in the ways of social work. Also, Drs. Seyoum and Andargatchew, and a few younger colleagues in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, had successfully placed the development of a master's degree in social work in the University's five-year strategic plan. While a goal, there was little or no capacity to actually develop such a program.

Together, we wrote a proposal for seed funds to Higher Education for Development (HED), the intermediary organization established in 1992 as the Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development (ALO). HED assists the nation's six major higher education associations in partnering with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). HED has funded more than 250 university-to-university partnerships over the past five years, from education, law, agriculture, and other disciplines, but we were the first social work program to receive funding. The Jane Addams College received $99,000 to partner with Addis Ababa University to establish Ethiopia's first-ever master's degree in social work. Through the Social Work Education in Ethiopia Partnership (Project SWEEP), we completed an assessment of needs and planning, curriculum development and faculty exchange, and program development, including syllabi and teaching materials [http://www.aboutsweep.org]. A five-year Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the two universities to collaborate in teaching, research, and service.

In developing the new master's degree curriculum, we aligned it with the "Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training" (IASSW, 2004). The curriculum addresses Ethiopia's current and emerging health and social needs by emphasizing engaged research and community-based services that focus on poverty reduction. The new graduate degree prepares professional social workers to manage community-based services and develop new programs in the areas of health, child welfare, and community development. Specific courses focus on community practice, social mobilization, food security, and migration; poverty and gender discrimination; counselling for people infected with HIV/AIDS; and extended family support for orphaned and abandoned children. Project SWEEP lays the groundwork for developing Ethiopia's educational capacity for preparing a professional social work workforce. We also imagined that the establishment of the very first MSW program in Ethiopia would be a significant step toward the accomplishment of the Ethiopian government's long-range goal for reducing poverty. The Faculty Senate at AAU approved the curriculum and the new degree in 2004.

The UIC-AAU partnership has been extraordinarily successful (c.f., Johnson Butterfield & Linsk, 2005). An indicator of this success is that AAU decided midproject to begin the graduate program as a new graduate school of social work, rather than as a master's degree in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology. In July 2006, the "first batch" (as they call themselves) of 39 students defended their thesis research projects and graduated with an MSW degree. The "second batch" of 39 students graduated in September 2007, and a new class of 32 students, one-third of whom are women, were enrolled. Applications have nearly doubled each year, from 60 applications to 109 applications to 210 applications in 2006 (third class of students). At the graduation celebration, which students organ-

ized at the Hilton Hotel in Addis Ababa, remarks by the Minister of Capacity Building and Andreas Eshete', AAU's President and UNESCO Chair for Human Rights and Democracy heralded the new program as a major educational development and the most successful international partnership on the campus.

Our experience of success is also due to another phenomenon at work in some countries in Africa, such as Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Southern Sudan. In Ethiopia, for example, the government is expanding technical institutes to academic degree granting institutions and building 13 new public universities from the ground up. This includes expanding capacity at eight institutions, each projected to grow by 8,000-10,000 students, plus the development of new universities, for a total of 21 institutions of higher education. This expansion also includes administrative improvements and quality education. To update pedagogical techniques, the university encourages faculty to move away from a strict lecture format to applied research, class exercises, group projects, internships, and other interactive methods. Project SWEEP is valued for fostering several innovations, including a skills-based curriculum, block teaching for course scheduling, a transparent admissions process, intensive student orientation, an adult-learning approach, and new pedagogical methods, such as group projects and field placements. Our block-teaching method was born out of necessity and from our understanding of adult learning models. Since there were only two Ethiopian faculty (the dean and associate dean with other administrative responsibilities), faculty and colleagues from other universities throughout the world went to Ethiopia to teach for one-month periods, including classes scheduled during their summer vacations or mid-semester breaks. In the first year, for example, four one-month courses were taught each semester.

Another reason for the success of our partnership was the infusion of leadership from the AAU side of the partnership, with the appointment of Abye Tasse as Dean and Dr. Melese Getu as Associate Dean. Their leadership was essential in obtaining university approval, securing computers, classroom space, and administrative staff. Until the appointment of Dean Abye, our project functioned more as a "grass-roots" initiative within the larger university. With leadership from President Andreas, and with Dean Abye also holding a key administrative position as Associate Vice President for International Affairs, Project SWEEP quickly turned into a recognized innovation and center of excellence within Addis Ababa University. This is a good example of how partnerships working at the "grassroots level" can become solidly a part of larger systems when leadership at the top joins grassroots initiatives.

BUILDING CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The success of our partnership must also be assessed by its ability to accomplish two goals: 1) build capacity for dealing with social problems in Ethiopia and 2) sustain social work education at the university level over the long-term. To provide some context to these issues, this section provides a brief overview of the social, health, and economic context of Ethiopia. Restarting social work education was seen as part of the answer to social problems in the country. It was in the following context that we planned the MSW curriculum to build the capacity of social work

in Ethiopia and work to develop the doctoral program to sustain social work education at the university.

The Social, Health, and Economic Context of Ethiopia

Ethiopia faces many problems. The situation in Ethiopia is not unlike that in many African countries. Ethiopia is an extremely poor country of 71 million people. Eighty-one percent of its population lives on less than $2 USD per day. As first exposed in 1984 by cameraman Mohamed Amin, recurrent drought and famine continue to plague the country (Smith, 1998). Since the appearance of HIV/AIDS, life expectancy has fallen from 45 years in 1990 to 42 years in 2001. Approximately three million people have HIV/AIDS, the third largest number of any country in the world. An estimated 1.2 million Ethiopian children have been orphaned. "Orphans in Africa suffer recurrent psychological trauma, starting with the illness and death of their parents, followed by cycles of poverty, malnutrition, stigma, exploitation, and often, sexual abuse. Experiencing this, orphans are at risk of developing antisocial behavior patterns that can endanger community and national development" (Matshalaga & Powell, 2002, p. 185-186). Impoverished grandparents care for many of these orphans, but as their numbers of grandparents decline, child-headed households are becoming more common. Child-headed households are a great risk, because of their limited economic capacity, gender inequality, prostitution, and drug and alcohol abuse.

In part, these problems result from more than 30 years of war with Eritrea, which consumed the country's resources. Similar to countries in Eastern and Central Europe ruled by Communist or totalitarian regimes, Ethiopia was ruled by a military regime prior to the 1990s. About the same time that the Berlin Wall fell and revolutions occurred in former Communist-bloc countries, Ethiopia changed to a democratic government in 1991. The country is making progress towards a market economy through its Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), which gives regional states the responsibility to plan and implement the delivery of health and other human services. In terms of human development, Ethiopia's reform and decentralization program has made progress:

- Gross school enrollment increased from 33% in 1990 to 64% in 2000 to 93% in 2005.

- GDP per capita grew from an average 5.4% in 2000 to 8.7% in 2005.

- Infant mortality decreased from 128 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 92 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 80 per 1,000 live births in 2005 (World Bank, 2007).

These improvements indicate a good context for development, even though improvement has not been uniform and disparities have widened in different regions of Ethiopia between urban and rural areas and among various groups of the population. The high-risk groups who are less able to take advantage of democratization and economic growth are the large numbers of people living in poverty, including women and children, the elderly, the disabled, and the handicapped.

From the perspective of higher education, Ethiopia has lacked the professional infrastructure to address the problems discussed above. Thus, for many years,

attempts to build a professional workforce meant sending people overseas for advanced degrees and training. Sending students to graduate programs in other countries does not build the capacity of local universities. This approach has proved at times to be disastrous, because of the high cost of education at overseas sites and the "brain drain" or "brain bleed," as some have called it. Doctoral students who study abroad too often remain there, and the resultant expatriate loss further reduces the opportunity for the country to build its own cadre of doctoral-trained faculty. The statistics are staggering. A survey at Addis Ababa University shows that 400 of 600 graduates who went for further study in the United States and Europe did not return to Ethiopia. Two out of 10 doctors from Addis Ababa University's medical faculty returned. Only 20% of the graduates of sociology and social administration who went for further study returned, and most were anthropologists who have a rich context for their work in Ethiopia. Although the Department sent several graduates abroad to obtain advanced degrees in social work in the late 1990s, none returned to provide leadership for developing the master's degree, as outlined in the University's strategic plan (Getu, 2005).

The Ph.D. Program

From the beginning of Project SWEEP, sustainability was an underlying concern of our planning team. "Sustainability is built on the capacity of the faculty." Those words by Professor Seyoum are etched in my mind and, from that point, our team's unspoken and ultimate goal was the development of a doctoral program in Ethiopia. This became our vision. Therefore, once the master's program was operational, attention returned to developing a doctoral program to prepare Ethiopian faculty for positions at Addis Ababa University and other universities in Ethiopia that may develop social work programs. With David Moxley, formerly of Wayne State University and now on the faculty of the University of Oklahoma, Abye Tasse and I collaborated on a grant proposal that was to be presented to the Ministry of Education for funds to start the Ph.D. program.

Eight students from the MSW class of 2006 were admitted to the doctoral program and hired as staff. Their roles included partial responsibilities for field education, scheduling and logistics for international visitors, student advising, assisting in strategic planning, administration of the Graduate School of Social Work, and so on. Thus, in the short-term, the doctoral program increased the capacity for Ethiopians in residence by about 200%. Addis Ababa University has also provided transportation funds and a small per diem for visiting international faculty, as well as funding for action research.

A challenge faced by the international team who developed the doctoral curriculum was combining their various views about what doctoral education should entail. The two Ethiopian members of our team had received doctorates from France and England; another professor obtained her doctorate in India; I had obtained mine in the United States. The British experience leaned toward individual work with a faculty chairperson and extensive individualized readings; the French experience included lively "discussion and debate" seminars with the great minds of the university; the program in India focused on applied research. My experience at Washington University in St. Louis involved interdisciplinary courses and research practicum. As we sought to create a plan for doctoral education in

Ethiopia, each of us brought our biases to the table. We each hoped to incorporate some of what we felt were the strengths of our doctoral programs; each of us wanted to address some of what we felt were our program's shortcomings. We also knew that the new doctoral program had to address the difficult problems of Ethiopia and the urgent need for faculty. Moreover, from our various perspectives, we sought a way to streamline the doctoral educational process without compromising quality. Our work together became synergistic. We created a curriculum plan for the Ph.D. program in Social Work and Social Development at Addis Ababa University, which includes innovative elements borrowed from our international experiences but which is also shaped by the particular context and educational realities in Ethiopia.

Table 1 shows the year-round curriculum, which includes a menu of eight courses, nine seminars, and eight planning/research units. Courses (for credit) are completed in the first four semesters of study. Seminars (pass/fail), held by the resident or visiting faculty, include four doctoral pro-seminars that critically examine substantive topics, such as poverty, gender, community heath, homelessness, migration, urban and rural development, child welfare, criminal justice, and so on, through multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary frameworks. Seminars engage faculty and students in dialogue and debate to critically analyze the topic of discussion, examine the theory and research base, and identify best practice models and policies for addressing it. A comprehensive portfolio is the anchor upon which the Qualifying Assessment is completed at the end of the fourth semester. Students who pass can move forward in doctoral study. Since coursework will be completed by the end of the first calendar year, students will be able to teach during the second calendar year of their studies.

The dissertation consists of three original empirical papers of publishable quality for submission to relevant journals. These articles are based on team-led action research projects but reflect a carve-out area of independent research carried out by each student. The three papers comprise an integrated series of scholarly publications that focus on a social issue of local, regional, or national importance. The final product, which documents the student's scholarly expertise, includes three additional sections: an introduction to the substantive area of the research, implications for social work and social development, and a summary and conclusions. The Ph.D. program is a year-round course of study; thus, students will complete their dissertation projects and graduate in three years (c.f., Tasse & Getu, 2006).

The planning/research modules became the solution to another problem that we faced in developing the doctoral curriculum. How could we reduce delays in completing doctoral degrees and associated research projects? Without question, we wanted to avoid "credentializing" doctoral students, but at the same time, neither the urgent needs of the country nor the scarce resources of the university could afford extended financial and human resource investment in a few select students. We also wanted to do something different than the traditional process of doctoral education in the United States, where the typical trajectory towards a doctoral degree requires students to: 1) complete coursework; 2) pass a qualifying exam; 3) write and defend a proposal; 4) carry out research and analyze data; 5) write the dissertation; and 6) successfully defend it. I do not know the average length of time it

Table 1: *Ph.D. Sequence of Courses—School of Social Work, Addis Ababa University*			
Year 1: Summer	**Year 1: Fall Semester**	**Year 1: Spring Semester**	**Year 2: Summer**
Models and Theories of Social Change (C) 2 credits	Doctoral Pro-Seminar I (S)	Doctoral Pro-Seminar II (S)	Evaluation for Field Research (S)
Action Research & Philosophy of Science (C) 2 credits	Quantitative Data Analysis (C) 4 credits	Ethics in Field Research (S)	Teaching & Pedagogy in Social Work (C) 4 credits
Action Research Mini-Project I (P/R)	Action Research Mini-Project II (P/R)	Advanced Assessment for Action Research (C) 4 credits	Meta-Evaluation and Dissemination (C) 4 credits
		Advanced Data Collection & Analysis (C) 4 credits	Portfolio Development I (P/R)
		Planning Major Action Research Project (P/R)	
4 Credits	**8 Credits**	**8 Credits**	**8 Credits**
Year 2: Fall Semester	**Year 2: Spring Semester**	**Year 3: Summer**	**Year 3: Fall Semester**
Dissertation (8 credits)	Doctoral Pro-Seminar IV (S)	Action Research Supervision II (P/R)	Dissemination Workshop & Portfolio Preparation (S)
Doctoral Pro-Seminar III (S)	Action Research Supervision I (P/R)	Action Research Supervision III (P/R)	
Academic Writing and Dissemination (S)	Portfolio Development II (P/R)		
Design and Proposal Writing (S)			
8 Credits			

takes for the complete process to occur, but my experience is that four years is a "quick study," and the average time may be more like five or six years. Thus, to reduce delays in completing research, we decided to start team-based action research projects through the planning/research components of the curriculum. These team-based action research mini-projects begin immediately in the first semester, alongside the doctoral coursework and seminars.

Action Research and Community Engagement

Action learning is a form of engagement that focuses on the utilization of existing knowledge and best practices to design and implement research projects that achieve important development outcomes and, at the same time, contribute to scholarly knowledge. Action learning is a central idea of the doctoral program: 1) Ethiopia is addressing serious social issues that require effective and high impact action to ameliorate these issues; 2) the university is a major resource to the country and, through its civic engagement, can create long-term action projects sustainable across generations of doctoral students to achieve beneficial community outcomes, while contributing to a global knowledge base; and 3) action projects will generate dissertation research that can potentially have an impact on the country's national poverty reduction, healthcare, and development agendas. As a core aspect of the doctoral program, action research imbues it with relevance, practicality, innovation, and a linkage between social theory and social work practice. We believe that this action research focus also makes this doctoral program distinctive within the range of programs existing internationally. An AAU doctoral degree in social work and social development is perhaps one of a kind, given this action research frame of reference and ethos of community/civic engagement.

The planning/research requirement of the doctoral program contributes to an emerging model of a university-community partnership for development (c.f., Soska & Johnson Butterfield, 2005). Table 2 shows the process of our engagement with the Gedam Sefer community, an urban slum area in Addis Ababa. Our engagement started with a Community Assessment as part of a course assignment in the MSW program, followed by a small research study that assessed the skills and capacities of 100 poor women living in the community. For their field practicum, three students were placed in local government offices. Later, two MSW students carried out thesis research in the same community. When the doctoral program began, four students selected the Gedam Sefer community for ongoing engagement based on the Asset Based Community Development strategy (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The involvement of the doctoral students through action research in Gedam Sefer has led to increased formalization of the emerging university-community partnership through Action Research Mini-Projects I and II and other Planning/Research segments of the curriculum. Currently, doctoral students are playing a leadership role in developing a large-scale proposal and action plan for asset-based development with residents of the Gedam Sefer community.

The Gedam Sefer example illustrates how engaged research on the part of students and faculty in institutions of higher education, in partnership with local communities and organizations, can work collaboratively toward community change and build social interventions. We expect that the model of community engagement we are developing will lead to sustainable outcomes for improving the standard of living and quality of life of poor households in Ethiopia. Our model is also one means of responding to poverty by extending the teaching, service, and research capacity of a university in the United States and a university in Ethiopia to international development. As such, our partnership envelops the idea that partnerships are more than an exchange; they should exhibit a two-way transfer of

Table 2: *Action Projects in the Gedam Sefer Community*

Timeline	Assignment	Projects in Gedam Sefer
Fall 2004 MSW Student Team	Community Assessment	Community assessment on slum upgrading program: The case of Gedam Sefer community (Hagos, Gessese, Kebede, Abebe, Goshu, Barry, & Yared, 2004).
Summer 2005 Research		Slum housing and income generation: Women's role in obtaining public housing in Ethiopia (Johnson Butterfield, Kebede, & Gessese, 2005).
Fall 2005 MSW Student Team	Community Assessment	Assessment of beggars community in Arada Sub-city Addis Ababa (Mekonnen, Hailu, Bezabih, Nega, Jonfa, & B/Mesquel, 2005).
Spring 2006	Field Placement	Three students placed in local government office.
Spring 2006 MSW Student	Thesis Project– MSW Program	Social networks and communication among female householders (Kebede, 2006).
Spring 2006 MSW Student	Thesis Project– MSW Program	Human strengths approach for sustainable livelihood (Gessese, 2006).
Fall 2006 Ph.D. Team	Action Research Mini-Project I	Take research back to the community. Form a Core Group to work with AAU and UIC in university-community partnership.
2007 Ph.D. Team	Action Research Mini-Project II	Workshop with Core Group on Family Based Community Development (Kordesh, 2006). Discuss university-community partnership. Form a Technical Committee.
2007 Ph.D. Team	Planning a Major Action Research Project	Develop a major action research proposal in collaboration with Core Group and Technical Committee.

knowledge, methods, and practice skills. There is the opportunity to teach and learn from multiple partners. There is the opportunity to incorporate service into practice. And, there is the opportunity to engage in community development processes through action research.

INTERNATIONALIZING DOCTORAL EDUCATION AT HOME

I have some thoughts to share about what it might mean to internationalize doctoral education at one's home university. My comments relate to teaching in the doctoral program at the Jane Addams College of Social Work. As a doctoral program, we have not made a decision to internationalize our curriculum. Yet, my experience with the doctoral program in Ethiopia is influencing my teaching at UIC. Global issues, large policy frameworks, and innovative practices from developing countries can be used to expose students to different ways of thinking about recalcitrant social problems in the United States. Here are some ideas:

• **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (and others).** Child welfare systems in the United States are built on the premise of "the best interests of the child." In developing countries (as well as other industrialized ones),

the guiding principle for child welfare is the "rights of the child." Juxtaposing these two policy agendas will place child welfare policy in the United States in a global perspective. What would a child welfare system in the United States or Canada look like if our policies incorporated some or more of the idea of children's rights? Why hasn't the United States signed this declaration? Some discussion of this topic is included in the *American Psychologist* (c.f., Levesque, 1996; Melton, 2005; Murphy-Berman, Levesque, & Berman, 1996).

• **Comparative Analysis.** Much social work research on poverty seems to lack comparative or international perspectives. Recently, I was privy to hear Dr. Jeffrey Sachs from Columbia University speak. His book, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities of Our Time* brings a global perspective to poverty policy (Sachs, 2005). Can one imagine such a title to a book? Who can imagine ending poverty? This book shows methods of comparative social policy by looking at the nations and GIS mapping of such things as the re-location of the textile industry, availability of Internet access, the malaria belts of the world, and so on. He also features what some countries, India and Korea for example, have done to make progress toward ending poverty. As a macro-economist, Sachs quips about his expertise in "long and short division," while calling for "clinical economics"—a perspective that takes researchers out to the field to examine poverty first-hand, then works directly with the poor to solve poverty from their perspectives, based on their strengths. There is some recent comparative work on welfare and the working poor population in the United States (e.g., Hoefer & Midgley, 2006). The challenge for doctoral education in a global world is to advance policy research in social work to include comparative analysis. A good resource is Rihoux and Grimm (2006).

• **Millennium Development Goals.** Faculty, practitioners, and students of community practice in the developed world have paid little attention to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations for decreasing global poverty by one-half by the target year of 2015. The eight goals of this relatively unnoticed framework range from halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, to ensuring environmental sustainability, from promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women to providing universal primary education. The MDGs form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. Sachs and UN Secretary Kofi Annan are working with some villages in Africa to see what it takes to meet the MDGs. What does it take for a village community to get out of extreme poverty, to position itself on the lowest rung of the economic ladder? Early findings indicate the following: medicine, a truck, one Internet hook-up, fertilizer, and bed nets. Bed nets treated with insecticide last for five years and cost fifty cents per person. They will prevent half of the malaria cases each year. One dollar will provide three days of malaria treatment for each infected person. Just one day of the U.S. military budget ($150 billion) will buy bed nets for all of Africa for five years. We could extrapolate this kind of thinking to community development efforts in communities with extreme poverty in the developed world.

- **Community Development.** As a planned approach to improving the living conditions of poor and vulnerable populations around the world, community development responds to diverse global contexts. In the developing world, conditions of abject poverty noticeably require comprehensive and interdisciplinary approaches that include economic development, community participation, self-help, community organizing, capacity building, and so on from many disciplines and modes of intervention (Johnson Butterfield & Chisanga, in press; Johnson Butterfield & Korazim-Korosy, 2007). Creative efforts also seem to emerge in the developing world in an environment where less is sometimes more: there are less supports, but there may also be fewer barriers to getting things done by mobilizing human resources. Evidence from promising models and methods of community development include, among others, the effects of participatory asset-based approaches to alleviating poverty (O'Leary, 2006), the evidenced-based Rapid-Results Approach [http://www.rapidresults.org/], and community conversations (Gebre & Admassie, 2005).

- **Action Research, Measurement, and Evaluation.** Action research designs combine quantitative and qualitative methods (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Action research is also applicable to larger scale efforts at the community level, which are designed to foster participation, empower individuals, and so on. Providing doctoral students with methods applicable to larger systems should be a part of doctoral research training, so that within these larger systems, smaller studies can assess individual and group outcomes with particular measures at the psychosocial level. There is much work to be done by the World Bank in measuring empowerment (Narayan, 2005; Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006) and one can suppose that the international community is far ahead of our ability in social work to define and measure empowerment. Action research methods also teach teamwork and collaboration in research. By exposing our doctoral students to solid methods in action research, we can prepare them for team collaboration in research as junior faculty of the future.

My last comment presents challenges to deans and directors of doctoral education in social work. What would doctoral education look like if these two things happened?

- **Expand Doctoral Education Within a Developing Country.** The first challenge is for each doctoral program in the United States and Canada to become involved in expanding doctoral education *within* a developing country. This does not mean educating international students in doctoral programs at our home universities with the assumption that they plan to return to their homelands after completing their doctoral degrees. The partnership idea described in this article is just one of many potential and possible ways that doctoral programs contribute to building faculty capacity abroad. Higher Education for Development (HED) continues to provide USAID funding for such partnerships [http://www.hedprogram.org]. Online courses or other distance learning methods could be used to share doctoral courses

and faculty from one country to another. These models represent a move within universities as a whole to "globalize" their systems in what is becoming a national movement towards globalizing the campus. For example, since the mid-1990s, a number of large universities have opened new campuses in other countries, particularly India, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, with new growth occurring in China, India, and Central Asia. These branch campuses move beyond a place to send students for study abroad but are designed to educate the population from the host country (MacBurnie & Ziguras, 2005). Social work doctoral education should be at the forefront and lead the way toward internationalizing the profession.

- **Preparing Doctoral Students for International Work.** Internationalizing doctoral social work education in the United States and Canada would mean that each new recipient of the degree is well prepared to include international perspectives in his or her teaching and research. By internationalizing doctoral education, can we break out of the old paradigm that cautions our junior faculty not to pursue international work until they get tenure? Can the new paradigm be that those junior faculty who are involved internationally in their research and service are *more competitive* in the job market and tenure review processes? Can we imagine a world of social work faculty and researchers with doctorate degrees who are involved in the reality of the global world in some way? This does not mean that everyone has to travel abroad. We know, for example, that the Internet can put us in direct contact with the world. The world is flat. Comparative policies can be taught in the classroom. Learning from innovative practices in other countries has the potential to inform the profession, its current methods, and standards. Scholarship can build on and help build the best practices—not only in our home countries—but in those countries throughout the world that share our professional work.

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The Transformative Power of a Learning Community

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Abstract: *Recently, higher education has focused on "learning communities." This study examines a process in which students create expectations for their community of learners. The expectations provide the basis for assessment of students and the program. Across three cohorts, common themes arise. The major themes from students' expectations of faculty are that faculty should be organized, use a variety of teaching methods, and provide mentoring. Students primarily want their peers to participate actively and constructively in class, have academic honesty, and contribute to class in a civil, respectful manner. Study findings indicate that students are empowered in finding their collective voice and holding each other accountable for classroom community. Using the transformative power of a learning community to improve both student classroom behaviors and faculty teaching appears to be a promising practice.*

Keywords: Learning communities, assessment, program improvement

Excellence in education is a goal of social work educators (BPD, 2005; CSWE, 2005) and understanding ways in which social work programs can provide students with the strongest learning experience is an ongoing challenge. Evidence indicates that student engagement affects learning outcomes (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005). In determining how to engage students, teachers must consider the culture within a classroom and how to promote learning within it.

Concurrent with the focus on student engagement, social work faculty are called upon to utilize more assessment in their work, in part due to accreditation standards (CSWE, 2001). The current study presents a process that addresses the issues of engagement and assessment. In this process, students brainstormed expectations for faculty, their peers, and themselves for the academic year. The group process engendered consensus among faculty and students about mutual expectations for participation in a community of learners. These expectations were writ-

ten in the form of an agreement between faculty and students. At the end of the academic year, an assessment tool was used to understand students' perceptions of how well the expectations in the community of learners' agreement were met. Findings indicate there are core elements that are important aspects of a learning community and that students are able to discern whether or not these objectives are being met.

One focus of this paper is to describe the process of creating a community of learners. Another focus is to identify core elements that students value in their learning communities, and, finally, to posit how faculty can use students' self- and program assessments in a way that will transform a classroom into a true learning community. It may be that the learning community develop an assessment process that is described here, which can be useful to other faculty who are hoping to collaborate with students, and build community in the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of the learning community has been promoted in recent years. In a national survey on college student engagement, Kuh (2002) found that educational effectiveness was enhanced when students were part of a learning community. College classrooms are a social environment, and students' cognitive understanding and personal construction of knowledge depend on relations with others (Fung, 2004; Richardson & Swan, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Faculty who create a safe environment for a learning community in the classroom help students take risks and collaborate authentically (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998). Research illustrates the importance of students' perception that they are members of a community in order to collaborate and learn (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 2002; Wegerif, 1998).

Barab and Duffy (2000) describe *community* as providing members with shared goals and culture, a shared feeling of being part of a greater whole, the ability to negotiate meaning, and the ability to reproduce the community through new members (p. 37). Mutual support among students or "communities of learners," (Pringle, 2002) has long been considered beneficial in social work education (Randolph & Krause, 2002; Wulff, Nyquist, & Abbott, 1987). In a qualitative study, Wegerif (1998) found that students' sense of community affected their success in the course. Understanding what is meant by *community* can be challenging, as researchers do not always provide a definition of community in their work (Jones, 1995; Gunawardena, 1995; Reid, 1995; Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 1999; Swan, 2002; Tu & McIsaac, 2002). Community has been described as shared experiences in which both individual and group needs are met, either linked to a place and time but also transcending place and time (Brueggemann, 2002). Rovai (2002) describes community as a group of individuals interacting and connecting with each other either through formal or informal organizations. The presence of experienced community members provides the learning context for new members as they enter. Teachers can engage students in a process of mutually negotiating the norms and values of the learning community (Pringle, 2002).

Empowering students to establish the criteria for designing and assessing their learning community has its theoretical foundation in constructivism. The per-

spective supported by constructivism states that the instructor is a facilitator and the learner is an active constructor in knowledge creation (Bruner, 1996; Dewey, 1916; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998; Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, the recently popular concept of the "guide on the side" encourages increased inter-action among students, with the teacher providing consultation as needed (Huang, 2002; King, 1993).

Students are almost always given the opportunity to assess their faculty on formative and summative evaluations, based on pre-determined criteria. Self-assessment by students, while used in social work education, appears to be based on standard measurement tools, such as might be used for students to assess their skills in the field (University of St. Francis, 2005). While both forms of assess-ment produce valuable information, they do not contribute to empowering the student to become the "maker of history" (Freire, 1998, p. 55). If one agrees with Freire that teaching does not consist simply of the teacher's planting knowledge in the student's garden, one may be interested in learning from students what are their criteria for assessing their learning community. Yet, there is less written in the social work education literature about the method of students' establishing their own criteria and evaluating both faculty and themselves on the basis of these criteria. Further, having students self-assess is a skill they may have to do professionally, since giving and receiving feedback is a vital part of social work practice (Meldrum, 2002). The study presents the results of a community-build-ing exercise in which three cohorts of students create the assessment standards and later use the standards to assess faculty and their peers. At issue is finding the answers to two research questions:

1) What do students value from faculty and peers in their learning commu-nity?

2) How can faculty use students' self- and program assessments to increase student learning?

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTING THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

In three consecutive years, faculty from a small Midwestern BSW program invit-ed students to participate in setting their expectations for faculty, their peers, and themselves, during the August incoming student orientation. Faculty explained that the students would create expectations for a community of learners and that these expectations would become the basis for evaluating both the faculty and students during the junior and senior academic years.

The process involved dividing the students into small groups, each with a fac-ulty member participating. The faculty invited the students to think about what types of learning experiences and environment would make for a successful semester. The small groups were asked to brainstorm and record the expectations they hold for themselves, their peers, and their faculty. Additionally, the students were asked to think about how both the faculty and students could assist in cre-ating a strong learning environment. Issues, such as civility, being prepared for class, academic honesty, group work issues, attendance, and participation were also discussed in the process. The following are some examples of prompts used by faculty in the discussion:

- Describe what makes an ideal learning experience for you.
- What is a pet peeve that you have in the classroom?
- What is something you really find helpful for your learning?
- What is it like for you when _____ (people come late to class, most of the students have not done the reading for the day, etc.)?
- How do you want conflict or disagreements handled?
- What boundaries do you want?

After about 20 minutes of discussion, the small groups returned to the whole-group format. Each student group shared what they had written and all the ideas were compiled on newsprint. Then, the faculty led a process to combine similar ideas and group differing concepts, ending with a group consensus. The final agreed upon list of expectations for faculty, students, and group work was re-distributed and re-visited during the academic year. At the end of each semester, the faculty provided the students with a survey tool based on the community of learners' stated expectations, using a Likert scale for responses. Examples of survey items are:

- Faculty will:
  - Use life experience, real-life examples.
  - Use a variety of teaching styles—with activities, lectures, and discussions.
  - Be flexible with due dates if students, in general, are having problems.
- Students will:
  - Participate/interact in class.
  - Be supportive, rather than competitive.
  - Respect others' diverse opinions.

METHOD OF EVALUATING THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Participants

The students were invited to evaluate their learning community in their junior year. Overall, 62 of 68 students in three cohorts completed the survey, for a response rate of 91%. Demographic information is provided on the 68 majors overall, since collecting demographic data on the surveys in such a small program could have led to the identification of individual students. As may be expected for social work majors, very few in the potential response pool were men, 6% (5 of 68). Sixteen percent of the total pool were students of color (African American, Hispanic American, and Arab American).

Procedure

At the end of the spring semester, students from the graduating classes of 2005, 2006, and 2007 filled out the survey in one of their social work classes. The survey was developed by putting the expectations the students had developed in orientation into a series of Likert scale items. On the survey, the students were asked to evaluate how well full-time faculty met their expectations, and how well their

peers' and their own behaviors' met their own expectations. The response options ranged from 1 to 5, with the following instructions:

1 = nearly none of the time

2 = some of the time

3 = not sure or doesn't apply

4 = much of the time

5 = nearly all of the time

Among the three cohorts, there was variation in the number of expectations for students and faculty. The first cohort had 19 items for faculty and 16 for students, the second had 15 items for faculty and 20 for students, and the third had 11 expectations for faculty and 22 for students. The survey was administered by a staff member, rather than the professor of the class, in accordance with the university's Institutional Review Board requirements. Participation was voluntary. The survey response rate for the first year cohort was 82% (N=18), for the second year was 95% (N=20), and for the third year was 96% (N=24).

RESULTS

This study compares the results from the survey administered at the end of the junior year for all three cohorts. In order to compare the results, commonalities were found among the three surveys. From the three cohorts, five similar items were selected for faculty (see Table 1) and eight similar items were selected for students (see Table 2). The 13-item scale was examined for reliability with a Cronbach's alpha obtained of .83, indicating that the scale has a good degree of internal consistency. Table 1 presents the means for students' expectations of faculty, and Table 2 presents the means for students' expectations of themselves and their peers. Further analysis of the differences among cohorts on the common items was done through ordinary least squares (OLS) regression testing (not shown here). Items that were found to be statistically significantly different, by cohort, are starred.

Table 1 provides the expectations for faculty listed from lowest to highest in terms of the grand mean of the students' scoring in all three cohorts. Being prepared and being on time ranked highest, and using a variety of teaching styles and providing clear directions ranked lowest. However, all but one rating was at 4.0 (much of the time) or above. Interestingly, students' ratings of faculty improved overall by the time of the third cohort. The third cohort rated faculty statistically significantly higher in three of the five items (although note that, for the "be prepared for class" item, the second cohort's ratings were tied with the third cohort's).

The students' expectations of themselves in Table 2 are listed from lowest to highest, from the grand mean for each item. Participating in class discussion and academic honesty ranked highest, and being on time and using time wisely during group meetings ranked lowest. Interestingly, students' ratings of themselves were lower, overall, than their ratings of faculty. Whereas .07% of students' ratings of faculty were below 4.0, 29% of students' ratings of themselves were below 4.0.

Table 1: *Means for Common Items for the Assessment of Faculty*

Students' Expectations	Means Cohort 1 (N=18, 82% response rate)	Means Cohort 2 (N=20, 95% response rate)	Means Cohort 3 (N=24, 96% response rate)	Highest Rating
Use a variety of teaching styles, diverse media and approaches	3.8	4.6	4.7	Cohort 3*
Provide clear direction on assignments	4.2	4.2	4.8	Cohort 3*
Provide professional, positive guidance when asked	4.6	4.8	4.5	Cohort 2
Be prepared for class	4.6	4.9	4.9	Cohorts 2 and 3*
Be on time	4.8	4.9	5.0	Cohort 3

Note: N for all three cohorts is 62, with an overall response rate of 91%
*The differences among cohorts are statistically significant, at a level of p<.05, two-tailed test

However, most of the low ratings were in the first cohort. Students' ratings of themselves improved overall by the time of the third cohort. With the exception of "be on time," all the statistically significant improvements were found in the third cohort's ratings.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study show that students had fairly consistent expectations for their learning community, from one cohort to the next. It is noteworthy that students in three cohorts reproduced 13 nearly identical expectations for their community of learners. Perhaps the teachers present in the group exercise acted as experienced community members, providing a bridge from one year to another (Pringle, 2002). It could also be that by their junior year in college, students are socialized to expect similar behaviors from both their faculty and peers in the classroom. Such similar socialization could account for the considerable overlap in expectations. Perhaps other unknown factors are operating. However, the consistency in three cohorts of BSW students does lend value to the Community of Learners process as a way to discover what students hope to find in the class-

Table 2: *Means for Common Items for the Assessment of Students*				
Students' Expectations	**Means Cohort 1 (N=18, 82% response rate)**	**Means Cohort 2 (N=20, 95% response rate)**	**Means Cohort 3 (N=24, 96% response rate)**	**Highest Rating**
Be on time	3.1	4.0	3.8	Cohort 2*
Use time wisely during group meetings	3.6	3.6	4.4	Cohort 3*
Engage in constructive discussion	3.8	3.4	4.8	Cohort 3*
Come to class prepared, with readings done, so you can contribute in class	3.1	4.3	4.5	Cohort 3*
Listen to all ideas	4.1	4.5	4.4	Cohort 2
Respect others' diverse opinions	4.0	4.5	4.8	Cohort 3*
Participate in class discussion	4.1	4.2	4.8	Cohort 3*
Have academic honesty (avoid plagiarism)	4.3	4.7	5.0	Cohort 3*

Note: N for all three cohorts is 62, with an overall response rate of 91%
*The differences among cohorts are statistically significant, at a level of $p<.05$, two-tailed test

room. The common items listed in Tables 1 and 2 help to provide information to answer the research question, "What do students value from faculty and peers in their learning community?"

The answer to what students value can also be found by examining the meta themes. Regarding what students value in faculty, several clear themes are present. The theme that had the most expectations was *faculty organization* (referring to providing clear direction on assignments, being prepared for class, and being

on time). The other two themes were *good teaching* (using a variety of teaching styles and media) and mentoring (providing professional guidance when asked). Examining the meta themes of what students value in their peers, one sees that *student responsibilities* and *community civility* emerge. The meta theme of *student responsibilities* has the most expectations, which are to participate in class discussion, engage in constructive discussion, come to class prepared, be on time, use time wisely during group meetings, and have academic honesty. The meta theme of *community civility* entails respecting others' diverse opinions and listening to all ideas.

It may be of interest to note a meta theme was found in two, but not all three cohorts—that of *establishing a respectful classroom environment*. It is difficult to speculate why the third cohort did not include this theme, with possible explanations ranging from an oversight to the feeling that the process they were engaged in already demonstrated an atmosphere of respect.

Another issue to consider in examining student expectations is that faculty might not wish to embrace all expectations held by students. Another meta theme seen in two of the three cohorts was that of *faculty providing a high amount of student support*. For example, students expected faculty to be flexible on due dates if the class was having trouble, to keep in mind that students have other classes, to not overwork students "intentionally," and to provide review sheets for the examinations. It is improbable that very many faculty aspire to overwork students "intentionally," instead, perceiving that the amount of work assigned is necessary to meet the learning objectives. However, the expectation of providing review sheets for examinations may be one that some faculty resist. In short, not all expectations that students have for faculty, or for each other, should be assumed to be adopted by every member of the community.

The second research question, "How can faculty use students' self- and program assessments to increase student learning?" is perhaps more difficult to answer. In the program studied, improvement was found in many of the expectations at a statistically significant level. Over the three years of the study, faculty had been aware of student expectations and had worked on improving aspects of teaching and socialization of social work majors. Faculty discussed issues, such as student tardiness and academic honesty, and worked to educate students for improvement. Discussions with individual professors revealed that they had worked on the following items in response to the students' expectations:

- Using e-mail to communicate with all students between classes to let them know the professor is prepared and to help students prepare.

- Creating review sheets for examinations.

- Discussing the student-generated Community of Learners expectations during midcourse and final course reviews, to remind students of what they set as expectations and to provide feedback.

- Creating PowerPoint outlines for class, to aid in organization.

- Using diverse learning experiences, adding more group discussion, exercises, and videos to the class period.

In addition, when students clearly violate expectations of faculty and peers, the program director conducts a student review. The purpose of the review is to provide feedback, develop an action plan that supports student success, and closely monitor the student's efforts.

It is possible that use of the learning community helped to transform both faculty and student behavior. Such a macro-level intervention would be appropriate in social work education. Through this process, faculty can continually work to examine students' assessments of their expectations, for example, their low ranking overall of their peers' using time wisely during group meetings. Faculty can discuss strategies to address identified issues in student-faculty meetings and implement changes as part of a formative evaluation process. Thus, having student-generated criteria for assessing faculty and students provides programs with information that is both germane to the program and authentic in its relevance (Freire, 1998).

LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this process is that the survey asked students to rate themselves and their classmates, making it unclear in the analysis whether a student is rating him/herself or peers. Another complex issue has to do with students' ratings of faculty. Faculty are rated as a group, which raises questions as to whether some students have one professor in mind or are thinking of the program as a whole.

A third issue is that of the possible meaning of changes from year to year. For example, the second and third cohorts rated faculty as using variety in teaching much more than the first cohort. Only those faculty can know whether the change could be due to their working to improve their teaching styles or if it is simply due to a less critical group of students. If it is due to faculty improvement, that information is worth knowing for future semesters. Finally, the fact that this is a case study of a single BSW program limits its transferability to other settings, but further use of the model in social work education would provide an example of enacting and modeling core social work principles, such as empowerment, client-centered focus, and community development.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Future research could shed more light on this topic. For example, having student groups work independently of faculty involvement for several years, then examining overlap among group expectations, might yield interesting results. The use of this method by other social work programs would also expand the knowledge base concerning the efficacy of student-led expectations. It would also be useful to link students' evaluations of themselves and faculty to a student learning measure to see if there is a correlation. The Baccalaureate Education Assessment Project (BEAP) or a field evaluation might be a good student learning measure.

Using the transformative power of a learning community to create excellent classroom learning appears to be a promising practice to improve both student classroom behaviors and faculty teaching. Faculty can learn what students' value in their learning communities from examining students' expectations. Students' assessments of their community of learners agreement can help faculty deter-

mine what expectations were met in a way that is not always reflected in course evaluations. This has good potential for enhancing the teaching and learning process. Documentation of such program evaluation would be useful for accreditation. Engagement and support in a community of learners contributes to positive teaching and learning. Studies have shown that engagement and support in a community of learners is beneficial, providing a safe environment for learning and collaboration (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 2002; Randolph & Krause, 2002; Wegerif, 1998; Wulff, Nyquist, & Abbott, 1987). It is a potentially useful method to learn the best ways to assess and transform the learning community. Assessment is not just a method of evaluating; it also helps us learn and improve (Battersby, 1999). In addition, collaborating with students through a process of setting and evaluating their educational expectations may model the type of social work practice we would like them to engage in with clients. Social work educators often assert the importance of teaching social work majors to collaborate with consumers in goal development and the change process (Miley, O'Melia, & DuBois, 2001; Sheyett & Diehl, 2004). Practicing what we teach may prove to provide better outcomes for students and consumers, alike. Collaborating with students for self-assessment may help them learn skills they will need as professionals, as giving and receiving feedback is an important professional skill (Meldrum, 2002).

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Late Onset of Prescription Drug Abuse or Dependence Among Older Adults: Implications for Treatment

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Abstract: *Prescription drug abuse and dependence is an increasing concern for older adults. This article describes issues specific to older adults with late onset abuse or dependence on prescription sedatives and/or opiates. The older adult with late onset should not be viewed as having the same issues as individuals who have a life pattern of drug and alcohol abuse/dependence. A chart review of older adults in a treatment program contrasts late onset prescription dependence clients (n=12) and early onset addiction clients (n=104) and outlines differences and similarities between the two samples. Social workers need to understand the specific and changing needs of older adults as they relate to assessment and treatment of drug abuse and dependence.*

Keywords: Addiction and the aged, sedative/opiate abuse and/or dependence

ELDERLY AS A GROWING POPULATION AT RISK OF DRUG ABUSE

The older adult population, those 65 and older, will grow exponentially at a rate greater than in previous years. At the turn of the century, older adults were a small portion of the total population; however, projections indicate that, by the year 2030, older adults will make up 21% of the total population (Berkman, 2006). The growing aging population represents the success of industrialized countries and, at the same time, presents challenges to health care providers (Kinsella & Velkoff, 2001). Like no previous generation, aging adults have experienced increased opportunity for illicit drug abuse and increased availability of prescription drugs developed by new technologies to address a spectrum of emotional and physical illnesses. The advent of both brings challenges for care providers of pain management, addictions treatment, and case management of the older adult.

Older adults, like younger individuals, abuse the same types of substances: alcohol, prescription drugs, and illicit drugs (Shibusawa, 2006; Simoni-Wastila & Yang, 2006). For many years, alcohol continues to be the leading drug abused by older adults (SAMHSA, 2003). However, the last decade brought projections regarding

an increasing concern for prescription drug abuse and dependence in older adults (Anderson & Kerluke, 1996). Misuse and abuse of prescription medications has long been widespread among older adults (Barnea & Teichman, 1994). Older adults take medications more frequently; they are three times more likely than younger adults to use prescription drugs, and use of over-the-counter medications is also a concern (Patterson & Jeste, 1999). "Thirty percent of all prescription drugs are prescribed for elderly persons and many of these medications are psycho-tropics" (Bogunovic & Greenfield, 2004, p. 233). It is estimated that the aged spend "between $2,000 and $3,000 per person per year on prescription drugs" (Moxey, O'Connor, Novielli, Teutsch, & Nash, 2003, p. 140).

Older adults are more likely to use prescription drugs due to a variety of chronic illnesses, thus their annual costs of drugs are much higher than that of others. It is estimated that those 60 and older are taking, on average, five different medications (Oslin, 2000). They are also a group that is least likely to have supplemental insur-ance to cover the cost of drugs, although the still controversial Medicare Prescription Benefit may alter the situation. The annual out-of-pocket cost of medications can be as high as $9,000 (Angell, 2004). The high cost of medications is another aspect in the non-compliance of prescribed medications, which can also be a factor in abuse/dependence. Facing financial constraints can bring about drug swapping, reliance on over-the-counter drugs that are ineffective, or the use of stored medications that are either out-of-date or inappropriate for the illness.

Individuals abusing alcohol or taking multiple drugs are at risk for poor compli-ance (Braithwaite et al., 2005; Anderson & Kerluke, 1996). Patterns of misuse and abuse associated with medications among the aging population include misun-derstanding how a medication is to be dosed or used, use of multiple medications with potential for harmful interaction, and use when it is contraindicated (Barnea & Teichman, 1994). All of these patterns can contribute to abuse or dependence.

The prescription drugs that are most commonly prescribed and have the poten-tial for abuse are sedatives and opiates (Meadows, 2001), two classes of prescrip-tion medications that can lead to addiction (substance dependence). Sedatives include barbiturates and benzodiazepines. The prevalence of benzodiazepine use among older adults is widespread, despite its well-known adverse effects (Cook, Marshall, Masci, & Coyne, 2007). Opiates are morphine-like painkillers. The risk of dependence on these drugs increases with age and with chronic medical condi-tions requiring multiple medications (Bogunovic & Greenfield, 2004).

As the population of older adults increases over the next decade, so will the demands for mental health and addictions treatment specific to the aging popula-tion (Satre, Knight, Dickson-Fuhrmann, & Jarvik, 2004). Likewise, the increase of prescription medications for illnesses associated with aging processes will bring potential abuses.

The past two decades have seen research differentiating individuals who begin addicting substance abuse when young or middle-aged from those who begin abuse of addicting substances at age 50 or older. These studies have dealt primari-ly with alcohol abuse (Atkinson, Turner, Kofoed, & Tolson, 1985; Liberto, Oslin, & Ruskin, 1992; Sattar, Petty, & Burke, 2003). The focus of this article will be those

older adults whose addiction began at age 50 or older and were diagnosed as having abuse or dependence on prescription sedatives, opiates, or both.

SPECIAL ISSUES FOR ELDER SUBSTANCE ABUSERS

Addiction Treatment: Identification and Diagnosis

Identification with an addiction culture may be a daunting task for older adults. The culture of addictions treatment asks individuals to "negotiate both a new social as well as personal identity…[helping] move clients from addiction into recovery" (Matto, 2004). Some may choose self-identification as an "addict" and may experience it as empowering. This is a common practice in addiction treatment. Historically, older adults have viewed addiction as a moral failure, a source of shame, and stigma (Satre, Knight, Dickson-Fuhrmann, & Javrik, 2004). Therefore, the initial task is to provide a complete biopsychosocial assessment that establishes a need for treatment that both the client and family can collaboratively understand. The older adult with late onset should not be viewed as having the same issues as individuals who have a life pattern of drug and alcohol abuse/dependence.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding among the public and health care professionals alike about what constitutes addiction. Accurate understanding involves consideration of both diagnostic criteria and pharmacology (Erickson, 2007). Substance dependence, alcoholism, or drug addiction is officially diagnosed using the *DSM-IV-TR* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) as having a pattern of three or more of seven specific symptoms within a 12-month period: 1) tolerance, needing more and more to achieve the same effect of the drug; 2) withdrawal, a characteristic set of symptoms for each class of addicting drugs on stopping heavy use; 3) taking more of the substance for a longer time than intended; 4) "persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down" (p. 197); 5) spending a great deal of time obtaining, using, and recovering from effects of use; 6) giving up important "social, occupational, or recreational activities" (p. 197) because of use; 7) continuing use despite having frequent physical or psychological problems related to use (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Loss of control of use (symptoms 3 and 4) and psychosocial factors (symptoms 5, 6, and 7) indicate that the use of the substance is taking over the individual's life. It would be theoretically possible for an individual to meet criteria for three symptoms with any three of these five symptoms (i.e., without tolerance and withdrawal symptoms). Conversely, tolerance and withdrawal, alone, do not meet criteria for three symptoms. Older adults having abuse or dependence on sedatives or opiates may fall into this grouping.

Withdrawal symptoms from sedatives are medically dangerous as well as distressing. Opiate withdrawal is extremely unpleasant, including having generalized pain. Tolerance and withdrawal, alone, are simply pharmacologic properties of long-term use of moderate doses of sedatives and opiates. What appears to be "drug-seeking behavior" might simply be the result of an individual's attempts to stop medication and finding it produces painful and distressing symptoms. This, in turn, can result from long-term prescription use without careful follow-up and

failure to explain the nature of the medication to the individual. Pohl (2004) noted that, what is frequently viewed as "drug-seeking" behavior, is often a reflection of poor pain management, and typical addiction is characterized by deviant behaviors. These behaviors may not be typical of this late onset population.

Chronic Pain and Management

Chronic pain is another concern for the older adult and, particularly, proper management of chronic pain. Benzodiazepines are inadequate in treating pain despite the evidence that between 40% and 60% of those struggling with chronic pain are prescribed these medications (Kranzler & Ciranulo, 2005). Analgesics, opiates, and non-opiates are the most commonly prescribed pain medications, and older adults are most likely to have prolonged use. Studies suggest that even low-dosage, long-term use of opiates can produce tolerance or dependence (Edwards & Salib, 2001). Individuals with chronic pain, regardless of addictive disorders, experience pain in the same way as others and must be treated aggressively with appropriate pain management (Pohl, 2004). A tension exists between addiction treatment and pain management.

Addiction treatment providers tend to focus on abstinence from all addicting substances, including opiates, while pain treatment professionals focus on relief of pain using aggressive medication prescription with less concern about addiction. Both want to alleviate problems for the client and are challenged by the issues of pain and addiction. Assessment of pain, especially in individuals with a history of or current diagnosis of substance dependence, is complex.

"Pain is experienced and perceived by an individual with an addictive disorder in just the same way it is experienced and perceived by healthy non-addicted patients" (Pohl, 2004, p. 121). In any individual with chronic pain, it is important that careful medical, psychiatric, and substance dependence evaluation be administered and all illnesses be treated. Multiple modalities for the relief of pain, including non-pharmacologic means, should be employed in collaborating with an individual in order to find out what works or does not work. Non-pharmacologic therapies include: psychotherapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, hypnosis, acupuncture, non-addicting medications, meditation, and others (Gunderson & Stimmel, 2004). Ongoing assessment, frequent contact with the client, and modification of treatment plans as indicated, prevents the kinds of problems faced by this special population of aging adult.

Chronic Illnesses

Many older adults struggle with chronic illnesses and pain associated with aging. Chronic illness and pain may be exacerbated by abuse and dependence (Finlayson & Hofmann, 2002). Addiction treatment providers must engage these clients on behalf of their health benefits and costs. The treatment process must work to build an understanding that recovery management can provide the client with valuable tools that can assist in their autonomy and quality of life without their having to identify as an "addict."

Many see older adults as a population with sleep problems, chronic pain, and therefore in need of sedatives and analgesics; however, use and certainly abuse of

these drugs adds to morbidity and dysfunction of older adults (Finlayson & Hofmann, 2002). Misuse, abuse, and dependence on sedatives and opiates used in combinations with alcohol create the "potential for serious consequences, such as falls, automobile accidents, or even death" (Pringle, Ahern, Heller, Gold, & Brown, 2005, p. 1930). Alcohol use, even in small amounts, further compromises the individual's health, that is, using multiple medications (Pringle et al., 2005).

Older adults are likely to be under medical care for chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, diabetes mellitus, and arthritis (Finlayson, 1997). Adults in addiction treatment often have co-morbidity with diseases associated with addictions, such as COPD, liver disease, and peptic ulcers. In that this group of older adults with late onset does not have a long history of substance dependence, it is quite possible that they may not be likely to struggle with chronic illnesses associated with addiction as do populations that have a long history of abuse or dependence on alcohol and illicit drugs. Due to the late onset, there is no prolonged use that is associated with liver disease, peptic ulcers, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Co-occurring Disorders in Older Adults

Studies have established that mood and anxiety disorders develop independent of addiction and they are the most common psychiatric disorders (Grant et al., 2004). Stromwall and Larson (2004) found that women with co-occurring substance abuse are seven times more likely than men to be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and are significantly more likely to have anxiety and mood disorders. This points to a strong need for a thorough psychosocial assessment of older women, as well as integrated treatment, addiction, and mental illness treatment, simultaneously.

Women, and in particular, older women, are less likely to be screened and diagnosed for alcohol and drug abuse/dependence, and they are more likely to have a psychiatric diagnosis and also increased use of prescription drugs (Satre, Mertens, & Weisner, 2004). The use of sedatives is more prevalent among women (Bogunovic & Greenfield, 2004). Women may be prescribed sedatives appropriately for anxiety disorders, but inappropriately for other issues, such as grief management or the catch-all phase, "nerve problems." The latter are indicative of gender-biased misdiagnosis at best, and practices that do not meet the standard of care, at worst. Older women are candidates for addiction treatment, but their needs may differ significantly from clients with a history of addiction, inclusive of alcohol and illicit drug dependence. These individuals must be assessed carefully for co-occurring psychiatric disorders and evaluated properly for the continuation of psychotropic medication and psycho-social interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral treatment.

Family Assessment and Treatment

It has long been established that substance dependence affects the family, that these disorders run in families, and that families are distressed by the consequences of drug abuse and dependence (Steinglass & Kutch, 2004). Family history is often seen as a predictor for abuse or dependence on drugs and alcohol. This special population with late onset may not present with this history, and this

should not be a variable utilized to formulate a diagnosis or prognosis. However, Steinglass and Kutch point out that "inclusion of the family as a central partner in the therapy process significantly improves treatment outcomes" (p. 405). The family and client working together will serve to enhance recovery. Complex clinical issues, such as substance abuse and dependence, combined with chronic illness, chronic pain, and psychiatric disorders, require collaboration in decisions related to their health care. "Patients and their families are increasingly seeking more active participation in health care decision making as they are faced with more complex clinical choices" (Berkman, Gardner, Zodikoff, & Harootyan, 2005, p. 333).

Ageism

Kelchner (1999) points out how costly ageism is to individuals and society. Ageism and sexism are of particular concern for this group of older adults who abuse or are dependent on drugs. Both sexism and ageism prevent the older clients with prescription addiction from being seen in the context of their particular struggles with addiction and co-occurring psychiatric or physical disorders. Belonging to two groups (elderly and female), which are sometimes stereotyped and patronized, can be costly in that they go for a prolonged period of time without proper treatment. Older adults are often stereotypically viewed as a declining group that no longer contribute economically (Kane, 2004), and a younger population may be more likely to get the attention of addiction treatment providers in that resources are limited. Older adults in treatment may only represent 3% (SAMHSA, 2004) of the total population in treatment for substance dependence, and this may further serve as misguided statistical evidence to support less attention to the older adult in need of treatment for substance abuse and dependence.

Little attention has been paid to this specific population, and this compromises an individual's understanding of the necessity for treatment. These key issues (assessment, chronic pain management, chronic illnesses, co-occurring disorders, family issues, and ageism) are particularly important in assessing older adults who have potential prescription abuse concerns. The initial identification of prescription dependence in older adults can be masked by the context of illness, pain, changes in the family, and stereotypic views of aging clients. Social workers must fully comprehend the effects of these drugs, educate clients and their families, and advocate for medical detoxification and evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

This study was obtained from the medical records of patients age 55 and older who were admitted as inpatients for the first time to a Midwestern non-profit addiction treatment facility in either 1992 or 2002. A larger study focusing on changing drug use patterns is published elsewhere (Lay, King, & Rangel, in press). This study analyzed individuals who were diagnosed as either abusing or were dependent on prescription sedatives and/or opiates.

The aims of the current study were to (a) provide a descriptive summary of the prescription abuse subpopulation, (b) contrast older prescription abusers (n=12) and older abusers of alcohol and/or illicit drugs (n=104) on key factors, and (c)

determine if there were differences in the characteristics of older prescription abusers. The Internal Review Board of a university approved the study.

Charts from a private non-profit addiction treatment facility in a midsized city were reviewed retrospectively from the year 1992 and 2002 for a total of 2,313 individuals admitted to all levels of treatment. Individuals age 55 and older having a single admission to inpatient treatment were identified (N=116), representing 5% of the total admission from the two cohorts. Data were recorded on standardized forms and entered into a database for analyses (Lay, King, & Rangel, in press). This article focuses of those older adults who began using addicting substances at age 50 or older (n=12) and, more specifically, those whose drug abuse and dependence was restricted to sedatives and opiates.

RESULTS

Of the 2,313 individuals admitted to treatment from the two cohorts, 1992 and 2002, 116 met the study criteria, having a single admission to inpatient treatment at age 55 or older upon admission. This represents 5% of the single admissions to all treatment programs at the facility. The mean age of first use for all subjects (N=116) was 23 years of age. Illicit drug users (specifically, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin) were found only in the 2002 cohort, with a mean age of first use of 15 years of age. Including both cohorts, 27% reported previous psychiatric treatment. At the time of admission 34% of the 2002 cohort were diagnosed with a co-occurring psychiatric disorder as compared to only 10% of the 1992 cohort. The 1992 cohort had more diagnoses of illnesses associated with addictions (COPD, liver disease, and peptic ulcer) than the 2002 group. For all individuals in both groups, alcohol was the first and primary drug of abuse or dependence, with the exception of 12 individuals who began using at age 50 or older (Lay, King, & Rangel, in press).

Twelve (12) individuals began use of addictive substances at age 50 or older. This represents 10% of the total sample (N=116). Eight (8) of the 12 individuals were from the 2002 cohort and four were from the 1992 cohort. The mean age of onset for this group was age 61, and the mean age at the time of admission was 69. This sets them apart from the larger group, primarily diagnosed with abuse or dependence on alcohol, which had a mean age of onset of 23. Four of the 12 individuals, two males and two females, abused or were dependent on alcohol. The remaining eight people abused or were dependent on prescription sedatives and/or opiates. Of the eight individuals, seven were women. This represents 20% of the females from the total sample. Only one individual had a positive family history for addiction. Only women reported chronic pain. Four women had a diagnosis of anxiety or mood disorders. This group had a variety of medical illnesses typically associated with the aged: hypertension, diabetes, and cardiac disease. Almost half of the older adults with late onset in this study were diagnosed with a mood or anxiety disorder at admission or during treatment for addiction. They are all female.

TREATMENT IMPLICATIONS

This special population of older adults diagnosed with abuse of or dependence on prescription sedatives and/or opiates represents a small group of individuals who enter treatment for addiction and are in need of specialized treatment. These were

individuals who either self-referred or were identified by health care providers as being in need of detoxification and treatment; however, there may be others treated in other inpatient settings or with poor attention to the inappropriate use of medication. Late onset, age 50 or older, sets them apart from those individuals typically entering addictions treatment who have a history of chronic abuse or dependence of multiple drugs inclusive of alcohol and who often identify themselves as "addicts." This group of older adults entering treatment for addiction, averaging 69 years of age, has no documented history of abuse/dependence in their younger years.

CONCLUSIONS

The older adults with late onset of abuse or dependence on prescription sedatives and or opiates are predominately women, who use alcohol occasionally or not at all. They tended to have chronic pain and did not report positive family histories of substance abuse or dependence. It can be conjectured that these individuals are not only atypical substance dependent individuals, but they are also individuals with inappropriate pain management.

Generalizability cannot be reached from this small sample; however, we are provided with valuable information about treatment implications and further research for this group of older adults. Systematic, prospective follow-up of larger numbers of individuals will be necessary to determine treatment outcomes of this group and to design specific treatment strategies.

Specific knowledge related to abuse of or dependence on opiates and benzodiazepines is paramount. These drugs can cause confusion and unsteadiness in this population, predisposing them to falls (Kurzthaler et al., 2005), another matter of concern, which is directly related to quality of life. Although widely used with the elderly, these drugs account for impairment in functionality, escalation of abuse, and often result in morbidity and, in some instances, mortality (Lantz, 2005). In addition, benzodiazepine withdrawal is the most dangerous of all withdrawals medically.

Predictions for the future are that there will be increasing numbers of women among the substance-dependent population (Grant, Dawson, Stinson, Chou, Dufour, & Pickering, 2004) and that they will present specific needs in addiction treatment (Blow, 2000). Most likely, abuse or dependence of opiates and sedatives will be a primary treatment concern for this population. These are not the "typical" individuals admitted to addiction treatment. This group requires a different approach to treatment than the traditional addiction treatment that tends to be group oriented and, at times, confrontational regarding denial. The use of non-addicting pain treatment modalities, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, acupuncture, non-addicting medication, and support groups focusing on management of pain and disability are indicated in the context of cognitive behavioral therapy.

Older adults entering treatment for substance abuse and dependence are not a homogeneous group (Lay, King, & Rangel, in press). Social workers and health care providers of the older adult must understand assessment of substance abuse and

dependence, management of chronic pain, chronic illness, co-occurring psychiatric disorders, family assessment, and ageism—all important concerns related to the older adult entering addiction treatment. Substance abuse among the aged is "overlooked and underreported…presentation may be atypical and hence easily missed by the medical practitioner" (McGrath, Crome, & Crome, 2005, p. 228). Social work practitioners working in settings with older adults must complete a biopsychosocial evaluation that includes a listing of all medications, historical, and current use, with the understanding that the prescribed dosage may be problematic or used incorrectly. Pain management is critical to understanding treatment of the older adult. Social workers must be prepared to provide clients with psycho-education and appropriate referral to pain management as well as addiction treatment when indicated.

Social workers are trained to view people from an ecological lens, and this lens, including a multidisciplinary approach, is a necessity in order to address the complexity of issues the older adult brings to treatment settings (Berkman, Gardner, Zodikoff, & Harootyan, 2005). Social work curricula and continuing education must include content specific to gerontology and produce research that will inform practice specific to the complex addiction treatment needs of the older adult.

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Considering Family and Significant Others in the Faculty Recruitment Process: A Study of Social Work Recruiting Practices

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Abstract: *One of the most important facets of quality social work education is the recruitment and retention of faculty. This mixed methods study uses findings from an on-line survey of 106 recent (within three years) faculty hires and their (n=24) spouse/partner/significant others (S/P/SO) to determine the degree to which family-integrative recruitment strategies were being used in recruiting social work faculty and the impact with which the presence or absence of these strategies have on retention. A majority of respondents reported that S/P/SO were excluded from the recruitment process. Though the few respondents who felt included were pleased with their current position and planned to pursue tenure to stay with the school, a significant number of faculty whose S/P/SO were not involved were already contemplating their next position. The authors suggest family integrative strategies that help S/P/SO connect with the community may give social work programs the competitive edge they need to attract and retain the best and brightest social work faculty.*

Keywords: Family, recruitment, education, social work, spouse, partner

INTRODUCTION

The quality of any social work program is dependent on the quality of its faculty. Through research, teaching, and service, faculties are responsible for producing and disseminating social work's knowledge base (Frazer, 1993; Green & Bentley, 1994; Netting & Nichols-Casebolt, 1997). Faculties determine how students are socialized into a program, how curricula is structured, how social problems are understood, and how practice interventions are designed and implemented. Faculties, along with their administration, are also responsible for recruiting and retaining new faculty to maintain and enhance their program (Frazer, 1994; Lindsey & Kirk, 1992; Simon & Thyer, 1994).

In an era of tremendous demand and limited supply of qualified social work faculty (Thyer & Wilson, 2001), this study explores how recruitment efforts, which include faculty spouses, partners, and significant others (S/P/SO), may help pro-

grams gain a competitive advantage in recruiting faculty best suited for their program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Work Job Landscape/Literature

With more than 450 BSW programs, almost 160 MSW programs, and 72 social work doctoral programs, there is great competition for qualified social work faculty (Council on Social Work Education, 2003; Thyer & Arnold, 2003). Yet, despite the demand for qualified people, the number of degrees awarded at social work doctoral programs has remained relatively stable over the last decade. In fact, it is estimated that there are three to four faculty vacancies annually in social work education for every doctoral graduate (Thyer & Wilson, 2001). However, while an abundance of recent literature addresses issues, including increasing Ph.D. enrollment, training social work teachers and researchers, promoting diversity, and financing doctoral education in social work (e.g., Ross-Sheriff & Huber, 2001; Tirrito & Ginsberg, 2001; see also Schiele & Wilson, 2001), there is a void in the literature regarding how social work programs are to manage, while waiting for increasing numbers of qualified graduates. Social work programs have vacancies to fill immediately. They simply cannot wait for the future. The immediate need will escalate further, as more and more senior faculty members continue to retire.

Historically, the emphasis in the social work literature has been to focus on the tasks and qualifications of potential faculty. For instance, Harrison, Sowers-Hoag, and Postley (1989) conducted a national study examining the hiring decisions in graduate and undergraduate schools of social work. The article captures the most frequently cited factors search committees look for in new faculty. As one would expect, the respondents indicated that, having a doctoral degree in hand at the time of the on-campus interview, was most important. Other things, such as prior teaching experience, an identified research area, and publication in refereed journals, are all important factors in the hiring decision as well.

Other articles focus on the tenure and promotion of social work educators. Articles by Gibbs and Locke (1989) and Euster and Weinbach (1983) review the important factors influencing successful tenure and promotion for junior faculty. As one would expect, research in refereed journals, solid teaching evaluations, and service to the university were most important, with variations in degree being determined by the type of institution. In addition, Dedmon (1989) explored the effects of junior faculty attempting to engage in practice during their time before tenure and promotion. Despite possible costs in terms of tenure and promotion, Dedmon concluded that being an effective researcher and teacher in social work may include some commitment to continue to engage in some type of professional practice.

More recently, Wilson, Valentine, and Pereira (2002) conducted a telephone survey assessing the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship between newly hired faculty and senior faculty. Their findings suggest that mentoring was quite helpful in increasing publications, helping new faculty get acclimated to the culture of the department, and transition from student to educator. Likewise,

Beckerman (2002) described a faculty orientation group at Yeshiva University with incoming faculty. The article details how helpful the group was in developing a clear sense of expectations, providing consultation in regard to difficult situations encountered in the classroom, and increasing the potential for collaboration on projects.

Although each of these studies (and many others) represents laudable efforts in helping schools of social work recruit and retain quality faculty, a common consideration missing from this literature is any mention of the faculty's family. For example, in a specific article on finding and retaining new social work employees, there was no mention of family, spouse, or partner (Gummer, 2002). Moreover, Pamela Wilson (lead author of the article written by Wilson et al., 2002) states that she and the other authors did not even think to consider the family (personal communication, June 14, 2002). When families with higher levels of education consider changes related to work, however, they are likely to engage in direct dialogue and negotiations before making decisions (Zvonkovic, Schmiege, & Hall, 1994). Moreover, faculty from cultures that tend to value collective social relationships (Asian-Americans, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian) are likely to emphasize family inclusion when it comes to making career decisions (Lee, 1991; Leong, 1991; Sue & Sue, 1990; Yagi & Oh, 1995). For that reason, family considerations become a cultural competence issue that could impact the efforts of social work programs to recruit a diverse faculty.

Lessons from Business Literature

"Let's face it, today's workplace is busier than ever" (Rogers, 2002, p. 2). Great numbers of layoffs have left those who remain in their jobs working more hours. A situation similar to that of social work faculty, with demanding workloads and increasing budgeting restraints, the consequences are increasing amounts of stress, burnout, and higher turnover. In business, the bottom line is presumed to be the production of a quality product that will win favor in the marketplace and ultimately create a profit. To keep production costs low, employers need productive employees to survive. To support the productivity of employees, many employers are attempting to create a working environment that recognizes and supports a balance between work and family. Rogers adds, "A workplace that fosters balance results in less turnover, absenteeism, and burnout" (p. 2).

Utilizing a family-integrated retention and recruitment strategy is one way of encouraging a balanced and productive work environment. A family-integrated strategy consists of policies and practices that provide different services, financial supports, and time for employees to fulfill their family responsibilities (Champion-Hughes, 2001). Specific family-friendly practices include flexible work schedules, on-site/near-site child care, dependent-care reimbursement accounts, homework assistance programs, extended leave care, elderly care, telecommuting, time-off benefits for children's school activities, employee assistance programs, family considerations for travel and relocation, and resource and referral services.

This array of benefits is more than an expression of altruism on the part of employers. Instead, family-integrative strategies are calculated investments with an expectation of great returns for the company. The return is having a business

with employees who are loyal to the company. Champion-Hughes (2001) describes this sense of loyalty as organizational citizenship. She explains:

> Organizational citizenship refers to the willingness of employees to engage in behaviors that help the organization achieve its goals. Such behaviors include helping co-workers with job-related activities, accepting orders willingly, tolerating impositions without fussing, and making sacrifices for the good of the company. Generally, when employers are loyal to their employees, that loyalty is reciprocated (p. 301).

One noteworthy area in business that is similar to social work education is the amount of potential travel. Whether a faculty member moves across country to assume a new position or travels to present at a national conference, the business literature suggests that it is vitally important to think of the employee's spouse or partner during times of transition and travel. One of the main reasons employees leave a new job area is the stress from family members who feel isolated and unadjusted. Likewise, faculty will be less willing to travel to conferences when they perceive that their family is not fully connected in their new community (Grensing-Pophal, 2001). This is a serious issue for human resources personnel, because it is costly to recruit employees only to have them leave due to factors not related to their job. In fact, family resistance ranks as the top reason for leaving a new position after relocating and being reluctant to travel at all. Grensing-Pophal adds:

> Any policy that does not address issues related to the spouse and family misses the mark. If the family is not settled, then nine times out of ten the employee is not going to be settled. For Human Resource professionals, taking the stress out of relocations means a transferee can quickly be settled into the new position and the new home and be more productive on the job (p. 118).

When beginning a new position in a foreign country, the relocation issues for the family are even more complex. Shaffer and Harrison (2001) developed a family integrative model for conceptualizing how employers can assist families to successfully adjust to living in a foreign environment. The model consists of three key dimensions that are important to consider for spouse or partner readjustment. The three dimensions are: 1) How well the spouse or partner builds relationships with host-country nationals; 2) How well the spouse or partner adjusts to local customs and the culture in general; and 3) The extent to which the spouse or partner has a sense of becoming part of or feeling at home in the foreign country. A key factor in achieving successful adjustment in all three dimensions depends on whether the spouse can reestablish his or her identity in the new culture. Another key factor depends on whether the spouse has realistic expectations of what to expect in terms of workload and work hours of the employee. "Companies should give realistic job previews to spouses both prior to and during relocation. This will help spouses accurately identify the challenges they will face as well as the personal assets they can bring to bear" (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001, p. 251).

Research Questions

Several key research questions emerge for this initial study that explore recruitment efforts to include faculty S/P/SO in gaining a competitive advantage in

recruiting social work faculty. First, do S/P/SO play a pivotal role in the recruitment process? Second, do S/P/SO perceive that they play a role in the recruitment process? Third, do faculty members perceive that their S/P/SO has some control in the recruitment process?

METHOD

Respondents and Data Collection Procedures

Respondents for this study consisted of a purposive sample of social work faculty working less than three years in their current position. An e-mail was posted on the list-serve for The National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD) and The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) asking deans and directors to forward the e-mail to faculty members working less than three years. The e-mail included an informed consent form as an attached document as well as the website address for either the faculty or the partner survey. Faculty receiving the e-mail were asked to do the following: 1) Read the informed consent form and anonymously complete the online faculty survey and 2) Have S/P/SO read the informed consent form and anonymously complete the online partner survey.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The online faculty survey and partner survey, which were designed specifically for this study, consisted of three parts. Part one asked respondents if they were with their S/P/SO at the time of hire and, if so, which, if any techniques, were used by their current university employer to include their S/P/SO in the recruitment process. Respondents were asked to choose from the following recruitment techniques used by their current university employer: 1) Providing connection to a realtor; 2) Inviting S/P/SO to the campus interview; 3) Paying for S/P/SO to come to the interview; 3) Providing job search assistance for S/P/SO; 4) Inviting S/P/SO to social functions during the interview (e.g., dinner, lunch); and 5) Providing opportunities for interaction with other faculty S/P/SO. Part one also consisted of three semantic differential questions that asked respondents to assess on a scale between 0-5 the influence the S/P/SO had on the hiring process, how supportive the S/P/SO was in the decision to accept the current position, and their overall satisfaction with their current position. Part two of the survey consisted of demographic items, such as gender, ethnicity, the number of years working in higher education, highest degree, and the type of university. S/P/SO were also asked if they, too, worked for the same university and, if so, in what role—faculty, staff, administration, or other. The last part of the survey consisted of one open-ended question that asked respondents to tell us the story of their recruitment experience with regards to their S/P/SO.

The online faculty survey and partner survey were field tested with social work faculty from the authors' institutions (names of the authors' institutions) to assess face validity. In response to the initial field test, the phrase "spouse, partner, or significant other" was added to each item to enhance the face validity of the survey. Further efforts to establish more dependable measures of reliability and validity were beyond the scope of this initial study.

RESULTS

Faculty Respondent's Characteristics

Dichotomization of sample characteristics will better facilitate the description of the sample. The two sub-samples include respondents who identified themselves as faculty and those that identified themselves as S/P/SO. One hundred six (n=106) respondents identified themselves as faculty by completing the faculty question-naire online. Although an exact response rate could not be determined, Todd Lennon, Coordinator of Member Services for the Council on Social Work Education, estimated these respondents represented one third of faculty accept-ing positions within the last three years (Personal Communication, February 28, 2005). These respondents tended to be females (66%, n=70). They also claimed relationships with S/P/SO (79.2%, n=84) and that they were with their other S/P/SO at the time they were hired into their current position (72.6%, n=77). The majority of respondents identified themselves as white/Caucasian (69.8%, n=74). Other ethnic and racial identifications included African American (9.6%, n=11), American Indian (5.7%, n=6), Hispanic/Latina/o (2.8%, n=3), Asian American (2.8%, n=3), Pacific Islander (1.9%, n=2), African (1.9%, n=2), British of Africa (n=1), Jewish (n=1) and three subjects provided no data with regards to this question.

   While recruitment of the sample focused on those faculty persons in their cur-rent position for the past three years, there was considerable range in the number of years in higher education. The range was between 0 and 39 years with a mean of 6.25 years and a standard deviation of 6.53 years. The majority of respondents indicated that they worked in public universities and/or colleges (68.9%, n=73) over private ones (28.3%, n=30). These programs were approximately 48.1% (n=51) Doctoral/Research Universities, 34% (n=36) Bachelor's Programs, and 16% (n=17) Master's Programs. A total of 46.2% (n=49) of the faculty respondents indicated that they hold a Ph.D. in social work or social welfare, 1.9% (n=2) indicated that they held D.S.W. degrees, 21.7% (n=23) indicated that they held Ph.D.s in other fields and 1.9% (n=2) indicated that they hold other doctorates (e.g., Ed.D.). A rel-atively large proportion of the sample (24.5%, n=26) indicated that the latest degree was an M.S.W. or M.S.S.W.

Spouse/Partner/Significant Other Characteristics

There were a total of 25 submissions of the S/P/SO online survey. However, one of the submissions contained no data and was omitted for a sub-sample size of 24. The submission may have been an accidental early submission before the survey had been completed. Eighty-three and one third percent (n=20) identified them-selves as white/Caucasian. One person identified her/himself as African American, one person as Asian American, and two identified themselves as Pacific Islander. The majority of the respondents (70.8%, n=17) reported that they were with their faculty partner at the time of the most recent hire. Nine (37.5%) of the respondents indicated that they were employed in higher education and five of those nine reported that they worked at the same institution as their faculty part-ner. Five of the respondents in higher education reported also being faculty, one reported being staff, one reported being an administrator, and two reported their positions in higher education as "other."

Descriptive Statistics on the Faculty Recruitment Process

When asked about techniques that involved S/P/SO in the recruitment process, the majority of both faculty and S/P/SO respondents indicated exclusion rather than inclusion in the process. Only 17 (16%) of the faculty respondents and 4 (16.7%) of the S/P/SO respondents indicated that they were connected to a realtor by their prospective employer. Only nine (8.5%) faculty indicated that their S/P/SO were invited to the on-campus interview and only one (4.2%) S/P/SO indicated he or she was invited. The same number of faculty and S/P/SO respondents indicated that their S/P/SO expenses were paid to attend the interview. Twelve (11.3%) faculty respondents indicated that their S/P/SO was offered job search assistance by the prospective employer. Only one S/P/SO indicated that they had received this same assistance. Twenty-two (20.8%) faculty and 6 (25%) S/P/SO indicated that they (i.e., S/P/SO) were invited to attend social functions. Thirteen (12.3%) faculty noted that their S/P/SO were offered opportunities to interact with other spouses, partners, and significant others of the hiring faculty. Only four (16%) S/P/SO indicated that they were afforded the same opportunity.

An exploratory regression analysis on the independent variables (i.e., whether or not the faculty person was connected to a realtor; whether the S/P/SO's expenses were paid to attend the interview; whether job search assistance was provided for the S/P/SO; whether opportunities were provided for social interaction between the S/P/SO and the faculty/staff of the interviewing program; the faculty person's perception of the influence of their S/P/SO on the decision of whether or not to take their current position; whether or not the S/P/SO was supportive of the faculty person's acceptance of the current position; the number of years the faculty person has been employed in higher education; the education level of the faculty person; and, whether or not the employing program is a public or private program) of the faculty survey on the dependent variable (satisfaction with current faculty position) yields some interesting results. The authors chose to report regression analyses despite the small sample size for several reasons. First, the small sample size yielded significant results, suggesting that there is indeed a true effect size within the population. In this model, approximately 32% of the variance (R^2_{Adj} = 31.5, p=.006) in job satisfaction was attributable to the independent variables listed above. Only three of the predictor variable's individual model coefficients were statistically significant however, indicating possi-

ble strong predictors of job satisfaction. These statistically significant predictors included whether or not the S/P/SO's expenses were paid to attend the interview process (t=-2.852, p=.006); whether or not the S/P/SO was provided opportunity for social interaction with recruiting faculty, spouse, partners, etc. (t=2.891, p=.005); and the number of years in higher education (t=-2.574, p=.012). Second, the results of the regression analyses provide support for the qualitative results obtained. Although the use of inferential statistics is suspect at best given the limitations of this study, these results are consistent with qualitative results of the open-ended questions of both faculty and S/P/SO surveys discussed in the following section.

Open-Ended Responses

Extent of S/P/SO Involvement. Respondents shared a range of experiences regarding recruitment to their current institution. The majority of respondents (70%) reported that their S/P/SO was not included or considered in the recruitment process. One faculty member stated, "Neither my spouse nor my children were involved in the recruitment process in any way." Another faculty member indicated, "No assistance or attention was given to my spouse or his needs in moving here." A supportive S/P/SO lamented about being left out of the process:

> Not once in any of the recruitment process has anyone asked her about her family, the richness of the experiences she brings outside of the dollar signs she can bring to the university from her grants, or cared how her job might impact her family life.

Some respondents discussed their S/P/SO having a "behind the scenes" role in the recruitment process. In some instances, the S/P/SO worked with faculty to establish parameters for accepting a position. A male faculty member stated:

> My wife was a major factor in my job decision—while I was the one considering school fit with my interests, school reputation, and potential for professional and scholarly growth, she was the one helping to determine geographic limits, family expectations, and social climate of the setting.

At the same time, other respondents described S/P/SO communicating full support for the faculty member to have the autonomy to choose the best position possible. One faculty member commented, "My partner was very interested in my professional success and she encouraged me to take the best or highest ranked offer I received."

A smaller number of respondents described S/P/SO as being fully included and considered in the recruitment process. Several characteristics emerged as common experiences of S/P/SO who felt included during the recruitment process. For example, for S/P/SO with their own careers, all of them mentioned formal and informal support with job relocation. As one faculty member stated, "My colleagues in the social work department genuinely understood how important my husband's professional and social considerations were to my decision, and did everything they could to accommodate his needs." Another common experience was being invited to participate in the interview and learn more about the area surrounding the school. One faculty member reported, "My wife was fully sup-

portive of our move, because our dean was very inclusive of her, paid for her to visit the town, and made her feel part of the process." An additional faculty member shared how his wife's inclusion influenced his choice between two different offers.

> My wife was invited to come to the town, but not to the interview. She was shown around town by an administrative assistant and joined the faculty for lunch. She felt much more a part of this process than another one where she was not invited to attend anything. I was offered that position, but did not accept it.

Specific Same-sex Findings. Faculty in same-sex relationships expressed three additional areas of importance to them and their S/P/SO. First, respondents expected the university to provide partner benefits. "I will not consider any institution that does not offer domestic partner benefits for healthcare and life insurance," was a typical response. Second, respondents indicated that it was crucial for them to feel that faculty search committees considered their relationship legitimate and important. Finally, just as with all S/P/SO, members of faculty search committees should portray genuine warmth and acceptance. One respondent described experiencing complete acceptance and inclusion:

> The invitation and general welcome extended to my partner was especially significant to me, given that our relationship is a same-sex partnership. I came out during the interview, and no one blinked an eye. It wasn't that they were of the naïve mindset that sexual orientation doesn't matter. Rather, they were genuinely inclusive and valued the diversity I could bring to campus. My relationship was immediately treated as legitimate and important. Faculty, administration, staff were immediately warm and comfortable toward my partner and embraced us into the campus community at the welcoming dinner at the start of the academic year. Afterwards, I was struck by the fact that so many folks on campus remembered my partner's name and asked about her often.

Consequences and Benefits. Consequences and benefits of S/P/SO involvement emerged as another finding. Faculty whose S/P/SO were not included in the recruitment process, having only been in their current position for less than three years, were already contemplating their next position. As they plan for their next position, these same faculty members are making S/P/SO involvement and consideration an important part of choosing where they will teach next. As one respondent indicated:

> I do not feel valued as a faculty member at this institution, nor do I feel as though the university was invested in helping my spouse find employment. I plan to leave this university in the near future and will not accept another faculty appointment until I know that my spouse has also procured employment in his field.

Another respondent shared:

> In my recruitment experience, my partner was excluded and I was the one offered any information about the university, program, area, etc. Because I

am the sole provider for my family, my partner fully accepted my decision to choose this present school. However, because I am extremely dissatisfied with this faculty, I will be seeking a different teaching position and my partner will/must be more involved in the decision-making process. I believe that recruitment needs to include family members.

When S/P/SO felt involved and considered, respondents were more supportive, happy, and hoping to remain in their current positions for a long time. A S/P/SO shared why it was important for him to be part of the recruitment process.

I was glad to be along for the recruitment process. I could tell that the area would be good for the family and that the position would be great for my wife. Knowing this allowed me to be fully supportive of my wife working there.

A faculty member simply stated, "I am happy here and likely to stay (assuming I can get tenure) because I am happy and my family is happy.

DISCUSSION

In the midst of the current labor market, this exploratory research has sought to understand how expanding recruitment efforts to include faculty S/P/SO could help social work programs recruit and retain faculty best suited for their programs. Several limitations are important to consider in interpreting the findings of this study. Although several steps were taken to recruit a purposive sample of social work faculty working less than three years in their current position, the lack of randomization prevents generalization of findings. Further, the low response rate of partner surveys prevents comparing the responses and experiences of faculty with S/P/SO. The online surveys, though field-tested, were not standardized. It is possible that responses were more indicative of instrument error than respondents' actual recruitment experiences. In the same way, the survey items were limited to respondents' general perceptions of satisfaction and influence with other factors not considered (i.e., teaching load, research support, salary, geographic location). Finally, findings primarily describe the responses from faculty and S/P/SO; it may be equally or more important to understand the impact of entire family systems, including the presence, number, and age of children, as well as the influence of other extended family members.

Despite these limitations, several important findings emerged from this study. Perhaps most notable was that a majority of both faculty and S/P/SO respondents indicated that S/P/SO were not included in the recruitment process. A majority of S/P/SO were offered no support in finding a place to live, no job search assistance, no invitation to come to the interview, and no opportunity to interact with other faculty S/P/SO at social functions. Just as important, however, was the expressed commitment of respondents when S/P/SO felt included. For the small number of respondents whose S/P/SO felt included in the recruitment process, each mentioned how pleased they were with the current position and how they were intent on pursuing tenure and staying with the school. In contrast, a significant number of respondents whose S/P/SO were not involved were already contemplating their next position. Considered together, these findings suggest that, while including

S/P/SO in the recruiting process does not guarantee faculty "goodness-of-fit" in terms of scholarship productivity, teaching proficiency and service with a social work program, it may improve the likelihood of faculty wanting to remain with their current school. Furthermore, if faculty, whose S/P/SO were excluded from the recruitment process are spending time and energy contemplating their next position, it is reasonable to believe that they are spending less time and energy fulfilling their responsibilities in their current faculty position. When faculty members in this study do look for another position, they anticipate looking for schools that include their S/P/SO in the recruitment process, giving schools that consider the S/P/SO a competitive advantage.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The findings that emerged from this study provide initial support for including S/P/SO in the recruitment process of social work faculty. Consistent with the literature (Champion-Hughes, 2001; Grensing-Pophal, 2001; Rogers, 2002; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001), the current findings suggest that it is good business to include S/P/SO in recruiting and retaining social work faculty. After investing time and financial resources for advertising, faculty search meetings, expenses for interviewing candidates, moving expenses, new equipment and office space, readjustment of teaching schedules, and orientation, social work programs need faculty who can contribute to their programs as soon as possible. Stated differently, social work programs cannot afford to have faculty contemplate leaving in less than three years of being hired. In the same way, the quality, morale, and stability of social work programs depends on hiring faculty who, on one hand, add diversity of experiences and dynamic thought (Holley & Young, 2005) and, on the other hand, are invested in becoming productive scholars willing to make a long-term commitment to the program and the community.

Academia does not operate with the exact same parameters as the business world. Although including S/P/SO seems to be a pragmatic idea, social work educators will have to tailor their strategies to fit into the culture of their program. The authors, however, recommend beginning with two simple strategies that build upon the assets of the social work profession. First, faculty search committees can at least begin to make contact with the S/P/SO of the newly hired faculty person. Utilizing reflective listening skills, clarification skills, and empathetic responses, members of the faculty search committee can establish rapport and trust early in the hiring process. Furthermore, Grensing-Pophal (2001) suggests determining one or two critical elements for the S/P/SO that would make the transition easier. Perhaps the faculty on the search committee could help family members meet new friends, help with housing, and locate adequate childcare. Through establishing rapport and trust, S/P/SO will be more likely to share the issues that are most important for the transition to go smoothly.

Another strategy, which builds upon social work literature, is to consider implementing a mentorship program for the S/P/SO of new faculty. Mentoring is already effective in acclimating new faculty into social work programs (Wilson et al., 2002). Deans and other administrators within the programs can identify S/P/SO of senior faculty who would be willing to provide some mentoring to the

family members of new faculty. Once a new faculty member accepts an offer to begin working at a university, the faculty search committee can partner the new faculty's S/P/SO with one of the volunteer mentors. The mentor can provide support during the transition of moving into a new area. The mentor can also discuss, from his or her perspective, realistic expectations of the new faculty's work responsibilities, including what to expect in terms of travel, work hours, and time for leisure. Such a program may also be beneficial to the S/P/SO of senior faculty, as they are included in a very important aspect of the universities' operations—the recruitment and retention of quality faculty.

Finally, several areas of research are needed to address the limitations of this study and build on its findings. First, replicating this study with a larger, random sample would allow for greater comparisons between the experiences of faculty whose S/P/SO were included in the recruitment process and faculty whose S/P/SO were not included. Furthermore, the importance of including S/P/SO in the recruitment process should be examined in conjunction with other significant factors. Although exploratory regression analysis revealed initial support for the significance of including S/P/SO in the recruitment process, additional analysis with other variables (e.g., research support, workload expectations, salary, family responsibilities, number of children, and geographic location) would offer more conclusive evidence (Euster & Weinbach, 1983; Gibbs & Locke, 1989; Harrison, Sowers-Hoag, & Postley, 1989; Holley & Young, 2005). Second, much could be learned by a follow-up study using in-depth interviews with faculty and S/P/SO. How would faculty and S/P/SO characterize a successful recruitment experience? After accepting a position, how would S/P/SO describe their transition experiences and how do their experiences affect faculty productivity? For those who left a previous faculty position, what influence did S/P/SO have on their decision to leave? Third, a survey of deans on their rationale for inclusion/exclusion of S/P/SO would yield useful findings. The survey could assess the rationale of deans at the beginning of recruitment and after selecting a faculty person. Finally, additional discussion and study is needed to further understand the impact of recruiting entire family systems in academia. In business, the impact appears to be less turnover and greater morale and productivity of employees (Rogers, 2002; Champion-Hughes, 2001), which is consistent with operating a successful social work program.

In the midst of the current labor market, expanding recruitment efforts to include faculty S/P/SO may help programs recruit faculty best suited for their program. Helping S/P/SO to feel included in the hiring process may send the message to faculty that the school wants the whole family system to feel a part of the university. Such efforts, as supported in the business literature, could reduce turnover, increase recruitment and retention, and encourage faculty to be more loyal and productive for the university. Finally, one respondent offers another important reason to include S/P/SO in the recruitment process, "It would seem that, since we often teach of systems and their impact on client functioning, social work search committees would include systems thinking in their search processes."

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Journal Writing for Life Development

Dorothy M. Epple

Abstract: *: Journal writing can be a creative adjunct to psychotherapy. This article will describe a qualitative study of the experiences of journal writers. Each participant's narrative illustrates the integration of Winnicott's transitional phenomena, Freeman's four stages of epiphanies, and Kegan's adult developmental stages through journal writing. The central findings of this research are that the experience of the participants can be identified in the following three categories: therapeutic experience, meditative experience, and a transformative experience. Journal writing can be adapted by psychotherapists, as an adjunct to therapy, to aid clients in elaborating their stories, listening within, identifying epiphanies, and moving forward in the change process. This article will present a case study of one of the narratives from this research.*

Keywords: *Journal writing, narrative, interpretive interactionism, ethnography, transitional phenomena, transitional space, epiphany*

INTRODUCTION

Psychotherapy is regarded as a talking cure that relies on a clinical relationship between a client and a therapist based on conceptual understandings from ego psychology, object relations, self-psychology, systems theory, and narrative theory. Through the use of language and storytelling, the client develops a narrative that is representative of his/her world. A relationship develops in which the therapist honors the client's self-determination, the client's inner knowledge of self, and the client's interpretation of meaning of the events of his or her life. The therapist relays to the client a belief in the client's strengths and value and helps to empower the client to tap his/her potential. The process begins by accepting the client's current experience of his or her own life and providing a structure within sessions to enable the client to begin a self-discovery process.

This study on journal writing indicates that journal writing may be an adjunctive method that complements the therapy process. Journal writing is mediated through language, writing, and storytelling. It enriches and aids the client in the self-discovery process by drawing out of the client knowledge he or she already possesses but does not know he or she has. Journal writing has the potential to

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become a dynamic self-realization. The journal starts where the client chooses to begin. At the heart of journal writing is a narrative that is consistent with that of the therapeutic encounter. Journal writing is a non-analytical, non-judgmental method that helps clients crystallize issues in their lives, identify changes needed, and move forward to enact the change.

The purpose of this paper is to present the process of the Progoff (1992) journal writing, its relationship to personal growth, and its parallels to psychotherapy. Both therapy and journal writing focus on a process of quieting one's self, reflecting within, identifying ideas, epiphanies, strengths, potentials, and living these potentials in the world. This paper will: 1) review the literature on journal writing and psychotherapy; 2) report the process and findings conducted on a study of Progoff journal writing; 3) present one of the research participant's experiences of journal writing that illustrates the process and findings in the research; and 4) examine journal writing as an adjunct to psychotherapy.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature will document: 1) journal writing as a means to personal growth, creativity, and use in treatment, 2) studies that document the therapeutic effects of journal writing, and 3) the Progoff journal method and theory.

Journal Writing as a Means to Personal Growth

Journal writing has been a springboard for personal growth and the creative process. Psychoanalysts and psychotherapists, including Freud (1935, 1965), Jung (1965), Milner (1936/1981), and Progoff (1992) have utilized journal writing, autobiography, and diaries or letter writing for personal insights, creativity, and the development of their own theories. Freud (1935, p. 36) referred to his own autobiographical study as follows: "Two themes run through these pages: the story of my life and the history of psychoanalysis. They are intimately interwoven." Marion Milner (1981, p. 219), an English psychoanalyst, wrote "I was so astonished at what my diary keeping had shown about the power of the unconscious aspects of one's mind, both for good and for ill, that I eventually became a psychoanalyst." Jung recorded in his journal dreams, images, fantasies, imaginary conversations with his anima, and drew mandalas. Jung used his diary as a springboard for his theory of the collective unconscious. Jung (1965) states, "All my works, all my creative activity, have come from those initial fantasies and dreams." Germain (1991) has utilized and researched journal writing in Social Work HBSE courses to develop students' writing, analytic, and integrative skills.

Psychotherapists have noted the professional use of journals for treatment (Freud, 1919; Blos, 1962; Horney, 1980; Dalsimer, 1982; and Hymer, 1991). Freud (1919, p. 341) discussed the importance of Hermine Von Hug-Hellmuth's diary stating, "The diary is a little gem. I believe it has never before been possible to obtain such a clear and truthful view of the mental processes that characterize the development of a girl in our social and cultural stratum during the years before puberty." Blos (1962, p. 94) states, "The diary stands between daydream and object world, between make believe and reality, and its content and form change with the times." Dalsimer (1982) critiqued the *Diary of Anne Frank* and viewed the

diary as analogous to the clinical situation in content and in associative sequence. Dalsimer (1982) and Blos (1962) view the diary as being endowed with attributes of an object with which the writer develops an intimate relationship. Hymer (1991) states, for some, the diary becomes a "constant object" helping to ground the writer. Laird (1989), utilizing women's personal stories, writes of the importance of narrative, story telling, and myth. "Stories and myths help us to order the world, to sort out, explain, and integrate events in a striving for continuity and coherence" (Laird, 1989, p. 435). Psychotherapists who have utilized journal writing as an adjunct to therapy have found it to be a form of self-expression, self-reflection, a mirror, an object, a confident, and a bridge from past to present and future.

Studies That Document the Therapeutic Effects of Journal Writing

Studies document the therapeutic effects of journal writing (Nichols, 1973; Pennebaker, 1990; Wiener & Rosenwald, 1993). Nichols (1973) exploratory study of journal keeping revealed the most frequently reported benefits of the journal included an increase in self-awareness and acceptance, the ability to express feelings, and help in centering the individual, as well as fostering a relationship of friendship to oneself. Wiener and Rosenwald (1993) found developmental and integrative benefits associated with keeping a diary. Pennebaker (1990) conducted controlled clinical research on the mind-body connection and demonstrated that individuals who wrote about their traumas experienced greater well-being, both psychologically and physically, and significantly bolstered their immune functions, compared with those who did not keep a journal.

Multiple methods of journal writing have emerged in the 20th century (Rainer, 1978; Cameron, 1992; Capacchione, 1979, 1989; Phillips, 1997; Neubauer, 1995; Keen & Valley-Fox, 1989; Nelson, 1991; Kelsey, 1980; Dorff, 1998). Ira Progoff's (1992) journal techniques are reflected in many of the current journal methods (Bender, 1997; Dorff, 1998; Kelsey, 1980; Nelson, 1991; Rainer, 1978). Progoff (1992, p.12) states: "Once you have learned how to use it, the Intensive Journal method becomes like a musical instrument you can play; and its melodies are the themes and the intimations of meaning in your life." Progoff refers to his journal as an intensive, structured method of writing for personal and spiritual growth. It is a dynamic way to record one's life rather than the traditional diary, which tends to be a chronological ordering of experience. The journal becomes a continual confrontation of oneself in the midst of one's own life.

Ira Progoff Journal Method—Development and Research

Progoff (1956, 1959, 1963) published a trilogy of books that reflect the development of his theoretical view that underpins the methodology of the journal process. Progoff's (1956) first book is written from a historical perspective, crystallizing the evolving insights of Freud, Adler, Jung, and Rank, which represent a transformation from the repressed to an awareness of the inner self and a creative wholeness. Each theory brought new insights, and a unity of development unfolded, which transcended any one individual school of thought and reached beyond to a science to which they all contributed. But, Progoff saw these theories "Build a psychological hedge around the realities of man's creative and spiritual

experiences" (p. 81). The theories stifled creativity in their analytical, intellectual, and rationalizations of the self. Progoff's (1959, 1963) second and third books in his trilogy present his new view of the magnitude of human personality. Progoff saw the primary task of depth psychology as developing a capacity of perceiving the inward process of one's growth. As one becomes sensitive and attuned to one's growth inwardly, one is able to draw one's potentialities forward. Symbols appear as spontaneous images from the depth of the person and are a vehicle that the potentiality latent within can be brought forth. Symbols should not be approached in an analytical way, because, if they are reduced to experiences of the past, they are deprived of their potentiality. To break a symbol apart and analyze it deprives it of its power of life. Instead, one works affirmatively, encouraging, nurturing, and drawing forward a symbol (Progoff, 1963). Progoff (1959) used the term "organic psyche" to emphasize the close relationship between the psyche and natural evolution. He sees the psyche as the directive principle in the human that guides its growth from the moment of conception forward. The psyche is a unitary principle. It is not conscious, as opposed to unconscious, nor is it unconscious, as opposed to conscious. It is both. The inherent process of growth takes place with awareness and direction, as though it were consciously guided toward a certain purpose. It begins on a level of intuition as a non-conscious intimation of things to come. Neither the goal nor the manner of its fulfillment is thought out in advance. The pattern discloses itself as it acts itself out. In the course of the enactment, the person discovers the nature of the goal the person is truly seeking.

Progoff created the journal method in 1966 to help individuals become in touch with the dynamic aspect or potential that their life is trying to become. He uses the image of the acorn having the potential to become an oak tree. The journal helps individuals become in tune with this potential within. Progoff (1992) believes there is a specific process working at the depth of a person. This process can be evoked with the use of a journal. This process is the movement of the psyche in the life of an individual. It is purposeful, elusive, and reflected in dreams or images, which are often transient. Recordings in a journal of one's dreams or images can preserve the process and become an image or mirror of the psyche. Progoff's journal method was an attempt at a tool to help individuals open to the core of self and lead beyond the self. In the journal experience, one is ask to suspend any critical judgments and allow whatever emerges to emerge.

Progoff's journal workbook is a loose-leaf binder with dividers. The four main sections of the workbook are the lifetime dimension (historical data), the dialogue dimension (relational aspects of life), the depth dimension (symbolic dreams and images), and the meaning dimension (inner experiences and spiritual aspects of life). Each of these dimensions is divided into several subsections. There is a section for a traditional daily log and for a period log. The process begins with recording factual data in the journal log sections. These data are then expanded and worked with in other dimensions or sections of the journal. Working with material in one section of the journal has the tendency to stimulate material to work with in another section of the journal. As one follows the leads from one section of the journal to another section, new awareness, connections,

and integration of one's life can take place. The process of working with one's own experience by writing in the journal activates a creative energy. Through dialogue in the journal, one speaks of conscious plans and experiences, but hears the symbolic messages, the wisdom, the intuitions, and the inherent possibilities that life reflects from the written page. The journal method utilizes meditation, images, and dreams to explore the symbolic messages beneath the everyday experiences. The process of personal growth often begins with an image that previsions the achievement. It is on the level of intuition and it is a non-conscious intimation of things to come. Images do not state meaning in specific logical terms but portray meaning. When an emotion is felt, imagery conveys that emotion. The journal helps one link the conscious and unconscious in an integral unity, bringing a new awareness that restructures the prior conscious view and moves one forward in life.

Janet Loyd (1991) completed her thesis at Seattle University on "Journal Keeper's Experiences." This clinical, qualitative approach of the Progoff journal method involved identifying subjective attitudes through three cumulative stages, namely, the pre-pilot, the pilot, and the survey. In the survey stage, a formal questionnaire of agree/disagree statements was sent to 50 different people nationally, all of whom were obtained from the mailing list of advanced studies students at Dialogue House in New York City. Seventy-six percent of the questionnaires were completed and returned. Some of the results from this survey included reports that:

1) Journal writers maintained the journaling process on their own, apart from the workshop—86%.

2) They conferred that they had developed from their journal work a sense of their life as an ongoing process, which needs to be respected and allowed to unfold—97%.

3) They reported becoming more conscious of their own worth as an individual—95%.

4) Of those 58% who reported working with a therapist, they felt the journal was helpful in the course of receiving psychotherapy—91%.

5) They have found meaning in images and symbols—94%.

6) They reported a sense of connection with God or the divine when working with the exercises in the process meditation sections of the journal—92%.

This survey indicates that specific exercises in the journal were helpful for particular needs. This study indicates that, for those who utilize the Progoff journal method, they get significant benefits.

In February 1971, an 18-month on-the-job training program was sponsored by the New York State Department of Labor, applying the Progoff Journal, in addition to 20 weeks of on-the-job training and remedial education. The trainees had earned less than $3,000 a year in their former employment and 50% had formerly received state welfare. One year after initiation of the program, 249 of the 286 trainees had completed the program and were employed. Transcribed taped

interviews with the trainees indicated that the journal aspect of the training empowered the participants to make changes from within.

> "The ultimate poverty is a person's lack of feeling for the reality of his own inner being. People in poverty situations tend to feel they are powerless to change their circumstances because their individuality is submerged by the group situation. Thus, they do not feel they are persons and, therefore, that they have no power to redirect their lives. The answer to poverty lies in making it tangibly possible for a person to experience the fact that he is a person. We do that in our program by using the journal in such a way that it becomes the outer embodiment of the inner life of the individual." (Sealy & Duffy, 1977, p. 5)

A pilot Target Prison Program was conducted at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Bedford Hills, New York, utilizing the Progoff journal. This is a maximum-security facility for women. Twenty-eight inmates, who later narrowed to a core nucleus of 15, attended three core workshops, totaling 50 hours of instruction, followed by ongoing sessions and consultations. The women had been incarcerated primarily due to substance abuse violations, theft, or murder. Racial and ethnic backgrounds varied. The age of the group ranged from 25 to 45, with one inmate being over 60 years of age. The inmates were literate and interested in writing about their life experiences. The study included evaluations with the inmates, who provided feedback on how they were using the method and its benefits related to their self-development. The prison officials were consulted regarding the progress of the inmates. The inmates commented that the journal helped their ongoing growth and rehabilitation process by self-empowerment, release of feelings of anger and frustration, increased self-understanding, heightened sense of inner peace, more self-control, and greater awareness of creative abilities. Visible results of changed behavior were documented by feedback from the prison officials (McNair, 1999).

Other studies of the Progoff journal include the dissertation work of Gerard Werckle (1990); a phenomenological study of the experiences of persons who consider the Progoff journal important in their lives; and Walter Hopkins (1997), a non-analytic qualitative study of dreams and symbolic material. Theresa Craig (1991) utilized the Progoff journal to keep a personal record of responses to her field log notes of her dissertation.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study is twofold: 1) to provide a window into the personal experience of how people use the Progoff journal method to tell their stories, make sense of their experience, and identify whether the writing has provided a change process; 2) to examine the utility of journal writing as an adjunct to psychotherapy. The Ira Progoff journal method was selected for study based on the understanding that many of the journal techniques in other current methods of writing are encompassed in the Progoff method. Also, the Progoff method makes claim to a dynamic form of writing that moves one forward in

their life, rather than making a chronological ordering of experience that is often reflected in other methods. This continual confrontation of oneself in the midst of one's own life has the potential to tap creative energy that will continue with a life of its own.

Paradigm for Inquiry

Qualitative methods were used to explore the process, meaning, and subjective understanding of participants' experiences with the Progoff journal. Qualitative methods provide depth and detail by preserving the individual's story through direct quotation. "Knowledge of the realm of meaning is gained through interpretive or hermeneutic procedures" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.159). The qualitative design in this study includes an integration of Narrative Methodology (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorn, 1988; Riessman, 1988, 1993; Schwandt, 1997), Ethnographic methods (Van Maanen, 1988; Denzin, 1997), and Interpretive Interactionism (Denzin, 1989).

Denzin's (1989) Interpretive Interactionism was utilized as an overarching method of inquiry. Embedded in the bracketing process was an examination of each participant's writing related to Freeman's (1993) four stages of an epiphany.

Deconstruction

Capture

Bracketing

　　Freeman's (1993) four states of an epiphany

　　　　Recognition

　　　　Distanciation

　　　　Articulation

　　　　Appropriation

Construction

Contextualization

The Interpretive Interactionism process included a five-step process as indicated above. Deconstruction was an analysis of prior studies and a review of the literature of the phenomenon of journal writing. Capture included semi-structured recorded interviews of the experiences of 14 participants who had used the Progoff journal method for eight years or longer. Bracketing isolated the key features of the journal process. Embedded in the bracketing process, Freeman's (1993) four phases of an epiphany were examined for each participant's story. This four-phase process includes: recognition of a disjunction between one's life and one's potential, distanciation or separation of oneself from the disjunction, articulation of the old self and the new self being projected in the future, and appropriation or transforming the new knowledge into action. The last two steps of the Interpretive Interactionism allowed for a construction of each participant's process of journal writing over time and a contextualization or locating of the phenomenon in the worlds of lived experience. This narrative approach allowed for a rich, thick description of the experiences of each participant and allowed

various levels of themes and categories to emerge from the data. An expanded analysis of the narrative then developed the context of stories within stories. Validity is measured in verisimilitude, related to how this project captures the experiences of the participants so that others can share, vicariously, in their experience and resonate with it.

Participants

Participants were recruited from a mailing list provided by journal leaders in the Midwest. The 14 participants included nine women and five men. ranging in age from 44 to 68. The participants included three married men, two men never married and committed to the clergy, five married women, one divorced woman, two lesbian women, and one nun. Five participants had children. Employment for five of the participants was in the social service field (MSW, psychotherapist, hospital chaplain, director of volunteers, RN), three were employed in a writing profession (teacher of creative writing, editor, freelance writer), three were in religious life (parish priest, monk, nun/retreat director), one was a political science professor, one was an executive owning his own company, and one was a systems programmer. Four participants had earned a bachelor's degree, seven earned a master's degree, and three had a Ph.D. Faith backgrounds identified by the participants included Catholic, Buddhist, Taoist, Wicca, Tibetan Buddhist, Jewish/Buddhist, and United Church of Christ. Participants had utilized the Progoff journal method for eight to 30 years. Ten participants had practiced diary writing before they were introduced to the Progoff method. Four of these had kept a diary since their teen years. The participants were asked to describe their experience of the Progoff journal writing over time and how the writing had affected their life. The participants were allowed to let their stories unfold in a semi-structured interview. Those participants who were willing also shared quotes from their journal that exemplified their experience of journal writing. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The participants read the transcribed interviews and the analyzed interviews for the purpose of member checking.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using Denzin's (1989) Interpretive Interactionism and Freeman's (1993) four phases of epiphanies. Each epiphany is illustrated in the participant's narrative by exploring the "recognition" of a disjunction between one's life and one's potential; "distanciation," or separation of oneself from the disjunction; "articulation" of the old self and the new self being projected in the future; and "appropriation" or transforming the new knowledge into action. Winnicott's (1951) concepts of potential space in the intermediate area of experience were also examined. Winnicott describes transitional phenomena as a third part of life: "An intermediate area of experience, to which inner reality and external life both contribute . . . It shall exist as a resting place for the individual keeping inner and outer reality separate yet inter-related . . . the substance of illusion" (1951, p. 30). This potential space lies between the inner world and the external reality, while both are joining and separating the two. Winnicott widens his concept of transitional phenomena to play, art, religion, and dreaming. The journal process of quieting one's self, meditating, and writing allows one's experience in

this intermediate area to be written in the journal. The containing of one's story in the potential space of the journal is attuned to the illusive process of imagery and its symbolism that is below the surface of conscious awareness.

Limitations

This qualitative study was exploratory in nature and specific to the experience of the 14 participants who used the Progoff method for eight years or longer. Other journal methods were not examined. As a qualitative research project, there are limitations inherent in this design. All narratives of an experience are representations of an experience but are not the complete true experience itself. The teller of a narrative selects aspects of his or her experience to tell and interprets aspects of the experience in the telling. Telling is limited by language and by the awareness of the teller. Narratives about the subject's narratives are a creation of the researcher, as a result of the interaction with the subjects of research. There is a co-construction process between the researcher and the participant. Meaning is fluid and contextual. Meaning is not fixed and universal. Objective science discovers facts. The notion of an objective reality will not be applicable in this project.

FINDINGS

The experiences of the journal writers were identified in the following three categories: therapeutic experience, meditative experience, and the integration of the journal methodology into other disciplines. The vignettes reveal a journey to the creative inner voice that leads to self-discovery and wisdom (therapeutic), transcendence (meditation and creativity), and transformation (the methodology of the journal is owned, integrated with another theory, and transformed). Selected participant comments related to each theme are listed below:

Therapeutic Experience

"The journal was saying to me, 'You are not here to do bookkeeping. You are here to be a midwife of souls. You are here to evoke from within other people what is there.' Today I get great joy out of seeing other people blossom and grow and find their path in life."

"I had this absolutely mind-breaking, totally un-grounding experience that just opened up all kinds of new things."

"Progoff has helped me to realize my value system and I want to live my value system."

"The journal gave me a voice."

"The journal has been a factor in my having the courage to believe in myself."

Meditative/Transcendent Experience

"The journal has taken me beyond one religion in the sense that I have become very active in inter-religious dialogues and in learning about the spiritual and mystical sides of other religions . . . It opened me beyond the rigid structures of any system. It opened me to seeing the truth wherever it is, without totally leaving my roots."

"The journal has given me a place in which to experience myself and to discover my existence."

"It is a way of making contact with strengths or powers within myself which I may tend to habitually over look or minimize."

"I accessed my inner wisdom and, after that, I knew that everyone has inner wisdom."

Application and Transformation of the Methodology

Four participants in the study learned the journal method, made the method their own, then transformed the method by integrating it with their own discipline or career and, in turn, creatively came up with something new. These new inspirations included writing books; giving retreats, one-act plays, and journal methods for businessmen and companies; and counseling techniques.

"All I did is take the language that Ira Progoff is using and translate it into business. . . . I've used it in corporations to answer strategic questions or vision questions."

"I'm an intuitive thinker with rational training, so what happens is I get an image of either a change in my life or a change in society and then rationally construct the means to have that happen. Getting the original vision of where I'm headed is important and the journal certainly helps in that."

The author's analysis of the vignettes demonstrates that epiphanies that emerge in journal writing have the potential to bring a new view of life and a new action in the world. Rather than just an intellectual understanding, this epiphany often appears for the participants as a result of an image or a series of images that convey meaning at a symbolic level. The imagery process entails leaving behind the logical mind and creating a space where an image can emerge. The image carries the seed for future action and taps a developmental unfolding. The process of journal writing produces images, symbolic meanings of the images, and the initiation of a developmental process or spiritual deepening. Each participant's narrative illustrates the integration of Winnicott's transitional phenomena, Freeman's four stages of epiphanies, and Kegan's adult developmental stages through journal writing.

SIGNIFICANCE TO SOCIAL WORK

The narrative in the journal is parallel to the narrative the client brings to case management or therapy. The journal as a potential adjunct to therapy could facilitate the narrative process and the construction of a coherent story. This could increase the progress made in each therapy session and continue the therapeutic process between sessions by harnessing and organizing the person's thoughts. The potential of the journal to initiate the developmental process, tap intuitive abilities, broaden the perspective of the client, approach life situations from new perspectives, create a bridge between past memory and future intimations or hopes, would all move the process of the therapy forward. Narrative theory and journal writing could be integrated with any other therapeutic theory to form a foundation, to assist in the process of narrative construction toward therapeutic

means related to the client's presenting problem. In psychotherapy, the journal has the potential to facilitate the process of bringing to the surface the not yet conscious aspects of life. As an aspect in short-term therapy, the journal can make the course of therapy briefer and give the client a method to continue the therapeutic process and enhance self-development following treatment. The therapeutic atmosphere of the journal is a means to a continued therapeutic process within the self after therapy has ended. A goal, in therapy, is to help the client develop a means with which to be present to themselves and to find within themselves their own answers and their own authority.

The journal experience of one participant was chosen to present, because her experience was illustrative of the three findings of the study, and it also demonstrated the integration of the transitional phenomena, epiphanies, and the tapping of the developmental process through the journal writing. This methodology was a narrative study (as opposed to a grounded theory study), which kept the integrity of each participant's story intact. It allows for the rich breadth and depth of the experience to be realized.

LILIANA—JOURNAL WRITING: BEYOND THE TWELVE STEPS

Liliana was a 64 year-old Caucasian of German/Irish/American background. She was a published poet and fiction writer. Her full-time employment was at a university as an instructor in creative writing. Liliana has earned a master's degree in literature and the teaching of writing. She was raised a Roman Catholic, but, at the time of the study, was a Taoist and a practitioner of Religious Science.

I met with Liliana at her home. Liliana's energy and exuberance overshadowed her facial lines of aging, bringing her a natural glow. I immediately felt at home with her warm welcome.

The desire to write began as early as five years of age, when Liliana dictated a "novel" to her mother, while waiting for doctors' appointments to address a serious early-childhood illness. Liliana had been a lifelong journal writer, beginning at age eight. Liliana described her mother as an alcoholic. She remembered being lonely and feeling her parents did not know her or see her unique qualities. Liliana became her mother's confidant, creating a cycle of intimacy, dependency, confusion, rejection, and loneliness.

Liliana appeared to have been born with creative capacities, but her early life experience discouraged a belief in her own talent:

> "I used to play in my bedroom closet when I was quite young . . . I would stage plays . . . I have this image in which I say to little Liliana 'I have to leave for a minute. I'll be right back.' Then, I didn't come back. That is when I lost touch with my authentic self. . . . When I graduated from college, I remember, putting things back in that same closet, thinking, I have to stop writing because I am not good enough and I don't have the right to put my life into something that I am not going to be successful with."

Liliana abandoned herself and her talent to marry and support the talent of her husband, who was a performing musician. Many years later, she embarked on a midlife change that included recovery from addictions, divorce, relocating to

another part of the country, and obtaining a master's degree in Creative Writing. Liliana also began Progoff journal writing.

> "Taking me back to that first workshop, I remember checking in and getting this huge book and thinking, 'Oh My God! What is it that they are going to expect of me here?' At that time I had been in a Twelve Step Program for eight years. The Twelve Steps demand that you look at yourself and the way you are functioning and be open to change. Those of us who are in that process are a fruitful field for plowing. I don't think that there was any specific thing that I was working on but I was anxiously trying to get deeper into myself.

Progoff refers to the journal, especially the Life History Log, as "loosening the soil of our life," which is similar to the Twelve Step self-examination process that Liliana calls a "fruitful field for plowing." Both allow for an opening of the channels in the inner space of one's life. With eight years of Twelve Step reflection in the AA program, Liliana came to the journal workshop ready to freely explore her inner life. Liliana described the first weekend:

> "I mostly remember the psychological movement that happened that I just thought was fabulous! It told me that I had more rooms inside myself than I had been in consciously. They were accessible. They were willing to open the doors, if I was willing to keep writing. That was very exciting to me . . . I remember that experience the way you remember psychological milestones . . . I learned to trust myself in a way that I hadn't been known to do before . . . What that moment told me was that my insides were a trustworthy geography . . . Wow! I'm getting emotional now! The thing that I got when I came into AA was that I realized that I was getting a second chance in life. It was a new arena in which to discover who I was and become who I wanted to be. This is a very similar thing. This process told me that there were a lot of riches within me waiting for discovery and that they were mine. It was reclaiming myself . . . But it's more than that because it moves you forward in life. You're not just reclaiming the past . . . it has messages to . . . reveal your past to you."

Ira Progoff (1992) describes his journal method as having a feedback process in which the feedback generates an energy that thrusts forward, in the form of new experiences, new recognitions or new ideas, connecting one to an inner-self or inner-movement in life. Liliana describes the energy in her journal as helping her to become aware of "more rooms inside" herself that she had not "been in consciously" and that were "accessible" if she was "willing to keep writing." She described this movement as being a "psychological milestone" in which she learned that her insides were a "trustworthy geography." She came to realize that she had many "riches within" that were "waiting for discovery" and that she was being given another chance to "reclaim" herself by allowing the journal to reveal her past to her. This process, as described, is similar to Winnicott's (1971) transitional phenomena, or intermediate area of experience, in which a person searching for self requires a new experience in a specialized setting. The journal provided a space for Liliana to do a ticking-over of the un-integrated aspects of her personality and realize sensations that had been beyond detection and defied

description. Lillian's first epiphany in this transitional space was a recognition (Freeman's term) that she could trust her insides. She describes this process:

> "Images are not always visual but they are in the body and so sometimes they are felt, and they are very specific. They have all the characteristics of a visual image in that they have parameters, scope and roundness or flatness. They have texture . . . a sense of color, a sense of flavor . . . The recognition of trust within came . . . It was like an explosion of opening. Sometimes, when you see a film and it fast forwards, like the opening of a flower—it just opens just like that . . . The space opened. It was an opening of a space within me . . . I was holding myself. I was bigger then I usually thought of myself. Wiser, all of that was present . . . I felt this underlying structure that had been present . . . It was buried down there, it was active and it was alive. That told me a great deal about myself . . . What I found was that these were things that were alive, that were actively functioning in me, even though I wasn't conscious of them and that they were accessible and that I could make decisions about them. That is a lot of power."

Liliana described the sensation of trust within as "an explosion of opening," like the "opening of a flower," and a "space within me" that allowed for a "holding myself." This instant explosion had parameters, scope, roundness, flatness, texture, color, flavor, and layers, without being visual. This moment in time, an epiphany of inner knowing and trust, gradually changed the future internal and external life for Liliana. The holding of the infant by the mother, termed as the environment, is seen by Winnicott (1965) as providing a transition from an "unintegrated state to a structured integration." Liliana's movement from awareness of a "trustworthy geography within," to the felt "underlying structure that had been present and was active and alive," resembles Winnicott's early mother-infant holding environment. The journal provided a space for transitional phenomenon to occur that reconnected Liliana to that early mother-infant relationship that was "present" and "buried" within her. This made available the "power" to enact the epiphany of inner trust. Liliana reports the early journal writing exercises that brought about this epiphany experience were a sequence of childhood writings that included Steppingstones, Life History Log and Enlargement, Dream Enlargement, Twilight Imagery, and Dialogue with individual family members. Liliana states, "What the journal did for me was reconfirm the path I had chosen." Liliana's new path had included divorce, relocation, and a career change. She knew she could trust these changes, because they emanated from a sense of knowing herself. Rather than leaving home, Liliana was finding a home within herself, a home that had been there but had been unknown. This recognition of inner trust was the beginning of the four steps of her epiphany. The disjunction and the distanciation phase of Liliana's epiphany of gaining inner trust was not one of separating herself, but rather, one of embracing herself. Liliana describes how the journal epiphany led to the articulation and appropriation of inner trust through fiction writing:

> "The journaling process gave me a vocabulary for talking about my inner-life, which I had never had . . . For instance, the Entrance Meditations have a vocabulary that matches my insides right away . . . I could then talk about

it to myself and to other people . . . I think something I didn't have before was a sense of respecting my own sacred language. There are images that are specific to me that are sacred and are just as loaded as any image in the Bible . . . Another thing Progoff gave me was language for a sense of connectedness with something larger than myself . . . Progoff does assume that every human being has a spiritual dimension . . . I think that what the Progoff journaling has done for my writing process is to deepen me into that spiritual connection and give me more language so that I could write from that place. Most of what I write about in my fiction is about how people come to a moment of change. I think those turning points in our lives are the story of our life. They're the most interesting things that happen and how you get there and how you negotiate it."

Liliana described the journal as giving her a "vocabulary" for her inner life, an experience that resembled "turning a light on over a terrain that had been in semi-darkness." This experience is parallel to Helen Keller's acquisition of language, as told by Freeman (1993). Helen Keller's loss of sight and hearing had resulted in an experience in which she "forgot that it had ever been different" until the teacher came, "who was to set my spirit free" with the acquisition of language. As humans, we are immersed in language. It is only through language that we can describe our memories and our inner experience, allowing for meaning. The journal provides a space, a playground, where one can listen to and feel the movement of the words as they tell and retell the experiences of life, while rewriting the self.

A respect for her own sacred images brought a connectedness to the larger than personal. This connection to the larger than personal gave Liliana a language to write about the spiritual dimension of life, of "how people come to a moment of change" in her fiction. Liliana's writing was a concrete expression of the articulation and appropriation of her epiphany of inner trust. The development of a small performing arts group that integrates poetry reading and music was another concrete example of appropriation of this inner trust.

Liliana's epiphany in the journal writing took her beyond the AA program and beyond what therapy provided to a spiritual substratum. From this she developed an inner trust to act out of her knowledge of herself. The language of Progoff was evocative in allowing Liliana to find metaphors, rich descriptions, and words to describe her internal space. The journal exercise of Steppingstones, Life History Log, Dream Enlargement, Twilight Imagery, and Dialogue were used to examine childhood experiences with a therapeutic result. The journal process provided a space for transitional phenomenon that reconnected Liliana to an inner trust and an active, underlying structure that she had been disconnected from since childhood. The connection to a "trustworthy inner geography" was mediated by language. Multiple layers of meaning flowed from her experience of inner trust and resulted in reclaiming her artistic and spiritual inclinations. Outward activity of fiction writing, poetry writing, and performing arts was propelled from within, the now trusted interior terrain of her life. The central findings of the research are evident in her narrative. The journal writing provided a therapeutic experience, a spiritual or meditative experience, and a transformative experience in which her

personal journal writing became integrated with her professional work as an author, teacher of creative writing, and a co-founder of a performing arts group.

DISCUSSION

This experience of journal writing, as exhibited by Liliana, illustrates a process of change that includes Winnicott's transitional phenomena, Freeman's four stages of epiphanies, and Kegan's adult developmental stages through journal writing. Vignettes, in Liliana's own voice, demonstrate the epiphanies, metaphors, and themes as they emerge in the journal writing. These vignettes illustrate a developmental process through the journal writing. The author's analysis of the vignettes demonstrates that epiphanies that emerge in journal writing have the potential to bring participants a new view of life and new possibilities for action in the world. The imagery process entails leaving behind the logical mind and creating a space where an image can emerge. The image carries the seed for future action and taps a developmental unfolding. The process of journal writing produces images, symbolic meanings of the images, and the initiation of a developmental process or spiritual deepening. All of these themes in journal writing are the clinical process.

Parallels exist between Winnicott's transitional phenomena, transitional space, illusion, play, and creativity, and the process of journal writing. The meditative state, when using the journal, is a transitional space that creates the illusion of transitional phenomena, while the journal itself is an objective object that is highly personal and used in play, providing a form of transitional experience. One knows the journal is a notebook filled with paper and writing but is deeply moved by it, as though it were much more than a notebook. Through illusion, the participant plays with words, symbols in dreams, or twilight imagery. The participant is able to distinguish between fantasy and fact, inner, and outer, but through illusion, allows the outer and inner reality to speak to each other, finding a journey through remembering and reliving fantasy and dreams and integrating past and present and future.

Winnicott states, the person searching for self requires "A new experience in a specialized setting. The experience is one of a non-purposive state, as one might say a sort of ticking over of the unintegrated personality" (1971, p. 55). Winnicott also states the therapeutic procedure must "afford opportunity for formless experience, and for creative impulses, motor and sensory which are the stuff of playing" (1971, p. 64). He refers to this state as one of "formlessness." He goes on to state the person must be allowed to "communicate a succession of ideas, thoughts, impulses, sensations that are not linked" (p. 55). The journal parallels this source of playing and manifests itself in its choice of words, humor, analogy, metaphor, and symbols. It relies on both the conscious and unconscious cooperation utilizing dreams, twilight images, and the connections of dream state images with factual events. This dynamic use of journal writing can be adopted by psychotherapists as an adjunct to therapy to aid clients in elaborating on their stories, listening within, identifying epiphanies, and moving forward in the change process.

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Social Work in Natural Disasters:
The Case of Spirituality and Post-traumatic Growth

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Abstract: *This study explored the role of social work in natural disasters by examining the relationship between spirituality and the posttraumatic growth of people in a collectivist culture. In this case, a retrospective study was conducted among people in Taiwan who had survived a major earthquake five years earlier. The hypothesis tested was that those who reported higher levels of spirituality would also report higher levels of posttraumatic growth. A concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design was employed for this study. Six hundred and forty participants completed the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI). Twenty-eight others participated in semi-structured in-depth interviews. Results indicate that, in Taiwan—described here as a collectivist culture—traditional cultural narratives around suffering and adversity, many of which are voiced as spiritual beliefs, have a significant effect on posttraumatic growth. In this situation, social workers need to work with or support spiritual leaders, folk healers, and indigenous religious organizations, as they provide helping services. Respect for cultural differences may require that social workers primarily act as community organizers or developers, not clinicians focusing on coordination and development of material resources.*

Keywords: Spirituality, posttraumatic growth, natural disaster, Hakka spirit, symbolic interactionism

INTRODUCTION

On September 21, 1999, a devastating earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale, which Taiwanese people refer to as the 921 Earthquake, struck central Taiwan. The earthquake was responsible for approximately 2,423 deaths and 11,305 injuries. More than 100,000 people were left homeless. Of all the affected townships, Tung Shih suffered the highest death toll, with 358 ("Social aid," n.d.; Liao, 1999). This article reports on a study of Tung Shih earthquake survivors and service providers, with a focus on social workers and the extent to which spirituality contributed to the posttraumatic growth of survivors.

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SPIRITUALITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS

Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) have argued that spirituality—in the form of *religious beliefs*—can offer a direct means for survivors to perceive benefit evolving from disasters. Later work has continued to make the case, though in more general terms. For example, Saleebey (2002) claimed that spirituality influences survivor coping styles both in the face of disaster and in their ensuing daily life. Cadell, Regehr, and Hemsworth (2003) agreed, arguing further that making sense of an event—attaching meaning to it—is an essential component of successful coping that survivors often attempt to resolve through spirituality (p. 280). Nathanson (2003) contributed an important and perhaps distinguishing qualifier by, not only claiming that "spirituality is an important force in recovery" (p. 63), but also by pointing out that spirituality has historically been associated, across different cultures and religions, with the human search to find meaning in suffering. This was also noted by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995, 1996), who incorporated *spirituality* as a subscale in their Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI).

In Taiwan, a collectivist culture with strong clan ties, spirituality is seen as both a philosophy and a way of life—primarily expressed through a variety of religious traditions. Notions of living harmoniously with Nature are a predominant feature of spirituality. Nature is an active force in everyday life, particularly in the region included in this study, where natural disasters, though varying in intensity and severity, are frequent. Generally speaking, people in Taiwan consider natural disasters the will of the gods (Davison & Reed, 1998; Jordan, 1999). Spirituality in Taiwan is based on a set of beliefs in the fundamental interconnectedness of all natural things and all forms of life, that "all things of heaven and earth are connected by the life force" (Davison & Reed, 1998, p. 32).

These cultural beliefs conform to a pattern strongly noted by social work writers in Western cultures and subcultures, where investigations also indicate that a conflation of spirituality and religion occur in social performance (Amato-von Hemert, 1994; Canda, 1998; Coholic, 2003; Lowenberg, 1988; Sheridan, Bullis, Adcock, Berlin, & Miller, 1992). For example, in Coholic's study of spirituality and religion among feminists, Coholic noted that, while spirituality and religion are conceptualized in different ways, they "overlap and influence each other..." (p. 49). Further, the reports of her study participants emphasized:

> The development of spirituality is, above all, a complex and lifelong process that sometimes encompasses struggle. The process of spiritual development can be influenced by family, friends, culture, religious/spiritual traditions, and transformative life events, which can act as catalysts for spiritual discovery and exploration (p. 62).

Every one of the influences on the process of spiritual development described by Coholic (2003) are important to social workers and are applicable to the situation described in this study. However, the study situation is also notable as an example of the difficulties of conducting Western World social work successfully

in a collectivist culture like Taiwan. The cultural narrative of the Hakka spirit in Taiwan, described briefly in the next section and elsewhere (Jang & LaMendola, 2006), is an example. In the spirit of the Hakka pioneers, the narrative of their past becomes what Mink (1987) would call a "...primary cognitive instrument … rivaled only by theory and metaphor as irreducible ways of making the flux of experience comprehensible" (p. 3). Survivors of the earthquake especially note the palpable influence of Hakka aphorisms on their behavior. This type of narrative contributes as well to the development of what Hieb (2002), in his study of the Hopi, has called a "moral community." Such beliefs are considered a key facet to consider in contemporary risk management (Paton, 2006) and social work interventions; for example, it is thought that beliefs that a spiritual life force is "watching over" daily needs may bring great comfort to survivors and actually promote resilience and growth in the aftermath of trauma.

Growth from trauma is a notion that can escape notice in much of the social work disaster literature. While definitions of resilience, common in social work (e.g., Barker, 1999, p. 411), infer that there are intrinsic resources that can be called upon to maintain or regain pre-disaster levels of functioning, recent research has gone further, identifying transformations that go beyond a return to pre-disaster functioning levels in a manner characterized by growth (Paton, Violanti & Smith, 2003; Violanti, Paton, & Dunning, 2000).

Violanti et al. (2000) have acknowledged that the paradigm in disaster studies is progressively shifting from a pathologic one with a focus on loss or negative psychological outcomes to a *salutogenic* one. Violanti et al. claimed that a *salutogenic* paradigm directs researchers to look at natural coping resources and encourages them to consider how individuals, families, and communities can draw upon family and social support, as well as other resources to facilitate resilience. *Salutogenesis* refers to people's ability to thrive in disasters, to achieve greater personal strength, and to have a better understanding of the disaster. In line with Violanti et al., Norwood, Ursano, and Fullerton (2000) have suggested that a paradigm shift from a focus on disease to health is necessary in the field of disaster psychiatry. They have encouraged psychiatrists to facilitate the natural recovery process and prevent psychiatric concerns, instead of treating pathology.

In addition, Ursano, Fullerton, and Norwood (1995) found that, for some survivors, trauma and loss facilitate a move toward health. They argued that a traumatic experience can help survivors recognize a previously disorganized life and re-evaluate their values and goals—citing other disaster studies to support their claims:

> Many survivors of the 1974 tornado in Xenia, Ohio . . . learned that they could handle crises effectively (84%) and believed that they were better off for having met this type of challenge (69%) (Taylor, 1997; Quarentelli, 1985) . . . Sledge and colleagues (1980) found that approximately one-third of U.S. Air Force Vietnam-era prisoners of war reported having benefited from their prisoner of war experience; they believed that they had developed an important reprioritization of their life goals, placing new emphasis on the importance of family and country (p. 197).

Table 1:   *Hakka Spirit*
Migrated from China to Taiwan without a penny
Worked hard tilling the fields and mountains
Lived frugally for decades without complaint
The tradition of frugality and diligence passed on from generation to generation without change in three hundred years
Never, never, never abandon the Hakka spirit
Living standards are improving, society is change
Traditional morals and values are facing challenges
Advice to all the Hakka is to seek perfection in conscience
Be a righteous and kindhearted person just like our ancestors
Never, never, never forget the teaching of our ancestors
Translated by Li-ju Jang

Symbolic interactionists might argue that spirituality would be, to some extent, shaped by the traumatic experience and constructed continuously through inter-actions between people, creating bonds of shared meanings in the process. In such a view, the social work frame of reference for spirituality would include: a) social processes, b) social norms, c) shared meanings, and d) context (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). This is the frame of reference for spirituality in this study—as a dynamic but also a historically-based narrative that "everybody knows" in Mink's (1987, 2001) terms—one that re-minds people as they act and react to their situation. An example of this is a Hakka folk song (Table 1) known by most people in the region.

For the authors, this song represents the Hakka view of the world, a world occupied by a people who are guided by the practices of those before them, but who ultimately use the memories of the past to create new forms in the present. It allowed us, as social work researchers, to hear the human promise of disaster. In that promise, survivors act in purposeful ways, *reminded* by their ancestors and their historical understanding to use social practices of great power, such as those embedded in their song, as a spiritual narrative to transform their lives.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods design that Creswell (2003) terms a *concurrent triangulation approach* was employed. For the quantitative portion of the study, it was assumed that a person who reports posttraumatic growth (PTG) must have a level of resilience sufficient enough to support growth. The focus was on measuring post-traumatic growth. The Chinese version of Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) was used to test a general hypothesis that those "participants who report contin-

uous religious affiliation will have a significantly higher score on the PTGI than those who report no religious affiliation." Spirituality was measured by participant reports of *continuous religious affiliation*—an indicator based on whether or not participants reported religious affiliation before and after the 921 Earthquake. While such an indicator would be understandably suspect in Western studies, the public admission of continuous religious affiliation in Taiwan is a serious matter and represents a deep spiritual commitment.

In the qualitative portion of the study, study participants, including survivors, service providers, and volunteers, were given opportunities to speak in their own language to share their stories related to changes experienced as a result of the 921 Earthquake and the contribution of spirituality. The stories were taken as narratives about posttraumatic growth.

Instrumentation

The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory developed by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995, 1996) was employed to assess posttraumatic growth of the 921 Earthquake survivors in Tung Shih. They first reviewed studies of perceived benefits and generated 34 items, then performed a principal component analysis (PCA) on those 34 items using varimax rotation, which assumed zero correlation between factors. They reported that five factors were extracted, which accounted for 55% of the common variance. A total of 21 items, with loading greater than .5 and cross-loading on any other factor no greater than .4, were included in the final version of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory. Then, Tedeschi and Calhoun performed a Pearson product-moment correlation between the total scores based on the 34-item and 21-item versions of the PTGI. The results indicated that there was an almost perfect correlation (r=.98) between these two versions of PTGI.

Further, Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995, 1996) reported that the internal consistency of the 21-item version of PTGI was α=90, and for the five factors, α ranged from .67 to .85. They claimed that all items were measuring a similar underlying construct, but none was overly redundant with the others, based on the findings of corrected item-scale correlations (r=.35 to r=.63). Its test-retest reliability over a two-month period was r=.71.

Because the written language used by the target population was Chinese, a Chinese version of the PTGI was required. Hence, the 21-item version of the PTGI was translated into Chinese. The first Chinese version of the PTGI was presented to a professional interpreter and four service providers who worked with survivors of the 921 Earthquake to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of the language use and word choice. Required revisions were made based on those experts' comments. The final Chinese version of the PTGI was a 21-item self-rating scale with a 6-point response format (0 = I did not experience this change as a result of the 921 Earthquake, 5 = I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of the 921 Earthquake). Higher scores indicated higher levels of posttraumatic growth. A total PTGI score of zero might suggest no posttraumatic growth occurred. Any score greater than zero indicated some levels of posttraumatic growth. Cronbach's alpha estimate for the Chinese version of PTGI in the present study was α=.96. Internal consistency reliabilities for five subscales were presented in Table 2.

Table 2:   *Cronbach's Alpha Estimates for the Chinese Version of Posttraumatic Growth Inventory Five Subscales*

PTGI Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha
Relating to Others	.89
New Possibilities	.84
Personal Strength	.86
Spiritual Change	.85
Appreciation of Life	.77

SAMPLING

A single-stage cluster sampling strategy was used in the recruitment of survey participants. The population of Tung Shih was broken down into clusters (Singleton & Straits, 1999) consisting of four natural groupings: a) schools, b) religious groups, c) governmental agencies, and d) community members. A total of 17 key informants from schools, religious groups, governmental agencies, and community assisted with questionnaire distribution and collection. Recruits for interviews were identified using a snowball sampling strategy. The criteria were that prospective participants must be: a) 18 years or older and survivors of the 921 Earthquake or b) service providers to survivors in Tung Shih, or c) volunteers who were involved in relief efforts and/or reconstruction projects in Tung Shih.

Data Collection and Analysis

To ensure a reasonable survey response rate, the PTGI was delivered in person by key informants or researchers. "Face" is very important to the people of Taiwan. It was thought that people were more likely to respond to this study if they were concerned about saving the "face" of themselves and the person who delivered the surveys. A total of 1,250 surveys were distributed to potential participants, resulting in a total of 640 completed surveys. Twenty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted. A parallel mixed analysis approach was employed, meaning that the results from the quantitative and qualitative analysis were not compared or consolidated until both sets of data analyses were completed (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003).

Participants

A slight majority of survey participants were female (65%) and Hakka (57%). Many were high school graduates (33%). Both before and after the disaster, about three quarters of the survey participants reported affiliating with Buddhism, Taoism, or Folk Religion. The 28 individuals who were interviewed included 16 survivors, six service providers, and six volunteers. Fourteen interviewees were in their 40s at the time of interview. Twenty-five reported experiencing loss of loved ones or were suffering from property damage. Fifteen participants reported affiliations with folk religion.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

Of the participants age 46 years or older, 88% reported "continuous religious affil-iation," whereas 68% of the participants ranging in age between 26 and 35 years reported "continuous religious affiliation." Ninety-seven percent of the partici-pants in the "less than junior high" education group reported "continuous reli-gious affiliation," while 65% of the participants in the "college or higher" educa-tion group reported "continuous religious affiliation." In general then, continuous religious affiliation was highest among study participants who were middle-aged or older and had not completed junior high.

About 45% of the participants in the "continuous religious affiliation" group, but only 23% of the participants in the "no religious affiliation" group, scored within the fourth or fifth quintile on the PTGI. To assess correlations among sample characteristics and the PTGI, the Pearson product-moment correlation was cal-culated (see Table 3).

Table 3: *Intercorrelations Between Post-traumatic Growth and Sample Characteristics*				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Age	-	-.29**	.23**	.20**
2. Education		-	-.27**	.01
3. Religious Affiliation			-	.19**
4. Posttraumatic Growth Inventory				-
Mean	3.02	3.52	0.79	57.66
SD	1.10	1.21	0.41	22.
*Note. **p<.01.*				

Here, *age* and *education* were treated as scale variables, because they had five or more ordered levels (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). The results showed that the PTGI was positively associated with *age* (r=.20, p<.01) and *religious affiliation* (r=.19, p<.01), which suggested that participants in the older age groups or those who reported *continuous religious affiliation* were more likely to score higher on the PTGI than others.

The result of an independent-sample *t*-test indicated that participants who reported *continuous religious affiliation* scored significantly higher on the PTGI than those who reported *no religious affiliation*, t(496) = 4.63, p<.01. The hypoth-esis that, those participants who report continuous religious affiliation will have a significantly higher score on the PTGI than those who report no religious affili-ation, was supported by this finding. Further, a hierarchical regression model sug-gested that spirituality (ß=.19, p<.01) was a significant predictor of survivors' PTG.

Qualitative Findings

Themes

Among the major themes important to social work that emerged from the interviews with survivors and service providers were three, which were based in traditional Taiwanese culture; namely, *the role of fate and destiny, ancestor worship*, and *lessons from gods*. The examples of each theme that follow are primarily extracts from interviews. In each case, social work notice is taken that survivors felt supported in their recovery and posttraumatic growth, regardless of the dominant theme that they expressed.

Traditional theme: Fate and destiny. Mr. Lu (participant names have been replaced with common Chinese family names) was a popular architectural designer who incorporated the concepts of Feng Shui and date-picking art into his designs. He commented that, ". . . with the knowledge of Feng Shui and date-picking art, I am able to provide extra services for my customers. My customers can expect 3-in-1 services from me!" Lu was an optimistic person, despite the calamities he experienced. He not only lost his wife and daughter to the disaster, but he was also paralyzed from the waist down due to severe spine injury. Lu stated that he knew that the Feng Shui of his family house was not good for his immediate family. He said that he had tried to change it, but he failed, because it involved all his extended family. Regarding his injury, Lu felt that people had done their best to help him. He stated that, if he could not be healed, it was because it was his destiny. "I believe in fate and I accept fate," Lu affirmed.

Generally, service providers reported that people in Tung Shih accepted natural disasters as the will of the gods. Ms. Jan, Mr. Hou, and Mr. Su reported that, when people in other areas experienced natural disasters, people in Tung Shih often said, "It's their turn now." To the people of Tung Shih, it was fair, because people took turns experiencing natural disasters.

Traditional theme: Ancestor worship. Ancestors—the experiences they survived, the resilience under great duress, and the values that they held—guide everyday behavior. Ms. Yu said:

> Ancestor worship is a way to show our gratitude for the foundation they laid for us . . . We are connected with our ancestors through daily ancestor worship and the annual tomb-sweeping festival. Those rituals constantly remind us not to bring shame to the family name and not to forget our family duties.

Ms. Yu stressed that daily ancestor worship provided the necessary strength to move forward with her life, while reminding her about who she was and her duties to her people. She said that she felt assurance that her ancestors and gods were with her. Other survivors asked Taoist priests to check on the Feng Shui of their ancestral tombs, because they were afraid that their sufferings resulted from damaged ancestral tombs.

Traditional theme: Lessons from gods. Some survivors believed that people would continue experiencing natural disasters until they learned the lessons that the gods wanted them to learn. Ms. Liu cited a Buddhist master saying, "People

experienced natural disaster because they did not live harmoniously with Nature. People were not honest with their fellowmen. Political turmoil and contentions among people resulted in natural disasters. Natural disaster was gods' way of cleansing evil doers." Ms. Jan stressed that, growing up in Taiwan, people were constantly being reminded about the folk saying, "Lift up your head and then you will know there are gods." People were told that gods watched people's deeds and thoughts. Gods rewarded people's good deeds and punished their evil doings.

Helping Services

Mr. Shu and Ms. Fu reported that several major hospitals set up medical booths, offering counseling services to survivors in Tung Shih, but that few survivors visited those "mental health professional" booths. Mr. Shu and Ms. Fu stated that the reason for the lack of use of the mental health professionals was that healing and recovery was associated with spirituality, not mental health. They reported that there were always long lines in front of booths offering religious remedies or folk healing arts. Mr. Shu and Ms. Fu commented that religious rituals were more powerful than professional counseling. They went on to emphasize that it was natural that survivors would prefer visiting a medium believed to be able to communicate with spiritual beings than a mental health professional. Mr. Shu also indicated that he participated in the seeding support group that was facilitated by a group of clinical psychologists from National Taiwan University. He said that he thought that the facilitators were good people, but somehow he felt that they could not bring inner peace to his life. Mr. Shu went on to explain that his spiritual beliefs provided explanations for many things that the psychologists could not explain. For example, there were proper spiritual rituals for the deceased to ensure that they were at peace that brought great comfort to survivors. Mr. Shu stressed that such beliefs were not superstitions but a matter of fact. He also pointed out that many survivors hired Feng Shui masters to rearrange their house settings, hoping the new arrangements could bring fortune to their families.

DISCUSSION

Study results indicate that, in Taiwan, a collectivist culture with widely shared cultural narratives spirituality has a significant effect on posttraumatic growth (PTG). This finding builds on Western studies that find that spirituality contributes to people's resilience and PTG (Cadell et al., 2003; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995, 1996). In addition, a hierarchical regression model used in the analysis suggests that spirituality is a significant predictor of posttraumatic growth.

As may be commonly experienced in this type of study, there are unexplored levels of analyses and uneven use of data collection techniques. Due to the nature of Taiwan's conservative collectivist culture, a non-probability sampling strategy was utilized for the quantitative research and snowball sampling for the qualitative research. Taiwanese people are relational, and connections are very important to them, so that research techniques were employed that could ensure adequate response rates. It is also important to note that, because Tung Shih is located in a water source reserve area and no manufacturing plants are allowed to be built there, younger generations were more likely to study or work in other areas and were therefore not represented well in this study. In addition, the older gen-

eration was more likely to be illiterate or elementary school dropouts and proba-
bly chose not to participate for those reasons. As a result, the majority of partici-
pants, in both the quantitative and qualitative studies, were more likely to be in
their 30s to 50s at the time of the study. Finally, the PTGI used for the quantitative
research was developed in an individualist culture in which the development of
relationships following adverse experience may represent a unique change to
social dynamics. In contrast, in collectivist societies, the importance and quality
of social relationships is far higher under normal circumstances. Hence, our
assumption, that the nature and implications of spiritual beliefs are sufficiently
similar across cultures to allow the original PTGI scale to be used, may be ques-
tioned.

The difficulty of cross-cultural comparisons is not ignored by symbolic interac-
tionists who would point out that meanings also vary between local cultures and
contexts, and that they change over time. Despite these limits, it is arguable that
the theory can provide social workers a rationale that supports understanding the
manner in which the 921 disaster survivors in this study define the reality and
meaning of the disaster. Further, symbolic interactionists view the self as dynam-
ic, creative, and adaptive, a view that is congruent with the definition of resilience.
This study contributes interesting possibilities to be further explored between
such theoretical perspectives and their possible utility in the investigation of dis-
asters in varying cultures (e.g., individualist vs. collectivist cultures).

The social work implications are much more involved than one might imagine
from first glance. While it would seem to be relatively straightforward to support
the emphasis on cultural appropriateness current in the field of social work today,
in fact, the meaning of that in this context would be to advise social workers to
work with and support spiritual leaders or folk healers who appear to be more
acceptable and helpful to the survivors. Social workers would also need primari-
ly to be community organizers, not clinicians focusing on coordination and
development of material resources. In fact, possibly the most serious problem
noted by participants was the lack of "government response" and the delay of
providers in delivering material resources and aid—a situation echoed in the 2004
tsunami and, more recently, hurricane Katrina in the United States. Those delays,
in themselves, cause traumatic effects. In other words, social workers need to
consider the dominant cultural narratives as an asset and shape their roles
accordingly—in terms of their contribution to recovery and growth. In this case,
it seems likely that preventative work in the form of material preparation and
response scenarios, the coordination and provision of immediate material aid,
meeting health needs, and dealing with resource issues are of paramount impor-
tance.

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Social Justice and Lesbian Feminism:
Two Theories Applied to Homophobia

Denise L. Levy

Abstract: *Trends in contemporary social work include the use of an eclectic theory base. In an effort to incorporate multiple theories, this article will examine the social problem of homophobia using two different theoretical perspectives: John Rawls' theory of social justice and lesbian feminist theory. Homophobia, a current social problem, can be defined as "dislike or hatred toward homosexuals, including both cultural and personal biases against homosexuals" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 2). Rawls' theory of justice and lesbian feminist theory are especially relevant to the issue of homophobia and provide a useful lens to understanding this social problem. In this article, these two theories will be summarized, applied to the issue of homophobia, and compared and contrasted based on their utility.*

Keywords: Homophobia, theory, lesbian feminism, social justice

Practicing social workers encounter a wide variety of client situations that often require the use of multiple theories and interventions. It is important for social workers to be able to use a range of theories to inform their practice with unique clients (Lehmann & Coady, 2001). The more tools that social workers have at their disposal, the better equipped they will be to help clients. In fact, "the valuing of multiple perspectives for understanding and intervening . . . are consistent with and can inform social work practice" (Lehmann & Coady, 2001, p. 13). In this spirit, this article will examine the social problem of homophobia using two different theoretical perspectives: John Rawls' theory of social justice and lesbian feminist theory.

Homophobia is an important concern for social workers today. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1999) Code of Ethics, social workers should understand oppression based on sexual orientation, advocate for equal access and equal rights for all individuals, promote respect for diversity, and work to end social injustice and discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation. First and foremost among these directives is the call for social workers to understand oppression, which includes homophobia.

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In defining homophobia, it should be distinguished from heterosexism. Lorde (2001) defined homophobia as "a terror surrounding feelings of love for members of the same sex and thereby a hatred of those feelings in others" (p. 234). On the other hand, heterosexism is the societal superiority of heterosexuality (Krieglstein, 2003; Lorde, 2001). In other words, homophobia signifies an individual's beliefs or feelings about homosexuals; the broader term, heterosexism, deals with the denial of privilege to non-heterosexuals at the societal level (Simoni & Walters, 2001). These concepts are certainly intertwined, and both will be addressed in this article. Furthermore, although the focus is on homophobia against gay and lesbian individuals, this discussion is certainly relevant to discrimination against other queer populations.

In an effort to better understand homophobia, this article will examine this social problem through the lens of two theories: John Rawls' theory of justice and lesbian feminist theory. Specifically, there will be a focus on the contribution of each perspective to understanding homophobia. The two theories will be compared based on their utility and their implications for social work practice.

RAWLS' THEORY OF JUSTICE

Basics of the Theory

John Rawls, born in 1921, was a major American political theorist (Martin, 2002). Rawls' book, *A Theory of Justice*, published in 1971, "stimulated a revival of attention to moral philosophy . . . [and] made a sophisticated argument for a new concept of justice, based on simple fairness" (Martin, 2002, p. 19). This theory is certainly relevant to social work, especially considering the profession's value of social justice (NASW, 1999). Furthermore, this theory, as outlined below, can provide a unique framework in which to view and examine homophobia. John Rawls' theory of justice includes three main concepts: reflective deliberation, the original position, and a well-ordered society.

Reflective Deliberation. In reflective deliberation, rational people generate ideas regarding what is just or right, as well as what is unjust or wrong. In other words, individuals deliberate and reflect on what is just in order to come up with considered judgments (Kaufman, 2006). These considered judgments are simply a list of what individuals find to be right through the reflective deliberation process. Once considered judgments are identified, they can be tested using the original position (Rawls, 2001).

The Original Position. In the original position, individuals are blinded to their position, status, and wealth in society as they debate considered judgments (Rawls, 2001). For example, if a rational individual does not know whether he or she will be rich or poor, that individual will most likely advocate for programs to assist underprivileged groups. Because individuals do, in fact, know their positions in society, the original position is more of a thought experiment than a reality. However, utilizing this "veil of ignorance," in which individuals test principles of justice while being ignorant of their positions in society, is certainly useful (Rawls, 2001). The idea is that individuals will act in

their best interest but, without knowing their eventual societal status, they will choose principles of justice that are beneficial to everyone. Essentially, individuals will approve principles that forbid anyone from being oppressed so that they can keep from being exploited themselves (Nathanson, 1998).

If the considered judgments do not stand up to the hypothetical test of the original position, further reflection and deliberation is needed. Rawls (2001) explained that:

> By going back and forth [between reflective deliberation and the origi-nal position] . . . I assume that eventually we shall find a description of the initial situation that both expresses reasonable conditions and yields principles which match our considered judgments duly pruned and adjusted. This state of affairs I refer to as reflective equilibrium (p. 58).

Rawls asserted that reflective equilibrium will lead to the formation of two central principles of justice: the liberty and difference principles (Rawls, 2001; Nathanson, 1998).

A Well-Ordered Society. Rawls (2001) explained that the process of reflective equilibrium will always lead to the liberty and difference principles. The lib-erty principle outlines basic human rights and states that all people will have equal rights in a just society (Nathanson, 1998). The difference principle, though it does allow for some economic inequalities, focuses on providing the greatest benefit to those who are least advantaged (Nathanson, 1998). This entire process of reflective discourse and the original position leads to and is based on a well-ordered society, or a society in which every member follows and adheres to the principles of justice.

Assumptions

Rawls' theory of justice includes several assumptions and may not be consid-ered a very practical theory. For example, critics might question the utility and value of a hypothetical thought experiment. In fact, as everyone knows their place in society, the "veil of ignorance" is impossible. However, the theoretical situation is useful in contemplating social justice and principles of justice in a new way. This theory also posits that we live in a well-ordered society, and Rawls (2001) acknowledged this as a limitation. Finally, Rawls (2001) assumed that individuals in the original position will always come up with his two prin-ciples of justice: the liberty and differences principles. It is, in fact, the differ-ence principle that highlights one of the main assumptions of this theory—the assumption of deep inequalities in society (Rawls, 2001).

Definition of Homophobia

Rawls' theory of justice does not specifically speak to the social problem of homophobia. This issue may not be addressed simply because the theory is designed as a thought experiment and is not applied, by Rawls anyway, to everyday issues and problems. However, based on an understanding of the theory itself, inferences can be made regarding how it can be used to under-stand homophobia. In the theory of justice, the first principle is concerned

with basic human rights and liberties. The second deals with greater assistance to the least advantaged in a society. Rawls' theory, therefore, would characterize homophobia and heterosexism as removing these liberties and continuing the cycle of oppressing the least advantaged. Rawls (2001) explained that basic liberties include "freedom of the person, which includes freedom from psychological oppression and physical assault and dismemberment (integrity of the person)" (p. 60). Consequently, homophobia would be defined as the psychological oppression of gay and lesbian individuals. This oppression would go against respect and self-respect, which Rawls "regards as a primary social good—a value more important than money and power" (Jones, 1980, p. 286).

Causes of Homophobia

Although the theory of justice does not specifically describe the causes of social injustices and social problems, these can be inferred. Using the definition of homophobia as the psychological oppression of homosexuals, the theory could identify a variety of causes of this social problem. For example, Nathanson (1998) discussed the importance of self-interest in Rawls' theory:

> To take account of these facts about human motivation, Rawls assumes that people in the original position are concerned with advancing their own interests. They want to make sure that their own lives will go well, and they want principles of justice that will protect them from various kinds of bad conditions (p. 83).

In society, some individuals are totally motivated by self-interest and, knowing their position in society, they want what is best for them and for those like them. If these individuals are part of the heterosexual majority, then the result could be heterosexism and limited opportunities for gay and lesbian individuals.

Homophobia might also be caused by individuals who have not tested their considered judgments in the original position. These individuals, for example, might be surrounded with others who are homophobic and never question this belief. If examined using the Rawls' "veil of ignorance," though, homophobia would be discarded as unjust.

Another cause of homophobia could be discriminatory religious views. Rawls explained that principles of justice must be just in and of themselves, and he discouraged any appeal to a religious or moral authority when deciding these principles (Rawls, 1999). However, people do defer to their religion for what is right, moral, and just. Because many forms of Christianity, for example, consider homosexuality to be a sin (Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, & Hecker, 2001), the result could be fear of and prejudice against homosexuals.

Rawls' theory of justice assumes that social problems and inequalities exist in society, but it does not explicitly discuss causes of these issues. Therefore, in inferring causes based on the tenets of the theory, the result might be less than satisfying. For example, the social justice perspective does not account for homophobia being caused by lack of contact with homosexuals.

Solutions and Implications

Rawls' theory provides a thought experiment in which to test our considered judgments about what is right and wrong. This, in and of itself, can be a solution to homophobia. The original position provides a way for individuals to suppose that they do not know whether they will be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer, or straight. Because of self-interest and other principles at work in the original position, individuals will not likely stand for homophobia to be considered just in a society if they do not know what their sexual orientation would be. Any rational individual who goes through this hypothetical situation will acknowledge that homophobia is unjust. Because the "veil of ignorance" is not truly possible, we are left with the question—what practical solutions, then, does this theory provide to this social problem?

Rawls explains that the original position will lead to the formation of two principles of justice (Rawls, 2001). If applied across a society, these two principles can encourage social justice and discourage social injustice. Furthermore, in employing the liberty principle, all prejudice against gay and lesbian individuals would be considered unjust. In addition to equal liberties, gays and lesbians would be given greater assistance under the difference principle. Though it does allow for economic inequalities, the difference principle states that the greatest benefits must be provided to those who are least advantaged (Nathanson, 1998). Because social workers have historically been concerned with social justice and empowering the least advantaged in society, this theory provides an appropriate framework for interventions. It supports social workers in their efforts to raise awareness about homophobia and heterosexism, lobbying politicians regarding related issues, petitioning teachers and educators concerning school curriculum changes, and increasing community outreach programs to gay and lesbian individuals.

LESBIAN FEMINIST THEORY

Basics and Assumptions

Lesbian feminist theory had its beginnings in the 1970s with lesbians who felt like they did not have a place in the radical feminist women's movement (Saulnier, 1996; Stein, 1997). The early lesbian feminist movement joined together:

> 1) lesbians who felt denied, silenced, or even expelled from the women's movement by heterosexual feminists; 2) lesbians who were dismayed by the inability of the gay movement to incorporate lesbian perspectives; and 3) radical feminists whose analysis of sexism extended to an analysis of heterosexism (pp. 76-77).

These individuals, despite their differences, held a couple of the same central beliefs: lesbians should not be devalued based on their sexual orientation; and heterosexism, rather than patriarchy, should be the primary focus of the feminist movement (Garber, 2001). These women believed that heterosexuality eliminated the solidarity between women, lesbianism was a political choice, and that women often experienced compulsory heterosexuality (Enns, 1997; Hawkesworth, 2006).

Although Saulnier (1996) referred to lesbian feminist *theory*, the term "lesbian feminism" often signifies the movement itself. This article will utilize the central ideas from the lesbian feminist movement as a unique theory or standpoint by which to analyze homophobia. In fact, Jackson and Jones (1998) explained that lesbian feminist theory, rather than emerging from academia, is one of the few theories based on experience. Further, contemporary scholars tend to refer to lesbian feminism as a theory (Enns, 1997; Enns & Sinacore, 2005; Jackson & Jones, 1998; Lehmann & Coady, 2001).

Lesbian feminist theory is a causal theory. It outlines very clearly the causes of social problems, such as homophobia, and it proposes suggestions for how to rectify these issues. In fact, a core ambition of the lesbian feminist movement was to create a sort of lesbian nation, which might end homophobia (Garber, 2001). To be a lesbian feminist in the 1970s was to be political, and the politics of the woman-identified-woman focused on patriarchy and male privilege (Bunch, 2001; Stein, 1997).

Lesbian feminist theory is based on multiple assumptions, including one that makes this theory distinct from other feminist perspectives: eliminating patriarchy in our society will not necessarily produce an end to heterosexism (Saulnier, 1996). In addition, lesbian feminists assumed that sexuality would be the most important part of a lesbian's identity (Stein, 1997). They believed that a separate movement was needed in order for lesbians to find their rightful place in feminism. Furthermore, they concluded that the best way to accomplish feminist goals was for women to join together independently from men (Saulnier, 1996).

Definition of Homophobia

Some lesbian feminists use the term "homophobia" as synonymous with heterosexism (Saulnier, 1996). They do not differentiate between an individual's homophobia, the assumption of heterosexuality, and beliefs in the superiority of heterosexuality (Saulnier, 1996). Therefore, this theory includes the following individuals as homophobic: those who are prejudiced against homosexuals, those who fear homosexuals, and those who believe that heterosexuality is superior.

Causes of Homophobia

The cause of homophobia, when viewed from a lesbian feminist perspective, is the power and value that society gives to heterosexuals. In this theory, homophobia results from the notion that lesbianism is a threat to heterosexuality and male superiority (Bunch, 2001). Some causes of homophobia, however, are not considered in this theory. For example, lesbian feminists did not consider that lack of contact with homosexuals might fuel homophobia. This is evident in that they advocated increased separation and isolation from men and non-lesbians (Stein, 1997). In addition to lack of contact, religious beliefs are not considered to be a cause of homophobia in this theory.

Solutions and Implications

Lesbian feminist theory offers a clear solution to homophobia: creating a group of like-minded women to influence society (Garber, 2001). The solution

begins with creating such groups to form the lesbian feminist movement and eventually the lesbian nation. This nation would be one in which heterosexism was not superior and in which lesbians had equal opportunities and political power. In addition, lesbian feminism insists on political action and ending male supremacy; being a lesbian without action is not enough (Bunch, 2001). These individuals can challenge heterosexism by "denying women's 'innate' need for men" (Bunch, 2001, p. 129). Finally, this theory can serve as a basis for increasing social and community interventions for lesbians. In particular, lesbian feminists encourage programs where women are empowering and assisting other women.

COMPARING THE TWO THEORIES

Rawls' theory of social justice is a broad theory that can be easily applied to almost any social problem. The liberty and difference principles provide a way to tackle social injustices. Furthermore, by using the thought experiment of the original position, one can test considered judgments about society in order to see if these judgments are truly just. However, Rawls' theory is almost too broad in its nature. It does not adequately explain causes of social problems, such as homophobia. Furthermore, this theory is designed for a well-ordered society in which all members will follow the principles of justice. In reality, there are people in society who break laws and commit unjust actions. This theory does not address how to handle these situations; thus, other theories are needed in order to fully understand homophobia.

Lesbian feminist theory, on the other hand, is very narrow in its scope. It is focused on the specific experience of lesbians in a heterosexist society. This theory does address the causes and solutions of a specific social problem, homophobia. Though lesbian feminism provides a unique and important perspective on homophobia, it does not encompass a wide variety of social problems. Therefore, this theory is a good counterpart to social justice theory in understanding homophobia.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The NASW (1999) *Code of Ethics* states that "social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to . . . sexual orientation" (p. 9). This mandate is especially important in today's society; social workers often encounter homophobia and heterosexism in practice. Gays and lesbians may experience homophobia and heterosexism in the form of jokes, ridicule, and violent physical attacks (Garnets, Herek, & Levy, 2003). In addition, these individuals are not afforded the rights given to heterosexuals, including the ability to adopt children, marry partners, or visit partners in the hospital.

Using the theoretical perspectives presented in this article, social work practitioners can assist their clients in a variety of ways. Rawls' theory of justice is helpful when organizing or planning educational seminars around homophobia and heterosexism. Social workers can present Rawls' concept of the original position in order to have attendees analyze these social issues. In addition to educational

programs, Rawls' theory of justice provides a framework by which to advocate for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer clients.

Social workers can also use the tenets of lesbian feminist theory to create support groups and networks of underrepresented individuals. According to this theory, it is important for women to empower each other and experience solidarity. By starting these support groups, social workers can ensure that women and other non-heterosexual community members encourage and empower each other.

In conclusion, no one theory is all-inclusive when practicing social work and doing research. Both lesbian feminism and Rawls' theory of justice provide distinctive and significant elements to the understanding of homophobia. As this article has demonstrated, it is only through using multiple perspectives and theories that inclusive comprehension can be achieved. In using a broad theory, such as social justice and a specific one like lesbian feminism, the framework for understanding homophobia highlights both macro and micro aspects of this issue.

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Social Work Practice with Arab Families:
The Implications of Spirituality vis-à-vis Islam

Ronald E. Hall

Abstract: *In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, spiritualism has become apparent as critical to social work practice with Arab families. Regrettably, research on Arab families today is all but non-existent. Their belief in Islam is the fastest growing form of spirituality in Central Asia. Social workers who do not acknowledge this fact will be at a severe disadvantage in their attempts to treat Arab clientele. It is not compulsory that practitioners endorse client belief systems or other aspects of their spirituality, but practitioners should acknowledge said systems as a critical point in the client's frame of reference. In the interest of social justice, social workers are thus challenged to develop creative treatment strategies less confined to Western bias.*

Keywords: Spirituality, Islam, social work, families, Arab

INTRODUCTION

Post September 11, 2001, spiritualism has become apparent as critical to social work practice with Arab families (Kilpatrick & Holland, 1990). Professional and anecdotal accounts of spiritualism offer considerable evidence to substantiate that claim. Dominating the aftermath of horrendous destruction, political pundits of every tenor find little basis for disagreement in the wake of renewed patriotism, stern warnings, and calls to military action. Within the midst of such fervor, social work will require a more informed response if it is to remain viable and loyal to its Code of Ethics (Gambrill, 2001). Furthermore, despite the events in New York and Washington, D.C., which ended in commercial aircraft being used as missiles to assault non-military targets, America will prevail. No doubt, these most recent and past instances of Arab terrorism suggest concern for America's ability to prevail, but any call to action must be tempered with patience. Patience will accommodate informed practice methods with Arab families, despite episodes of terrorism perpetrated by a few among their population. Failure on the part of family social workers to comprehend the circumstances will facilitate ignorance exacerbated by political repercussions.

Repercussions have the potential to dampen enthusiasm for the incorporation of spirituality into social work practice. Such a dampening effect extends to practice

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with Arab families who may find themselves subjected to the auspices of Western service providers. Without exception, spiritualism is a necessity of practice with Arab families that could impede the ability of well-meaning social workers who lack either the knowledge or motivation to apply it (Hodge, 2000). Furthermore, in an effort to divert attention from the issue of spirituality, activists have expanded the rhetoric of social justice to include age, sexual orientation, gender, and disability (Sam, 2000). Yet, within society—and in spite of rhetoric to the contrary—spiritualism for many remains pertinent. Although the literature acknowledges spiritualism among the list of treatment resources, amidst the augmentation of social issues, it has been all but trivialized (Solomon, 1992). Greater focus on ethnic and cultural diversity will enable social workers to assist Arab clientele without incident. Instead, discussions pertaining to Arab families rely too heavily upon circumventing controversy and/or discussion of terrorist acts. In the outcome, rather than asking how they might incorporate spiritualism, social workers pose nebulous questions, such as: "What are the deficits of Arab families?" "In what ways can Arab families adjust to the American cultural ideal?"

Regrettably, most social work research on Arab families today continues to be all but non-existent (Schiele, 1997). In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, such oversight has loomed conspicuous in social work practice. While American diversity has experienced a significant increase in recent years, mainstream studies invariably focus on Western/Eurocentric resource models, which do not account for non-Western criteria or cultural variations in family clientele. Any attempt on the part of practitioners to stray from standard models encourages invitation to ostracism in journal publication and ridicule by mainstream professionals (Schiele, 1996).

Fortunately, in recent decades, increasing numbers of family studies have begun to focus on spirituality not addressed by the mainstream (Phan, 2000). These studies seek the incorporation of religion and other manifestations of spirituality that have been heretofore dismissed as inappropriate for practice settings. In fact, spirituality has been proven invaluable to Arab families and the social workers who incorporate it into their practice. Furthermore, spirituality utilized by social workers and other helping professionals assists community-based groups and policymakers. Spirituality allows for the development of comprehensive program interventions that fortify and give voice to non-Western families or families otherwise not identified with the Western mainstream of society.

Conscientious social workers would be remiss to exclude a critical aspect of life from practice with families. Spirituality may facilitate access to family values, family belief systems, and family practices otherwise inaccessible by traditional methods. Furthermore, spirituality for Arab families may contain coping mechanisms that enable them to confront and overcome the many challenges of daily life. In an effort to educate and contribute to the effectiveness of social work practice, this paper will have four objectives: 1) provide a beginning introduction to the history of the Arab population, including spirituality as per the religion of Islam; 2) illustrate the importance of spiritualism vis-à-vis Arab families; 3) provide implications for social work practice; and 4) make available a resource to assist social workers and policymakers in the design and development of treatments that incorporate spirituality.

ARAB/ISLAMIC HISTORY

Despite their growth among America's population, Arab families who follow Islam represent an unfamiliar component of society (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Their numbers have caused concern among Judeo-Christian scholars for the mounting tension that has accompanied their growth. As Islam continues to become a more significant aspect of Western society, it will necessitate portrayal of its followers fairly, objectively, and accurately. Suffice it to say that, in Western countries, American families who follow Islam may eventually outnumber the followers of Judaism. Given the continued Middle-East unrest, recognition of this fact will be critical to maintaining civil order and governmental stability.

The potential for tension brought about by Arab families who follow Islam is a consequence of their relocation to Western societies. In the United States, there are now more than 1,000 mosques and Islamic centers, where followers may worship their faith (Shuja, 2001). These Arab families are respected and productive members of society who are engineers, attorneys, social workers, etc. Their numbers are calculated to be in the millions and still growing. In fact, Dearborn, Michigan, ranks as home to one of the largest Arab and/or Islamic populations outside the Middle-East (Goodstein, 2001). No doubt, such a large population has given America cause to anticipate cultural tensions between Islamic factions and its citizens, which extends throughout the Western world. What is more, America is not alone in receiving those who follow Islam. Among European nations in toto, there are currently 20,000,000 followers of the Islamic faith. Nearly half–8,000,000–reside in Western Europe. When the Republic of Turkey is calculated among this number, it increases dramatically to at least 50,000,000 (Shuja, 2001).

While most Americans and other Westerners known very little about the religion of Islam, it is the fastest growing form of spirituality in Central Asia. Following the collapse of Communism in the U.S.S.R., Kazakhastan, Kyrghystan, Uzbekistan, Turkemenistan, and Tajikistan, by official decree, became Islamic nations. Among the French, Islam rivals Catholicism in the number of individuals who follow the traditions of an established faith. Among the British, followers of Islam exist in numbers large enough to advocate for state subsidies in the funding of Islamic schools (Shuja, 2001). Among Germans, similar efforts were introduced by Turkish immigrants in the 1970s. Even in Australia, Islam has become a mainstay of the population, given its being situated adjacent to the largest Islamic country in the world, i.e., Indonesia.

Families who follow Islam are a diverse population, but repercussions from September 11, 2001 have been directed primarily at Arab members of the faith and Arab Christians (Kennedy, 2001). The origin of the Arab population is associated with Semitic peoples on what is referred to as the Arabian Peninsula. The term "Arab" in America more often includes those who regard their mother language as Arabic. Arab countries consist of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the West Bank, and Yemen.

There is disagreement as to how the term "Arab" came to be. Scholars on more than one occasion have redefined its meaning. Some, in particular, have associat-

ed the origin of the term with an ancient patriarch, Qahtan, whose tribal group was thought to have originated in Saudi Arabia (Glubb, 1969). Others equate the origin of Arabs with nomadic peoples who resided in parts of the Arabian Peninsula (Glubb, 1969). Subsequently, the local population in the same area was not considered Arab. Still, others applied the term to residents of the entire Arabian Peninsula and the desert areas of the Middle-East.

Arab people may form significant communities elsewhere in the world, including U.S. non-Arab immigrants who are often assumed to be Arab, but, in fact, are separate and apart from the true Arab population. They include Jews in North Africa who speak Arabic, Kurds, Berbers, Copts, and Druze. Christians who speak Arabic and reside in countries, such as Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan, are counted among the number of those regarded as Arab (Glubb, 1969).

There has been an ongoing effort on the part of Arab leaders in the 20th century to form an Arab nation. It would consist of Morocco on the west and across the Middle-East to the borders of Iran and Turkey. That not being possible, the various Arab nations have joined to form the Arab League. The purpose of the Arab League is to garner unity around issues of Arab interest, such as oil prices, Colonialism, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Today, the Arab League is composed of 22 member-states. Their ownership of two-thirds of the world's oil reserves has made them a formidable social, economic, and political force. In the aftermath of WW II, much of their energy and resources have been devoted to their relations with Israel. Their belief that the State of Israel was brought about by confiscation of Arab land resulted in four Arab-Israeli wars. Violence associated with that issue has remained a primary factor in the perpetration of terrorism not irrelevant to social work practice (Kulwicki & Miller, 1999).

ARAB SPIRITUALITY

Islam is by far the prevailing manifestation of spirituality among families of Arab descent. In Middle-Eastern villages, individuals are born into the Islam faith and are expected to remain committed to it for life. Their commitment to Islam is so old and deep-rooted that it has permeated all aspects of family life (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). It is most evident in the belief system held by persons dedicated to the faith. These beliefs are considered canons and are not subject to debate. Perhaps foremost in importance among such canons is a belief in the oneness of Allah (God). That belief is associated with the prophet Mohammed. According to Arab tradition, Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah. While the Koran regards Allah as an ordinary human being, in the Arab belief system, Mohammed has been accorded the status of a divine entity (Wasfi, 1964).

Akin to Mohammed in status is the canon that takes the Koran to be the literal word of Allah. The Koran is the holy literature that exemplifies the final revelations of mankind. It holds the directives for life to which all Arabs must submit. Not to be minimized in context is its recognition of Gabriel. Gabriel is the most prominent among angels and is considered to be the bearer of the revelation and spirit of holiness. Belief in angels is essential, because it enables the last Arab canon, which is life after death. Dependent upon how one lives, reward or punishment will await him or her in the hereafter (Siegel, 1980).

Despite fundamental differences between various Arab factions, Arab families place a high value on spirituality in the form of Islam. The patriarchal arrangement is its traditional family structure. Both recent and not-so-recent Arab immigrants who follow Islam conform to a hierarchical organization of authority that extends to roles, obligations, and status. The welfare of the family supersedes the welfare of the individual, making it the basis of identity (Wasfi, 1964). Family is furthermore a reference point for behavior and spiritual directives. Its union all but completely negates individuality and/or independence—a concept that is foreign to Western mores.

Especially among Arab families where Islam is the spiritual tradition, reverence for the patriarch, as well as concern for the family's status, provides a strong sense of solidarity and loyalty (p. 44). Hence, the individual family member is not free to live independently but must consider family in each of his or her life decisions as prescribed by the Koran. The Koran, being the direct instruction from Allah, means that family members are expected to fulfill rules of behavior, family roles, such as husband, wife, child, etc., without the opportunity for personal input or preference. An individual's ability to adhere to spiritual directives reflects not so much upon him or her personally, but upon the family and its kinship network. In the Islamic tradition, males are then more valued than females, which may cause conflict in Western practice settings. However, unless influenced by Western norms, anxiety levels from this secondary status may not increase for women of traditional Arab families.

The importance of religious spiritualism among Arab families is evident in the extreme reluctance of individuals to yield to conversion (p. 49). Christian missionaries of the last century are well aware of this reluctance. The number of Arab believers who have converted from Islam to Christianity is very small. For the individual Arab, family is not irrelevant to that small number, as the family role in the existence of the community is crucial. Thus, those families who migrate to the U.S. more often send for their relatives who are in the "old country." Once abroad, there are few who do not have blood ties with the "old country." Those who do stand out, due to their difficulty in finding jobs or otherwise sustaining themselves. Frustrated, such Arabs without family frequently return to the "old country," where normal family ties are a way of life. This significance to family is evident by the fact that whole Arab communities may contain a small number of patrilineages (p. 22). Consequently, there is considerable overlap between family and spirituality within the Arab community. However, while family is an important social structure, spirituality, vis-à-vis Islam, guides life and the family belief system. Social workers who do not acknowledge this fact will be at a severe disadvantage in their attempts to treat Arab clientele. Those who do will consider the values extended from spirituality when working with such families. Values recognized by the Koran include the following:

> Respect for elders and parents,
>
> Wealth and male children,
>
> Subordination of women to men,
>
> Modesty,

Intensive religiosity,

Equality of all human beings, and

Health and strength (p. 61-62).

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The implications of spirituality for social work practice in the U.S. extend from the Colonial era (Farber, 1977-78). During this time, various Christian sects took part in an effort to ensure the new nation would not validate, by official decree, any one religion, philosophy, or other manifestation of spirituality. That notion was put forth by Roger Williams and others who felt imposed upon by any religious doctrine to which they did not aspire. The preferred separation of church and state also accommodated the emerging diversity that characterized the flow of immigrant and native people who occupied American shores. Consequently, religious movements in both the New England North and the Protestant South failed in their attempts to institutionalize religion (Levine, 1994). That concept enabled complete separation of church and state contained in the U.S. Constitution.

In comparison with other nations today, there is relatively less confrontation between church and state in America. However, existing lines of demarcation have not eliminated problems completely. School systems on occasion have sought to solicit federal tax dollars to fund religious curriculums (Midgley, 1990). At the turn of the century, federal courts still continue to grapple with various religious factions that construct creative mechanisms to obtain federal funds. Social workers have not been isolated from the efforts of such activists, who many see as violating the Constitution in their attempts to federally-fund religious education. In the aftermath, family practitioners have been less inclined to utilize spiritual resources for fear that spirituality is not only biased but unconstitutional, as well.

The implications of spirituality for practice with Arab families include the need for practitioners to acknowledge, and when appropriate, apply values, belief systems, and other culture-specific criteria. This will provide the practitioner with alternatives to bringing about the desired change or coping-mechanism. It is not compulsory that practitioners endorse client belief systems or other aspects of spirituality, but they should acknowledge said systems as a critical point in the client's frame of reference.

Social workers who serve Arab communities would be advised to cultivate working relationships with Islamic clergy. These relationships might prove useful in the clarification of Arab norms, the facilitation of referrals, and the effective application of treatment strategies. Such relationships are mutually beneficial to the extent that both community and service provider is enabled by the information that is exchanged. While some Arab families may prefer assistance from Islamic personnel, others may be uncomfortable or self-conscious about expressing family concerns to Islamic members of a tight-knit community. Under such circumstances, the availability of professional social work practitioners might prove invaluable. What is more, the availability of social workers will be particularly helpful if, in fact, the spiritual system, i.e., Islam, is the focus of the client's

dysfunction. The professional social worker will allow the client to explore spiritual alternatives within the context of a spiritually-neutral environment.

From the perspective of the social worker, there are several reasons why practitioners might consider the incorporation of spirituality into their practice. First, the effects of spiritualism are well known and are likely to enable practice with Arab families (de la Rosa, 1988). Second, the term "spiritualism," for most social work practitioners, conjures images of legal conflicts, with the potential to charge emotions; when it is associated with stereotypes, it encourages knee-jerk condemnation of an entire race of people, their social structure, lifestyle, and other aspects of their being (Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001). The outcome will impair the ability of such groups to sustain themselves in the human social environment unless more rational social work factions prevail. Third, spiritualism must be viewed as being separate and apart from the legal process. To do otherwise will bias practice with Arab families, rendering social work as being less potent in its ability to accommodate them.

Beyond legal conflicts, the most efficient means of enabling practice with Arab families is for social workers to become more educated about Arab spirituality. Education pertaining to spirituality and Arab populations, together, will enable practice (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Social workers who are so enabled will be in a better position to learn and assist Arab families in sustaining themselves. Furthermore, social workers who help to reinforce respect for Arab populations build the self-esteem of their younger family members, which will assist the group's ability to survive in toto. Equally important is the impact of education upon the society at-large. One approach to this method is for social workers to create tolerant environments by building bridges to Arab communities beyond what is professionally necessary. The focus on such communities should be their language, history, cultures, etc., rather than the terrorist acts associated with any one member(s). Community action groups and youth projects, which familiarize the otherwise unfamiliar, have the potential to validate social work as a helpful profession among Arab families who might not otherwise seek social work services (Edmond, 1990).

CONCLUSION

Due to the potential for harm and legal repercussions brought about by spirituality, it is critical that practitioners exercise caution when incorporating spirituality into their practice. Some aspects of Islamic and other manifestations of spirituality might appear abnormal and indeed dysfunctional from a Western perspective. For example, among certain Christian sects is the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues," where church-goers slip into a trance-like state and begin to verbalize in an unfamiliar language (Gilbert, 2000, p. 79). In the not too distant past, such persons may have been diagnosed as psychotic and prescribed psychotropic medication. In fact, among said Christian sects, "speaking in tongues" is not regarded as psychotic or abnormal. Indeed, it is perceived by these sects as a gift from God. Thus, for legal as well as practice reasons, social workers must resist the inclination to label spiritual phenomena simply because it is unfamiliar and/or not Western. This necessitates worth in the much-heralded emphasis upon diversity. Social workers who fail to value diversity not only impair client progress, but

they may also alienate spiritual resources in the community, which could prove invaluable to client treatment.

The Western assessment of spiritual phenomena should not suggest that pathology is non-existent. Some aspects of spirituality may, in fact, represent psychotic or other mental impairments. The Diagnostic Statistical Manual lists symptoms that include "bizarre" religious behaviors, delusions, obsessions, and rituals (p. 79). Subsequently, spiritual phenomena may indeed extend from psychosis and other mental disorders, which would otherwise require professional attention. When legitimate psychotic symptoms are evident, social workers must exercise the wherewithal to differentiate between what is normal spiritual phenomena and what is not in an effort to accurately assess and diagnose Arab clientele.

Professional social workers engaged in family practice with Arabs must also be cognizant of their own spiritual belief systems and what these spiritual belief systems convey to the client (p. 80). The practitioners' position on spirituality is relevant to setting the tone of the practice environment (p. 80). From those who endorse spirituality, to those who reject it, the practitioners' position on spirituality will have an impact on the practice setting in a myriad of ways but they will impact it, nonetheless. Hence, the practitioner who endorses spiritually may be inclined to overlook dysfunction in certain beliefs and practices, particularly if there is spiritual commonality between practitioner and client. Conversely, the practitioner who rejects spirituality will view the same beliefs and practices as dysfunctional when they are not. Social workers who reject spirituality may further unintentionally minimize its role in practice with Arab families for whom it is essential. Subconsciously, by their behavior, such social workers suggest that spirituality is irrelevant or otherwise not appropriate as a treatment resource. Therefore, those who both endorse or reject spirituality must be vigilant that their personal belief systems do not cause injury or harm to family practice clientele.

Finally, the ability to accurately perceive, conceptualize, and interact with Arab families is a necessity in a rapidly changing and complex world. In order to enhance harmony and reduce the threats of terrorism by any aspect of the world's complex population, social workers and other concerned citizens must acknowledge that all groups have assets, capacities, and strengths that should be reinforced despite the heinous acts committed by a relative few (Sontag, 2001). Since many of these assets, such as cultural technologies, are derived from cultural legacies, social workers must increase their knowledge base considerably. Otherwise, their lack of education could contribute to the extinction of an irreplaceable component of mankind that might prove antidotal to violence and terrorism. Furthermore, at a time of increased contact among the world's various populations, social workers are confronted by issues and perspectives that did not require intellectual consideration in the past (Shatz, 2001). They are thus challenged to develop creative treatment strategies that are less confined to Western bias. Additionally, journal editors, book publishers, and other affiliates of the "fact" manufacturing industry must be actively receptive to the consideration of alternative views. That consideration must remain consistent and viable without interruption from unpredictable events to sustain the integrity and prestige of the social work profession.

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The Perceptions of Mexican-American Men as Fathers

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Abstract: *This qualitative study explores the lived experience of self-identified Mexican men as fathers. The sample consists of 47 biological fathers of children residing in Denver, Colorado, all whom are participating in the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project. The data suggests that these fathers engaged in traditionally conceptualized fathering roles. These men expressed the importance of being there, teaching, meeting the child's needs, being a role model, offering emotional support, and giving affection and love. The fathers reported taking more responsibility, decreasing substance use, and limiting their leisure activities as a result of becoming a parent. The results suggest that, fathering in and of itself, may create resiliency and may have powerful positive influences on the lives of fathers.*

Keywords: Latino men, fathers, masculinity, fathering roles

INTRODUCTION

Empirical research has found a positive relationship between a father's involvement and an infant's early physical and psychosocial development (Shears & Robinson, 2005; Lamb, 2002; Palcovitz, 2002; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1998a; 1998b). Additional studies suggest that fathers contribute differently to infant developmental outcomes than do mothers (Horn, 1999; Lamb, 1997; Yogman, 1981; Lamb & Lamb, 1976). While this link has been established, much of it has been through quantitative analysis that has merely identified the key variable and outcomes involved. While important, more information regarding the lived experiences of fathers is needed. By understanding the lived experiences of fathers themselves, family practitioners will be able to better understand how men construct their identities as fathers and will be able to more sufficiently provide services to them.

Several scholars have noted that much of what we know about a father's parenting attitudes and experiences was collected from the mother's reports (Shears,

Summers, Boller, & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006; Cherlin & Griffith, 1998; Tanfer & Mott, 1997). As social service and other providers seek to support positive outcomes for children and families, the experience of fathers via-a-vis their parenting are essential to understand. Given this importance, one might hypothesize that fathering attitudes and experiences might differ across race and ethnicity. However, much of what we know about fathering is from Western middle-class, well-educated families; research is needed regarding the perceptions of fatherhood with ethnically-diverse populations (Palcovitz, 2002). Too often, models of development and parenting derived from white middle-class families and men are constructed as socially normative and are viewed as the benchmark through which to view the experiences of other men. However, such over-generalizations can lead to misunderstandings at best, and stereotyping at worst (Furman & Collins, 2005).

As the Latino population in the United State continues to grow, social service practitioners and researchers are realizing that more must be done to understand the lived experiences of Latinos (Furman, & Negi, 2007). This is particularly true for Latino men. Too often, cultural variables, such as machismo and paternalismo, are misunderstood by the social service community and others who work with Latinos. The experience of Latino men is often viewed through a lens of pathology, rather than by understanding their unique lived experiences through important Latino values.

This exploratory study seeks to join a growing body of research on the lived experience of Latinos, in particular, Mexican-Americans. This study will specifically explore attitudes, experiences, and perceptions of self-identified Mexican-American fathers of children residing in the Denver, Colorado metropolitan area. The study represents a component of Early Head Start children and families, both of which shall be explored in a later section of this paper.

RESEARCH ON FATHERS

Much of what we know of men's experiences as fathers is derived from research in Anglo communities (Shears, 2007; Jarret, Roy, & Burton, 2002; Palcovitz, 2002; Toth & Xu, 1999). The focus of much of this research has been on examining the differences between fathering and mothering (Shears & Robinson, 2005; Hernandez & Brandon, 2002; Kokkinaki & Kugiumutzakis, 2000; Bumpass, Raley, & Sweet, 1995), the effects of the father-infant relationship (Storey, Walsh, Quinton, & Wynne-Edwards, 2000; Bader, 1995), exploring the experiences of fathers (Shears, Summers, Boller, & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006; Housaain, Fields, Pickens, Malphurs, & Del Valle, 1997; Parke, 1995), and how men learn to father (Snarey, 1993; Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Sagi, 1982). These studies also suggest that fathers are more likely to be involved in social activities, play, physical interactions, unusual, and unpredictable play. Because of the types of interactions and activities fathers participate in, they may interact differently with their children than mothers do. These differences in interactions suggest that fathers offer something unique to early infant development. In addition, the research on father-infant relationships suggests that fathers are emotionally connected to their infants, even to the point of having hormonal changes around the birth of their child (Storey, Walsh, Quinton, & Wynne-Edwards, 2000).

Another area of focus has explored how fathering is in a state of transition, as more fathers are embracing both traditional and contemporary roles. Traditional roles embrace activities, such as provider, protector, role model, disciplinarian, entertainer/socializer, and teacher, while the more contemporary roles might consist of caregiver, as partner with the child's mother, and as a source of affection and emotional support (Shears, Summers, Boller, & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006). A number of studies have identified differences in these roles with ethnic minority fathers (Shears, 2007; Jarett, Roy, & Burton, 2002; Mincy, 2002; Toth & Xu, 1999). These findings further strengthen the need for understanding how fathering experiences may be different among ethnic minorities.

Hispanic Fathers

Studies suggest that Hispanic families are more family-oriented than Anglo families, and particularly that Mexican-American families report more participation in large family networks (Sabogal, Marin, & Otero-Sabogal, 1987; Vega, 1990). A few studies have examined how Hispanic fathers' attitudes differ from Anglo fathers. Sanchez (1997) found that Mexican-origin families are egalitarian, in that fathers take an equal role in household responsibilities, including child rearing. Shears (2007) found that Hispanic fathers reported higher levels of socialization activities with their children than did Anglo fathers. Toth and Xu (1999) suggest that Hispanic fathers tend to reinforce the norms of family closeness and expect their children to show respect for and conform to authority. Consequently, it is suggested that they monitor and supervise their children more closely than Anglo fathers. A study by Hofferth (2003) found that Hispanic-American fathers mirror Anglo fathers in the number of hours they reported spending with their child during the week, while also reporting higher levels of caring for their child than Anglo fathers. The study concluded that Hispanic fathers displayed higher levels of warmth and were more permissive in their parenting styles. Although these studies highlight the positive aspects of Hispanic fathers, a number of these studies compared them to Anglo fathers. There is a need to expand our understanding of Hispanic fathers and to understand their experiences in fathering within their cultural context. As a result, the current study explores Mexican fathers as a single group, without comparing them to others.

METHOD

Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project

Early Head Start (EHS)

Designed to enhance a child's cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral development, as well as the parental capacity to engage in educational support activity, EHS includes intensive services that begin before a child is born and supports the family throughout the early years of a child's life from ages 0 to 3. A national team of researchers and federally-funded agencies collaborated with EHS programs to evaluate the program's implementation and outcomes at 17 research sites across the United States. Following a random assignment design, a sample of nearly 3,000 children and mothers were recruited while the children were 12 months of age or younger. The mothers completed a series of interviews, including a baseline

enrollment interview, a parent services interview at 6, 15, and 26 months following random assignment, and an exit interview. Data collection for the ongoing Early Head Start national evaluation focused on the primary caregiver–the female parent in more than 95% of the cases–as the key respondent. Although the responses from interviews with mothers yielded a wealth of data on fathers and father-figures, researchers also included an in-depth set of studies that focused specifically on fathers as the primary respondents. These studies helped to fill existing gaps in the body of knowledge by adding a further dimension to our understanding of how fathers, in the greater context of their family and the Early Head Start program, influence infant and toddler development.

The father study included measures parallel to the study of mothers. Such measures included: 1) measures of family resources and supports, 2) knowledge of child development, 3) parent characteristics, such as education and depression, and 4) videotaped interactions of father and child. Data for fathers who agreed to participate in the study were collected when their respective children were 24 months old. Further, an embedded qualitative study involving audiotaped, open-ended questions was incorporated into the study and interspersed throughout the quantitative interview. Thus, this study is part of a larger mixed-method research project, as reported in Boller, Cabrera, Raikes, Pan, Bradley, Shears, & Roggman (2006). Data for this report were taken from interviews with men who were verified as being the father or father-figure of the EHS child at 24 months.

Participants

This study includes 47 fathers who completed a qualitative interview around their child's 24-month birthday. The sample consisted of English, Spanish, or bi-lingual speaking men who self-identified as Mexican-American and who were more than 19 years old. These men were reported by the mother to be the biological father or father-figure of a young child participating in two Early Head Start programs in Denver, Colorado, which were currently involved in a research and evaluation project. Mothers who were enrolled in Early Head Start initially identified the participants in this study as the father/father-figure of their child when the child was two years of age. As a result, these men were the father or father-figure of at least one child who was around two years old. Because of the requirements of enrollment in Early Head Start, the families and children are low income. However, the men associated with these families were not necessarily low income.

The Interview

The interviews include a core set of qualitative questions designed to assist in the generation of new hypotheses about Mexican-American fathers and their involvement in their children's lives. This study consists of several open-ended, qualitative questions to explore the experiences and perceptions of Mexican-American men on their fathering in low-income families. The study was designed not from a particular qualitative tradition, but from a generic qualitative perspective (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003) in which the researchers sought to inductively approach the experience of Hispanic men.

Thematic analysis was conducted to uncover themes based upon the data. The first author read each of the interviews and, with the assistance of a Hispanic male qualitative researcher, developed initial codes and categories. Subsequent readings lead to the development of more refined themes. The first author and the research assistant discussed the coding schemes that each developed and, through a process of negotiation and consensus building, developed themes that both believed accurately reflected the data. This type of peer-debriefing and triangulation has been found to be essential to ensuring the trustworthiness of the data (Leitz, Langur, & Furman, 2006). The data are presented in two ways. First, passages that represent the major themes in the data are presented. The authors discussed these responses in comments designed to contextualize the findings. Frequency tables are presented to help the reader understand which responses were typical of this population; the researchers recognize that any numerical presentation of qualitative data, based upon a sample such as this, should not be taken as representative of the general population.

FINDINGS

Question #1: What Does Being a Good Father Mean to You?

Thematic analysis revealed a set of five non-overlapping themes that describe fathers' perceptions of good fathering. The key themes were "being there," teaching, meeting the child's needs, being a role model, and offering emotional support (Table 1).

Table 1: *Responses to Being a Good Father*		
Responses	**# of Men Who Responded**	**Percentage**
Being there	32	70
Teaching	23	50
Meeting the child's needs	17	37
Being a role model	13	28
Offering emotional support	7	15
Paying attention to the child	5	11
Being supportive	5	11
Playing with	4	9
Being patient	1	2
Total Responses 46		

The key themes listed in Table 1 are highlighted and described below.

"Being there"

Respondents believe that an important component of good fathering includes being available for their children. This was the most popular theme, appearing in 32 of the total responses and underscored by 46 participants. The importance of being accessible to their children, or simply "being there," was expressed in a variety of ways. One respondent states about his child, "I have to take care of my responsibilities, be there for him, make sure he knows I am part of his life, and will always be there." Similarly, another respondent describe "being there" for his child

as part of taking care of his responsibilities as a man but also to "make the child feel wanted." Fathers then expressed the importance of "being there" as not only fulfilling a responsibility but also providing emotional security for their families.

Teaching

The second most popularly identified theme of being a good father was the importance of teaching the child. Fathers underscored the importance of teaching their children to be able to distinguish between "right and wrong" as well as providing them with structure. One respondent relates:

> To me, it means being able to provide for her a well-structured avenue, so to speak, in terms of her growing up. Giving her some value and making sure she knows exactly what is right and wrong, and giving her a sense of purpose for her being her.

Fathers then talked about the meaning of teaching their children life-lessons that will foster strong values and self-esteem as well as enable them to become functional adults.

Meeting the Child's Needs

Fathers also identified the importance of financially meeting their child's needs. One respondent stated, "You got a responsibility to work, to have the money to buy the baby stuff, and make sure the baby has everything he needs, because that baby's special to you." Providing for the financial needs of the child is then underscored by some fathers, because it sustains the child's physical well-being.

Being a Role-Model

Fathers further discussed their key role as role models and the importance of fostering supportive relationships with their children:

> First of all, that means representing a positive male role model. I came from a place where mothers can teach men how to be a better man, and fathers can teach daughters to be betters daughters. I always try to be a positive role model. I always try to show that I care about her and support her, do things for her, encourage her, play with her. Let her know she's special. I think it's important for her to have that male role model, because her biological dad is choosing not to be part of what is going on. I try to be there to support things and really connect with her, bond with her. I feel that's something she's going to need.

Fathers then relay the importance of being a good role model or a "pillar of strength" for their child despite (or maybe because of) the less than ideal social conditions that their child may be growing up in. Sometimes, the responsibility of striving to be a good role model for their child may be difficult. A respondent relays, "I was still young, so I had to start acting like a grownup, because I had a son to take care, and he has to have someone as a role model so he won't go the wrong route."

Offering Emotional Support

Fathers discuss the importance of emotionally supporting and validating their child, even if it may not conform to traditionally held ideas of masculinity:

> A lot of men probably have trouble being there emotionally when their child wants to be affectionate. I think, as he grows older, I'll have to be there for him emotionally as he develops and as he learns and changes, especially when he enters adolescence.

Fathers then identify the importance of "listening to your kids, being active with your kids, being interactive with your kids, showing concern…" as a key component of fathering.

After this general question, some men were asked more probing questions regarding their experiences of fathering. The following is how a number of men addressed some of these probing questions.

Question #2: What Are the Positive Aspects of Being a Father?

Two themes emerged identifying a father's perceptions of the positive aspects of fatherhood (Table 2). A number of respondents (N=13) answered that the love and affection they give to and receive from their child are positive aspects of being a father. Three respondents stated that, as a result of being a parent, they have matured, while one respondent answered that, as a result of being a father, he has learned about life. The two key themes are discussed below.

Table 2: *Positive Aspects of Fathering*		
Responses	**# of Men Who Responded**	**Percentage**
Affection/love	13	76
Maturity	3	17
Learn about fathering	1	1
Total Responses 17		
Total responses 17/no response or not applicable 30		

Affection/Love

Fathers indicated that the love and affection they receive and give to their children is a significantly positive aspect of being a father. A respondent states, "Just seeing that smile on his face mostly. Just having that person there to love; I couldn't live without him now. I couldn't imagine life without him." Fathers then describe a nurturing and loving bond with their child that gives them immense happiness. Fathers also further describe their loving bond with their child as solidifying family bonds, "It's a blessing actually; it gives me a warm, loving feeling inside-a family-being-together feeling."

Maturity

Fathers further identified becoming more mature as an important and positive aspect of becoming a father.

> It changed my life a lot. Before _____ was pregnant, I was pretty wild, running around, partying, and stuff like that. I really had to take the time to think about my responsibilities and what it takes to raise a child and how it's time consuming. You have to put him first before going out or buying clothes for myself or CDs and stuff like that.

Becoming a father then dramatically altered the perceptions and life choices of some of the respondents, whereby they now began to place their child's needs above their own needs. Furthermore, becoming a father gave some respondents a reason to care for something, such as:

> Like, at first, I didn't work. I was just out there doing really bad stuff, not caring about nothing. When he came into my life, I knew I had another responsibility to my wife and him. I got a job."

Fatherhood then instilled a sense of financial and emotional responsibility that some respondents indicated they lacked before their child was born. The procurement of a job and placing their child's needs above their own needs, as well as a dramatic shift in life-styles (from partying to becoming responsible), was then identified as a positive aspect of becoming a father.

Questions #3: What Are the Negative Aspects of Being a Father?

Three themes were identified in the respondents' perceptions of the negative aspects of fatherhood (Table 3). A majority of the respondents (N=10) did not associate negative experiences with fathering. Some fathers (N=5) indicated that fathering may limit their flexibility to "pick up and go." Only one father stated that a negative aspect of becoming a father includes working more hours.

Table 3: *Positive Aspects of Fathering*		
Responses	**# of Men Who Responded**	**Percentage**
No negative	10	63
Limit activities	5	31
Work more	1	1
Total Responses 16		
Total responses 16/no response or not applicable 31		

No Negative

The bulk of the respondents indicated that there are no negative aspects of becoming a father. A respondent succinctly states, "I don't see any downsides at all. I enjoy being a father; I don't regret it." Their enjoyment of being a father then clearly overrides any negativity or "downsides" that may be associated with becoming a parent.

Limit Activities

Some respondents indicated that becoming a father has limited their flexibility to be able to engage in recreational activities with their partner or by themselves.

> We're not able to, my wife and I, do all the things we did before we had kids. We can't just get up and go; we always have to worry about childcare if we want to go out—dancing or dinner or something.

Our respondents indicated the inability to "just pick up and go somewhere" is the primary expressed negative aspect of becoming a father.

Question #4: How Has Fatherhood Changed You?

The majority of the respondents (N=21) reported an increased sense of responsibility due to fatherhood (Table 4). Others (N=8) indicated that their intake of alcohol and drugs had been limited due to fatherhood. While others (N=3) stated that fatherhood has changed their lives by limiting their leisurely activities. One respondent indicated that fatherhood has made him more patient, and another respondent stated that fatherhood has made him grow up faster.

Table 4: *Fatherhood Changed Your Life*		
Responses	**# of Men Who Responded**	**Percentage**
Had to take on more responsibility	21	72
Couldn't drink or use drugs	8	28
Limits leisure activities	3	1
Made them be patient	1	Less than 1
Made them have to grow up faster	1	Less than 1
Total Responses 29		
Total response 29/no response or not applicable 18		

Had to Take Responsibility

Fatherhood had an altering effect upon most of the respondents who indicated that becoming a father has instilled a sense of responsibility in them.

> Knowing you have a child makes you more responsible. It makes you think before you act. I never had much of a problem getting into trouble before he was around, but certain things were a lot less important before him—job security. Nowadays, it's… actually, it's a lot of weight being responsible for a child and everything from, "Does he have enough diapers and do we have enough milk in the fridge?"

Fatherhood, then, for some respondents, instilled the importance of job security in providing for their child's needs. In addition, fatherhood also led some respondents to develop responsible decision-making, whereby "you think before you act." Irresponsible behavior, through potentially illegal activity, is then no longer seen as a positive life-choice for these respondents. For example, a respondent states, "I can't run the streets like I used to. I can't hang out all the time. Gotta be there for the little one who needs you…"

Couldn't Drink or use Drugs

Some fathers further indicated that fatherhood altered their substance usage.

> I was doing drugs up until her sixth month of pregnancy—partying, gangs, and whatever. I had my son and it was an awakening. I'm in college and should be entering the cadet program in a couple of months to become a police officer.

For some respondents, the birth of their child indicated to them that substance and drug use is not viable. The birth of their child was then expressed as an "awakening" that led them to curtail their substance usage and other illegal activities.

Another father states, "I used to play in a band and be a heavy drinker. Ever since I had my son, I drank for four months, and then I stopped drinking. It's been over two years since I've drank." Fatherhood then facilitated the curtailment of substance use for some respondents.

Limits Leisure Activities

Respondents also indicated that fatherhood has limited their activities.

> I used to have a lot of time for myself. I used to be able [to do whatever I wanted] whenever I didn't have kids. No, it's kind of like everything is slowed down. I worked 40 hours a week and I used to have no problem staying over time at all. Now that I have kids, that's a definite thing I gotta do—make time for them.

Fatherhood then has shifted the focus from engaging in leisurely activities, "doing whatever," or even putting in extra time at work, to individual time, to spending time with their children. The fathers' lives are then starkly different than they used to be when they did not have children. One respondent states, "Just day to day, I get to read less (laughs), I get to do fewer things I would normally like to do."

Question #5: What Are Some of the Obstacles That Keep You From Being the Kind of Father You Want to Be?

A majority of the respondents (N=26) stated that their job's time requirements are the biggest obstacle to being the kind of father they want to be (Table 5). Some respondents (N=8) indicated that lack of finances was an impediment to being the ideal type of father, while few reported that television or electronic games, their ex-wives, lack of transportation, family stability, parole/courts, and family were impediments to them being the kind of father they would like to be. The key themes were then their jobs and lack of money.

Table 5: *Obstacles to Being a Father*		
Responses	**# of Men Who Responded**	**Percentage**
Job/time	26	67
Money	8	20
Electronic games/TV	3	1
Ex-wife, wife/in laws	3	1
Nothing	3	1
Lack of transportation	2	Less than 1
Family stability	2	Less than 1
Parole/courts	1	Less than 1
Family	1	Less than 1
Total Responses 39		
Total response 39/no response or not applicable 8		

Job

The bulk of the respondents discussed the time-consuming nature of their employment. Some respondents talked about the long hours they worked or weekend employment, in addition to having to work two jobs.

> Like I said, when I get off work, I'm usually in bed for the rest of the day; I don't really feel like going anywhere or doing anything. I'm so tired—my job. I hate to say it, but there's times when I don't interact with her that much.

Employment then often places a physical as well as emotional strain on the father, leaving him exhausted and with little energy to interact with his child. Some fathers then expressed the desire for more time to be able to spend with their children. One respondent states, "I wish I had more time, sometimes. Keeping the ball rolling is stressful."

Money

Some fathers expressed lack of finances are an obstacle to being the kind of father they would like to be. Fathers expressed how having more money could potentially enhance their parenting.

> If I could make enough money so my wife could stay home with them, that would be great. There are certain things I'd like to do with them and that stuff costs money, and right now, we don't have the extra money to do that.

Lack of finances is then perceived by some fathers as disallowing them from being involved in the type of activities they would like to be involved in with their children. One respondent states, "Money. (laughs) Finances. I'd like to be able to take them everywhere."

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that Mexican-American fathers feel that it is important to be involved in the lives of their young children. This idea of "being there" for their children is in agreement with other research on fathers (Shears et al., 2006; Allen & Doherty, 1996). This suggests that fathers in low-income Mexican-American families have similar perceptions of being a good father as men of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. With the exception of offering emotional support, these men generally held very traditional beliefs regarding their importance to childrearing. The responses of being there, teaching, meeting the child's needs, and being a role model, all represent very traditional beliefs in fathering. This focus on traditional fathering attitudes is somewhat surprising, given the recent adoption of more contemporary attitudes of fathers.

One area where there may be a shift from more traditional to contemporary attitudes is when men talked about the positive aspects of being a father. Their responses indicated that these men were comfortable and enjoyed the affection they received from their child. This is an important finding, as men often may not be viewed as being important, affective models and providers of care in the lives of their children. Contrasted to the above noted traditional roles, Mexican-American men in this study clearly understand and value their importance to the affective lives of their children.

When asked about negative experiences of fathering, a number of men stated there were no negative experiences. This is interesting, given that these are fathers in low-income families. However, it is certain that these men have similar ideas of good fathering as middle-income men, but generally they have fewer economic resources. One might expect that a negative experience for these men would be their difficulty in meeting their personal fathering expectations, but this was not the case. This clearly demonstrates the strength and resiliency of this population, and their recognition of the value of fathering within the context of various family constellations.

A number of men expressed that, having a child was a positive, life-changing event. Simply put, becoming a father changed their lives in a positive way. Several men stated that they stopped or greatly reduced their participation in risky behaviors, such as doing illegal drugs or participating in illegal activities. One might question whether this finding is partly the result of the low-income status of several of these fathers. It has been suggested that illegal drug and alcohol use might be equally represented across economic levels, particularly during adolescence (Schensul & Burkholder, 2005). However, research in this area also suggests that many in middle-class communities tend to "grow out" of such risky behaviors (Arnett, 2004; Sehulenberg, O'Malley, Bachman, Wadsworth, & Johnston, 1996). Being a father, then, may provide some inoculation against various psychosocial and behavioral maladies.

One area that may address the issues of economic status and men's perceptions of fathering is when the men were asked about the difficulty in being the kind of father they want to be. Most men responded that lack of economic resources and their working to secure these resources were significant obstacles that are impeding them from becoming the type of father they want to be.

Given that Mexican-American fathers held very similar ideas of fathering as Anglo fathers suggests the possibility of a unifying theme in highly involved fathers. These results support similar findings of other studies (Brayfield, 1995) that suggest fathering in low-income families is not very different from the role of fathering in other socioeconomic classes. Future studies might examine how fathering might differ across racial and ethnic populations, attempt to understand how mothers influence the type and frequency of fathers' involvement with their children, and explore how much fathers contribute to mothers' involvement with children.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study helps us to understand more about the fathering of young infants in self-identified Mexican-American families. Men involved in this study generally found value in both traditional male fathering roles and more contemporary affective roles. Men in this study clearly were self-reflective about their own fathering and understood the importance of their affective contributions to the lives of their children. This study confirms that Mexican-American fathers' attitudes and activities might be changing similarly to contemporary fathers across ethnic and racial groups. Although there has been an increase in fathering research studies and available literature, researchers must be cognizant that the

process and topic under study is constantly changing. In addition, we need to be mindful that men from various economic levels and ethnic/racial groups might offer different views of their fathering roles, and we need to remain diligent to also hearing their varied voices.

There are specific implications for family and social service practice, given the increased numbers of Mexican-American families in the United States. We should be mindful that many of the families with which we work may be considered fragile families by virtue of their limited resources and/or unstable relationships. However, as this study demonstrates, fathering in and of itself may be a powerful factor in strengthening the lives and experiences of men, whether or not they are members of a traditional family constellation. Fathering itself seems to provide men with powerful experiences that increase their desires and abilities to engage in prosocial behavior. Practitioners may focus on helping fathers in traditional nuclear families and those who parent outside of these relationships to understand the powerful, positive influence fathering may have. Practitioners must seek to validate the strengths of Latino men and the many ways in which they positively contribute to the lives of their children.

Additionally, since it is clear that affective caretaking is an important component to the parenting experience of Latino men, practitioners must understand this role in the context of Latino culture. Viewing Latino men through a narrow understanding of machismo is limiting. Machismo should be viewed more as a deep sense of obligation to the family, regardless of the particular family structure. The positive aspects of Latino male fathering, which includes traditional, economic, and affective care, must be understood. Practitioners who are unfamiliar with Latino culture are encouraged to utilize a strengths-based lens through which to view the experiences of Latino men as fathers. That is, they should seek to understand the lived experiences of their clients and how their clients possibly contribute to the lives of their children. Having a clear understanding of the fathers' unique contributions to early infant development and how it is vastly different from mothering would be a good start for practitioners and child-care providers. Helping to educate parents on these issues is important, as many families may not understand the fathers' importance in child rearing. Families need to know and understand the importance of fathers to children's emotional and financial well being. In many cases, young men may not understand their own importance; educational interventions should focus on the positive relationship that fathering has both on the child and the young father.

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