EDITORIAL:
Global Problems, Local Solutions:
What Works, What Does Not, What Can We Do?

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The inspiration for this special issue came at a faculty retreat held on a glorious late summer day on a bucolic campus. In such a setting, what else would Social Work and Labor Studies faculty think about but intractable problems and impossible solutions! We had been thinking of ways that our two disciplines, social work and labor studies, converge, and the obvious answer was that both were oriented towards problem-solving, as were other disciplines in the social sciences. But what were the problems we were trying to solve? Where did they originate and where were the solutions come from?

Two things seemed obvious, intuitive, and in need of specific attention of the type provided by a journal issue. First, many of the problems faced by the populations both disciplines serve were, if not new, then at least historically located in the emergent global order. And second, most solutions were being worked out at the local level, through some combination or coalition of actors attempting to fashion problem-solving institutions and methods that empowered at-risk populations. Thus was born the Global Problems and Local Solutions issue of *Advances in Social Work*. What was out there that could be shared amongst practitioners to bring best practices to problems at different local levels? Our hope was to bring in different approaches that could be applied across regions and disciplines in order to see what works, who was doing what, and if there were truly regional applications to problem solving that, with some adjustments, could be generally applicable at the local level given the ongoing processes of global emergence. We recognized that such a single journal issue could never be comprehensive, and that our target of potential contributors would necessarily be limited by disciplinary and professional boundaries. Yet in looking at the state of the game in local problem solving and empowerment, our 15 essays provide a valuable window into both the successes and ongoing difficulties of providing paths of resistance, preparedness, and pro-active power to vulnerable, at-risk communities.

Of course, empowerment must be more than just a buzzword when it comes to fashioning local solutions, and our collection of articles highlights the difficulties of using top-down power to promote bottom-up action. As contributor Bret Weber reminds us, the NASW Code of Ethics charges us to "enhance human well-being…with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable." So what our articles, and our experience shows, is that there are many paths to empowerment, and those paths are often blocked in various ways. In casting our net wide, we drew in reports from a wide-ranging field of experience, and in this, we consider our efforts a success. Indeed, the problems for vulnerable populations are not confined to a single area, or a limited set of circumstances. Global processes, while bringing the world's people

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together in many ways, cause a myriad of seemingly unending and intractable problems. Given those conditions, we were certainly pleased with the vast array of problems, solutions, methods, and approaches in the submitted articles.

However, that very wide net and vast array of responses presents another challenge: organizing some sort of cohesive, readable summary. In an effort to bring some order from a diverse group of articles, we indentify three main paths to local solutions on offer in the case studies: government policy, legislation and state institutions; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and grassroots and community-based organizations. Of course, as experience and our articles show, efforts to solve problems at the local level are rarely attempted or achieved in homologous paths involving just one right way. Solutions are crafted in a global system; they require cooperation across boundaries, across disciplines, and through different levels of authority, organization, institutions, and networks. When they work, it is through these interactions, just as when they fail, it is usually within these interactions that efforts break down.

Along those lines, our essays are organized into three sections, based on what level of problem solving they engage. The categories, of course, will not be perfect, and often overlap, but each essay provides insight into state-centered, NGO, or community-based solutions in some measure and in some combination.

In looking at state-centered action, policy, legislation and institutions all received attention. Bromfield and Capous-Desyllas' work on the problems of human trafficking offers valuable information on how legislation is crafted through the formation of somewhat unlikely and often uncomfortable alliances. Here we see how views of what constitutes human trafficking, and indeed, what counts as empowerment, are neither simple nor subject to general agreement. Thus while the major players agree on the nature and scope of the problem, they vigorously clash over what defines the at-risk community. The result is legislation that, while helpful, stops short of being a real local solution. Likewise, Marquita Walker's work on displaced workers highlights the problems of crafting a policy solution that satisfies the vulnerable population while actually addressing the problem. Few issues appear more intractable than the problem of displaced workers in the new, flexible global economy. Walker shows that there are no easy answers, and points to ways that more local control might improve retraining programs. On a more hopeful note, Jones, Rotabi, Levy, and Gray, in their study of teaching innovations, point to ways that state-sponsored institutions can draw on local knowledge and experience to craft education programs that work to truly empower populations at risk from natural disaster. Their work demonstrates the power and knowledge that state institutions with proper support can direct and bring to bear on the thorniest and most immediate of global problems, those caused by ecological catastrophe. On the problems in the developing and vital field of gendered immigration, Agbényiga and Huang suggest ways that both state-centered institutions of higher learning in social work and NGOs can learn from a close study of women's immigration experiences. They point to the need for social work curricula to include a sub-category on gendered immigration in order to understand the diverse issues facing immigrant women at the local level.

States will almost always have a role to play in crafting solutions, but often that role will be in concert with NGOs, which often take on the most active roles when local problems arise. As well, NGOs often are the go-between when coordination is necessary between state resources and community-based organizations. Agbényiga, Barrie, Djelaj, and Nawyn's article shows how refugee agencies play a key role in the re-settlement of the recently displaced within state systems. This is best accomplished, they found, by forging deeper ties between refugees, agencies that serve them, and local ethnic organizations to fashion a truly local set of solutions to one of the most severe global issues. Simmelink and Shannon's work on community-based aid for refugee communities highlights some major advantages and constraints in local problem solving. Their work indicates that while ethnic based refugee organizations can be more helpful for certain issues, mainstream refugee aid groups often are better equipped to assess the mental health issues that affect this troubled population. Des Marais, Bhadra, and Dyer's work on how Japan responded to disaster is a vital intervention into the local/state/NGO debate. Their work demonstrates how local and regional relief work can be enhanced by limited, targeted actions deeply based in local preparedness, infrastructure, and culture. Their case study serves another function by making an unimaginable event such as the tsunami/nuclear disaster legible and knowable. Similarly, Saleh Ahmed brings the popular concept of microfinance into focus by examining the actual workings of NGOs. His article dispels the myth that microfinance is a cure-all, while pointing to the importance of NGO work and large-scale goals such as the UN Millennium Development Goals. On the topic of fair trade certification, Charity Fitzgerald's article discusses the difficulties in establishing true fair trade systems through NGOs that provide information to local retailers linked to community-based efforts at supporting local agriculture and industry. Her conclusions on this important topic deal frankly with the contradictions and problems of free trade and encourage social work researchers to take a lead role in providing information to producers, retailers, and certifiers.

Many hail the grassroots and community-based organization as just such a cure-all, but of course, practitioners and academics know better, and several of our articles pointed to the difficulties of problem solving at any level, including the grassroots. Bret Weber's exciting piece points to the urgency of ecological action, while also highlighting the perils of cooperative efforts as they make their way up the power ladder. What begins as a grassroots community-based effort at sustainable economics runs into the problem of the growth-based economy at the larger level. Similarly, David K. Androff's insightful work on the problems of utilizing Truth and Reconciliation Commissions within a North American setting also points to the problems a grassroots group encounters as it confronts power. Hamilton and Erickson's article on urban heat islands urges social work professionals to become fully engaged in the issue of global climate change by pointing out the deleterious effects of the crisis on urban populations. They call on social workers to strengthen community efforts to form a sustainable ecological system and push state agencies into stronger action. Constantino, Rotabi, and Rodman's work on gendered violence also revolves around the struggle between community and grassroots-based action and power structures, as local solutions encounter the entrenched power of gender violence. Luca Sugawara, Hermosa, Delale, Hoffman, and Lupšić's article looks at how

very local solutions deriving from community-based support for family involvement in children's education in post-war conditions, while no cure-all either, help to enhance the development of democracy and renewal in truly empowering ways. And finally, Ankita Deka makes a potentially important intervention in critical social work practice by showing how a human rights-based approach to systemic poverty can aid practitioners in engaging with community groups working to address the root causes of endemic economic and social inequity.

What each study shows is that no solution, local, regional, state-centered, or grassroots, fits every aspect of our global problems, and not even the most empowering bottom up effort will satisfy everyone involved. The collection of articles for this special issue double as a field report on the both the state of at-risk populations under emerging global conditions and a best practices update on how local organizations and institutions are trying to meet the challenges. There is so much more out there, mainly because for each global connection, there emerges a local problem. Our task as educators, researchers and citizens is empowering populations to craft their own solutions, utilizing every tool available. If these collected articles contribute to that effort, and we believe they do, the effort is worthwhile.

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Underlying Motives, Moral Agendas and Unlikely Partnerships: The Formulation of the U.S. Trafficking in Victims Protection Act through the Data and Voices of Key Policy Players

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Abstract: *In response to the overwhelming amount of attention to human trafficking, the debates surrounding its definition, and its focus on the sex industry, the purpose of this study was to understand the motivations behind the formation of the Trafficking in Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Using the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) as a model, data was collected and analyzed in order to examine the coalition identities of key players and their positions. Through the presentation of in-depth interview data with key policy players involved in the making of the TVPA, this article illustrates how and why the TVPA was formulated, the implications of its development, and the necessity for critical analysis of its effects. The use of alternative frameworks of labor and migration for understanding trafficking is proposed. Further consideration is given to legislative changes to eliminate anti-prostitution ideology and to support anti-oppressive approaches to addressing forced or deceptive working conditions.*

Keywords: *TVPA, sex trafficking, legislation, prostitution, ACF*

INTRODUCTION

Attention to Human Trafficking

While human trafficking is not a new phenomenon, the issue has received an enormous amount of attention over the last 15 years. An eruption of conferences, debates, protocols, media coverage, and the development of various forms of legislation have taken place on a worldwide scale, aimed at the eradication of human trafficking. Reports of severe human trafficking offenses surfaced in the U.S. during the mid to late 1990s. Beginning in 1995, policy makers and other stakeholders started paying attention to human trafficking as an issue of U.S. governmental concern.

During this time, various factors brought attention to trafficking. These include: the rise of the women's human rights movement; the increased international labor migration in response to globalization; shifting economies and political systems resulting in the feminization of poverty and subsequent migration; and the growing recognition of organized crime in the underground movement of people (Chuang, 2010). Economic explanations for the migration and trafficking of women are often conceptualized in terms of push factors (limited opportunities in countries of the global south) and pull factors (developed countries' demand for cheap migrant labor) (Sassen, 2002). Others have associated the recent surge in attention to trafficking as being linked to the moral panic over women's sexuality and autonomy (Doezema, 1998), undocumented migration, (Capous-Desyllas, 2007; Pattanaick, 2002), racism, and xenophobia (Saunders &

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Soderlund, 2003). Trafficking is a phenomenon that seems unable to escape its historical association with prostitution, morality and migration control.

The first piece of legislation considered to address human trafficking issues comprehensively was the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), which was passed under the Clinton administration. Other governments were encouraged by the U.S. to adopt similar legislation. Although a number of heated debates ensued during the making of the TVPA, it passed relatively quickly by national coalitions of unlikely partnerships

Debates in Definitions of Trafficking

The term "trafficking" has been used interchangeably with diverse concepts such as illegal immigration, modern slavery, prostitution, and the sexual exploitation of women. Trafficking definitions fail to distinguish clearly between trafficking and voluntary consensual migration, often combining women's migratory movement with trafficking (Kapur, 2005). Definitions of trafficking are highly contested among scholars, NGOs, feminists, and governments, thus posing challenges in conducting research studies, reporting statistics and making generalizations. Debates over the definitions of (sex) trafficking are grounded in the "feminist sex wars" between abolitionist (radical) feminists and labor-rights (sex-radical and third wave, transnational) feminists.

Feminist Debates Shape Understanding of Trafficking

The abolitionist approach to trafficking asserts that prostitution is a violation of human rights, analogous to (sexual) slavery (Bindman & Doezema, 1997) and "an extreme expression of sexual violence" (Outshoorn, 2005, p. 145). The beliefs and assumptions are that no person can truly consent to prostitution, no woman would choose to prostitute herself by free will, and a woman who engages in prostitution is a victim who requires help to escape sexual slavery (Outshoorn, 2005). This point of view applied to trafficking always involves a victim of force, coercion and/or deception. Outshoorn (2005) asserts that from this lens "…trafficking of migrant women is always seen as against their will; they are by definition victims of trafficking. According to abolitionists, trafficking is caused by prostitution; making the best way to fight trafficking, the abolition of prostitution" (p. 146).

The other major trafficking discourse is the sex worker's rights approach, which views prostitution as a viable option and a choice that women make in order to survive. From this perspective, sex work should be respected, not stigmatized (Outshoorn, 2005; Chapkis, 1997). The pro-rights or sex radical perspective is supported by the beliefs that women have the "right to sexual determination," the right to work in safe labor conditions, and the right to migrate for sex work wherever they choose (Outshoorn, 2005, p. 145). For this group, "it is not the work, as such, that violates women's human rights, but the conditions of deceit, violence, debt-bondage, blackmail, deprivation of freedom of movement, etc. be it in prostitution, in domestic labor, or in the commercial marriage market" (Wijers & Van Doorninck, 2005, p. 2). Some assert that women who are in these violating conditions "can be victims of trafficking, but not all women sex workers

crossing borders are victims of forced prostitution" (Outshoorn, 2005, p. 147). However, most labor rights feminists reject the term 'victim' because it does not take into account those migrants who leave their homes for a better economic future.

Labor rights feminists aim to distinguish prostitution from trafficking, and point out that males are also being trafficked for sexual purposes (not only females) and women are being trafficked for other types of labor (such as domestic labor or caretaking), not just for the sex industry. Some activists, such as Obando (2003), highlight that numerous migrants who identify as transsexual or transgender are also entering the sex industry. Sex workers' rights groups advocate for the differentiation between voluntary migration and (sex) trafficking, in order to advocate for labor rights for those who are voluntarily working in the (sex) industry. While this position works for protecting sex workers and other marginalized individuals, Agustin (2005) points out that migrants, when in countries illegally, do not even have rights that other citizens have.

U.S. Definition of Trafficking

The media, the general public, and policy makers distinguish human trafficking as being the illegal transportation, exploitation, and sexual enslavement of adults and children through the use of manipulation of force for the purposes of profit. The common association of trafficking is one of foreign-born females being sold into prostitution against their will. However, "this focus on sex and sexuality distorts the image of both trafficking and sex work" (Ditmore, 2003, p. 2). There is a disproportionate amount of attention to sex trafficking and not enough attention to trafficking into other industries, such as sweatshops, construction, agriculture, and domestic labor. A more encompassing and less biased view of trafficking in persons should refer to men, women, transgender individuals and children, while addressing both cross-border trafficking for migration and labor in diverse industries. The controversies in defining trafficking illustrate the lack of a global consensus with regards to "the extent of trafficking, sexual or otherwise, its definition, its remedies and even its existence," with prostitution remaining at the center of the debate (Saunders, 2005, p. 346).

Development of Current U.S. Trafficking Policy

As disturbing stories of the trafficking of women and children emerged in the U.S., the problem of trafficking was addressed as a priority issue by the Clinton Administration and the 106th Congress. The Clinton Administration set up the interagency International Crime Control Strategy Group, to address the international crime implications of trafficking. On March 11, 1998, President Clinton issued a directive establishing a three-pronged, U.S. government-wide anti-trafficking strategy consisting of prevention, protection and support for victims, and the prosecution of traffickers. This strategy had both domestic and international policy components (Miko & Park, 2002). In addition, a Workers' Exploitation Task Force, which was chaired by the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the Solicitor's Office in the Department of Labor, was responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of exploitation and trafficking.

The 106th Congress undertook several legislative initiatives on human trafficking. The various bills that were introduced focused on prevention, protection, and prosecution, corresponding with the Clinton framework. However, some of the congressional initiatives went beyond Clinton's recommendations, notably, in calling for sanctions against other countries' governments that tolerated trafficking (Miko & Park, 2002). Since its inception, the TVPA has generated controversy and critique. The development of this policy entailed more than just protecting victims; certain ideologies and agendas have been promoted and continue to permeate the way that the policy is being implemented and understood, as will be discussed below.

Purpose of this Research

Through the presentation of quotes from in-depth interview data with key policy players involved in the making of the TVPA, this article provides an insider's view of competing motivations from various coalitions involved in the formulation of U.S. trafficking policy. This article also illustrates the necessity for a critical analysis of the legislation's effects. The purpose of this study is to identify specific coalitions and to examine coalition identities of key policy players involved in the making of the TVPA, in order to gain a better understanding of the competing motivations behind the making of the legislation.

METHODOLOGY

Framework and Approach

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) was the model used to guide this study. The ACF allows one to think of agency officials, academic researchers, and journalists as potential members of advocacy coalitions that engage in "some nontrivial degree of coordinated activity in pursuit of their common policy objectives" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999, p. 127). In the ACF, policy change or policy development is analyzed within a policy subsystem, which includes groups of people or organizations who interact "regularly ... to influence policy formulation and implementation within a given policy area/domain" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999, p. 135). The foundation for the ACF is grounded in the perspective that those involved directly with the policy-making have well-integrated policy belief systems and that policy players within a particular policy subsystem will group into distinct advocacy coalitions based on these belief systems. Determining the existence of advocacy coalitions and defining these advocacy coalitions gives insight into their motivations and their members. It is through an understanding of the motivations of advocacy coalitions and their members that we can critically assess the implementation and implications of the TVPA.

Identification of Key Policy Players

This study focused on the human trafficking policy subsystem in order to gain insight into the formation of U.S. human trafficking legislation. Identifying subsystem participants can be accomplished in several ways. One way is to "rely on the records of participation in arenas in which subsystem members (or their representatives) regularly

participate" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 241). The most useful source of records that Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) have found consists of public hearings conducted over time on a specific policy issue. To gather the sample that was used for this study, public officials testifying in human trafficking related hearings during 1995-2000 were identified through a search of congressional hearings related to human trafficking. The 1995-2000 time period was chosen because human trafficking was first mentioned as an issue of concern by the U.S. government in 1995 at the Beijing Conference on Women. The TVPA legislation was passed in 2000.

A search of the LexisNexis ™ Congressional database using the key words "human trafficking", "trafficking victim*", and "trafficking victim* protection act" and searching between the years 1995-2000 produced four hearings related to human trafficking. A total of thirty-five testimonies, speakers, and statements were included. Twenty-seven prospective respondents were identified through the congressional hearings. These prospective respondents were then invited to participate in an interview.

Participants

Twenty-one in-depth interviews were conducted with key policy players. Twelve interviews were conducted with individuals testifying in hearings related to human trafficking during the 1995-2000 time period, who were identified through records of congressional testimonies, as noted above. Nine other individuals, who were key stakeholders but did not publicly testify, were also interviewed. These individuals were identified through a snowball technique, in which other informants mentioned them as being critical players within the human trafficking policy subsystem and essential to the TVPA's development.

Nine of the 21 interviews were conducted in-person. The remaining 12 interviews were conducted via telephone. Some of the interviews occurred over several telephone conversations, with one occurring over three separate telephone conversations. The average length of interviews was 1.5 hours. With the exception of two interviews, which lasted approximately 35-40 minutes, the interviews ranged from over one hour to 4.5 hours.

The informants were representative of those involved in the human trafficking policy subsystem and included a range of governmental officials, key congressional staffers, human rights organization representatives, feminist organization representatives, other NGO representatives, Christian organization members, members of research institutes, and academics. Nine informants were government officials consisting of elected and appointed officials, congressional staffers, and others working within the federal government; nine informants were NGO officials; two informants were independent academic researchers; one informant was a journalist.

Data Collection

Each informant was asked a set of interview questions related to their policy positions on human trafficking and on the events that occurred during the making of the TVPA. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed; notes were also taken during

the interviews. The interview questions were designed to find out more about the informants' involvement in human trafficking as a legislative issue and also to explore the forces and factors which led to the making of the TVPA.

In order to limit interviewer effects and biases, standardized open-ended interview questions were used. The protocol included three sets of questions. The first set of eight questions was related to human trafficking as an issue in general, the second set of six questions was related to beliefs regarding trafficking legislation, and the third set of seven questions was related to the making of the TVPA specifically. One additional question, "Is there anything else on this issue I should be asking about?" was also included in the protocol.

Data Analysis

The data were categorized and organized by key topics and themes using Atlas ti software. By categorizing and comparing topics and themes, larger themes emerged that advanced the understanding of the human trafficking policy subsystem and the impetus for the legislation. In order to aid in categorizing the key topics and themes, a coding sheet was developed and used to guide the coding of the data. This was also used to group each player into a specific coalition (the coalitions emerged during the data analysis). The coding sheet included ten illustrative components that make up one's policy core beliefs, according to the ACF (Sabatier, 1998). Also included on the coding sheet was a description of each illustrative component as it relates to the human trafficking policy subsystem. Each informant's policy core beliefs were coded in order to place each informant into a coalition. The ACF assumes that policy core beliefs are the principle "glue" that holds coalitions together (Sabatier, 1998).

FINDINGS

Data from this study reveals that there were three distinct coalitions made up of several sub-groups who coordinated efforts during the making of the TVPA. The coalitions are briefly described below, and a detailed discussion regarding each of the coalitions follows:

1) **Liberal Feminist Coalition** was made up of some governmental officials, academics, and some human rights organizations. This coalition was interested in passing trafficking legislation, but was primarily concerned about protecting the rights of women and the rights of sex workers to be able to choose sex work as an occupation.

2) **Pragmatic Coalition** was made up of government officials and representatives from non-profit organizations, whose primary concern was creating legislation that would provide usable services to victims of trafficking. These services included protection for victims of trafficking (to ensure that victims of sex trafficking, as well as victims of labor trafficking, received services), and effective prosecution of traffickers.

3) **Left/Right Coalition** was made up of conservative Christians, Republicans, Democrats, radical feminist organizations, human rights groups, academics, and others. This was the coalition that was responsible for the legislation's passage, and whose primary mission was to equate human trafficking with prostitution. The core members of this coalition were most interested in restricting prostitution. They were (and still are) interested in abolishing legalized prostitution on a global scale.

Liberal Feminist Coalition

This small coalition was visible in the trafficking scene during the mid to late 1990s. The *liberal feminist coalition* included several (transnational, third wave, liberal, and postmodern) feminist academics, organizations, human rights groups, and government players, including the President's Interagency Council on Women. This coalition made a clear delineation between prostitution and human trafficking. One of their main concerns was protecting the rights of women who choose sex work. The impetus for the development of this coalition included Hillary Clinton's interest in trafficking as a social issue and the development of the *President's Interagency Council on Women*, which took on human trafficking as an issue of their concern.

"A very ideological perspective . . ."

Several academics and feminist organizations became involved in this coalition and had great influence on the coalition's ideologies. One informant (who was not involved in this coalition) felt that the *President's Interagency Council on Women*'s position on trafficking as an issue was shaped by liberal academic feminists and others who shared similar ideological perspectives on sex work. This perspective maintained that sex work was quite different from trafficking and that sex workers should not be viewed as victims of human trafficking. This informant, when asked about the formation of the trafficking definition during the making of the legislation, explained,

> *I'll be very honest because I don't have any reason not to be. In my view [the President's Interagency Council on Women] got set up and early on, its thinking was shaped by [liberal academic feminists] and people like that who had a very ideological perspective and they put their stamp on the early workings of that and groups like ours which were too small and too far away to be dealing with that policy level on-going thing. We got pulled into this [other] coalition and we ended up playing a useful role. We weren't in the Washington scene. When trafficking first hit the Washington scene these people really helped shape the policies that were coming out of the State Department and I don't think there was any serious understanding inside of the State Department. I know that's a horrible thing to say …they were government people who cared a lot, but they didn't really understand the debate, and somebody like [a feminist academic] is just running circles around them. She knows where she wants to go, and she really put a stamp on it and you could feel their influence on all of the State Department's documents…by the time we got in…their idea of the definition of trafficking had already been solidified and we had to undo or try to undo some of*

> *the thinking that we felt was problematic. The definition had been thrown at them, and there wasn't a real debate, because we weren't there…nobody was really there. That was a little unfortunate, I think.*

"[The abolitionists] are twisting where we are coming from on this bill . . ."

According to respondents, the *liberal feminist coalition* members were almost dragged into the human trafficking legislation debate and forced to form a coalition in response to the *left/right coalition's* sudden interest in human trafficking. The *liberal feminist coalition* was concerned that the *left/right coalition* was going to "steal" the human rights issue of human trafficking to use it as a means to abolish legalized prostitution.

Some informants saw human trafficking as a human rights issue, thus "belonging" to liberals and Democrats, not to the conservative Christians and Republicans who made up part of the *left/right coalition*. A member of the *liberal feminist coalition*, when asked about disagreements during the making of the TVPA, mentioned,

> *We sat down and we said we've got to get a response because they [the abolitionists] are twisting where we are coming from on this bill…it became forced prostitution very quickly and the kind of conservative, conservative, conservative, portion of the Republican party was beginning to increasingly dominate mainstream human rights issues that the liberals, Democrats, and moderates had generally stewarded…and it was like, "Oh my God, they are going to take this issue," and that's what actually happened. I mean, they won. They won. The worst, in many ways, has been the trafficking bill in terms of ideological impact.*

"It was that or nothing . . ."

The *liberal feminist coalition* did have some influence on the final outcome of the TVPA, although the *left/right coalition* had substantially greater influence over the legislation. Within the TVPA, there is a two-tiered definition of trafficking. This includes sex trafficking and severe forms of trafficking in which force, fraud, or coercion must have been used.

According to some respondents, the two-tiered definition of trafficking was suggested by a member of the *left/right coalition* to appease the *liberal feminist coalition* members. A member from the *left/right coalition*, when asked about her organization's stance on the two-tiered definition of trafficking mentioned, "some of the groups in our coalition did not want the [two tiered definition of trafficking] compromise, but it was clear to me that it was that or nothing. It wasn't like we could get what everybody else wanted." Members of the *liberal feminist coalition* noted that they had ultimately "lost", especially after the TVPA legislation was passed and Bush II came into office and supported the abolitionist agenda.

Pragmatic Coalition

Based on our findings, a second coalition in existence during the making of the TVPA legislation was a *pragmatic coalition*, made up of several government players and NGOs. This coalition was loose and focused on particular pieces of the legislation that they felt were important, such as protecting victims of labor trafficking and severe labor exploitation. These players weren't so interested in participating in the ideological debate surrounding prostitution versus sex trafficking. Their focus was to see a "good" piece of legislation passed in order to help victims of trafficking, which is why we label them as the *pragmatic coalition*. According to informants, those involved in this coalition were frustrated with both the *liberal feminist coalition* members and *left/right coalition* members for "hijacking" human trafficking in order to push their own ideological perspectives on prostitution.

"No one ever cared about them when they were Black or Latin…"

One informant, a former congressional staffer who helped to draft early human trafficking legislation in the U.S., described the context for U.S. human trafficking legislation development when asked about it:

> *It was a perfect storm. You had the Clintons; you had Hillary Clinton. You had people that despised them. You had this New York Times article describing white women in slavery. No one ever cared about them when they were Blacks and Latin. And the Evangelical movement was peaking. It was the perfect storm of sex, politics, the taking over of the international human rights agenda…It was all of these factors and it was unbelievable. Unbelievable! I remember not sleeping well for a year. It was rough. It was really rough.*

"You have to try to do something good for real victims . . ."

Another informant, who was part of this coalition and had experience working with trafficking victims, illustrated the coalition's basic stance when asked about debates during the making of the legislation:

> *I don't buy that thing that the 'sex worker types' push; that every woman has the capacity [to make her own choices] and doesn't need to be protected. I also don't buy the things that the abolitionists or 'Rad Fems' say about [prostitution] being all rape and all trafficking, because I know enough trafficking victims, so that pisses me off on their behalf…what [our part of] the law tries to do is steer this middle ground where you have to try to do something good for real victims.*

"I cannot, in good conscious, equate [prostitution] with slavery . . ."

An informant, who was part of this coalition, demonstrated her frustration with both of the other coalitions when asked about the human trafficking definition debate. This individual noted, "I despise prostitution, I don't support it as a right to work issue. I think it's inherently harmful, but I cannot, in good conscious, equate it with slavery. I can't. It doesn't have the same coercive quality. Not when somebody can ultimately walk away. And in slavery, by definition, you cannot."

"I don't see trafficking as a black and white issue; it's all shades of gray"

A third member of this coalition seemed to agree with the other informants from the *pragmatic coalition* when asked about the human trafficking definition debate, saying,

> *I don't see trafficking as being a black and white issue, it's all shades of grey . . . I've met very few classic, sort of like, the Lifetime [Network] kinds of women, who are trafficked, who are obviously deceived, who are obviously sold, who are obviously raped, and kept locked up. Most of the women I meet who have been trafficked or who are in prostitution may have been deceived to some degree or another, but they may know that they were going to be working in prostitution. But they feel so desperately in need of helping their families that they will do anything. So, I see it in many, many, many, many different shades, not just the ones that people would like to so clearly define; as being trafficked victims or victims, period.*

"They wanted to make all prostitution an anti-slavery movement . . ."

One member of the pragmatic coalition revealed her frustration with the ideologies that dominated the left/right coalition noting,

> *The neo-abolitionist movement—they wanted to make all prostitution an anti-slavery movement. This is an interesting thing because this is hardcore…if you look at the 70's movement, bra-burning exercises, the most extreme ideologies were in the anti-prostitution camp. So what you got was a group that would write you off if you said forced prostitution. Because all prostitution isn't forced. [Name withheld] is still carrying a torch on how all prostitution is forced…the movement was extremely oriented to all prostitution is illegal. It is really hard to sell [this idea] to the mainstream. There was a lot of squabbling during the legislative crafting phase. Was it going to be prostitution or was it going to be labor and prostitution…squabbling over how much you were going to come against prostitution as slavery…This is where the crack in the wall started…some people just wanted it to be about sex trafficking and my view was that, listen you know, you've got to have a balanced reflection of what modern day slavery looks like. You are over simplifying things and misrepresenting sex slavery and severe forms of the definition.*

"Punishing the victim all over again…"

An informant, who worked for an international NGO which assisted trafficking victims in South East Asia, strongly opposed the abolitionist movement. When asked about different perspectives that were represented during the making of the legislation she noted,

> *I think that [the abolitionist movement] diverts us from being able to carry on a deeper conversation about sexuality, sexual attitudes, about the demand side of economic depravity, and economic injustice in this world. We would have a lot fewer prostitutes if we had economic justice in this world. It's like were*

punishing the victim all over again by being so terse in our abolitionist attitudes. It's very elitist.

"Money that is being taken away from helping victims…"

An informant who was an official for the Department of Defense discussed the academic research (supported by federal grants) that was used to bolster the abolitionist position in the early days of human trafficking legislation development.

You know, the State Department has steered millions of dollars of very questionable contracts to this group of people [neo-abolitionists]…everybody kept on saying, 'well you don't actually have research that shows that every prostitute is a slavery victim' and so they then gave the very people, who were pushing that position, grants to write research papers that they could cite. So all of the research papers that they cite are by [the academics pushing the neo-abolitionist agenda]. It is disingenuous science is what it is…every dollar that gets spent on a bullshit grant to put up a crony, is money that is being taken away from helping victims…they ain't done shit as far as we can tell.

The *pragmatic coalition* had some impact on the legislation's final outcome, such as the inclusion of protecting labor trafficking victims in the legislation. However, the *pragmatic coalition* has since lost control of the trafficking issue to the *left/right coalition*.

Left/Right Coalition

The *left/right coalition* was the most powerful and vital force in the passage of the TVPA, and is where the hidden motivations and unlikely partnerships in the TVPA legislation most prominently exist. According to informants, this coalition still exists today, but does not include the same members; many have drifted from the original coalition while the hard-line members of the coalition continue to push the abolitionist agenda. The abolitionist agenda, which appears to be such a vital concern for this coalition, was not quite clear to some of its former members during the making of the legislation. This is the reason that we consider the motivations of the *left/right coalition* to be somewhat hidden. The players inside of this coalition are considered to be unlikely partners because the coalition is made up of both Republicans and Democrats, as well as conservative Christians and radical feminists, players that usually find themselves on the opposite sides of other social issues, such as abortion.

The primary players in this strong *left/right coalition* during the making of the TVPA legislation were faith-based NGOs, radical feminist activists, radical feminist academics, elected officials (and their Congressional staffers) both Democratic and Republican, some human rights groups, some NGOs working "on the ground" with trafficking victims, and some think tank representatives. This coalition's origin is credited to Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, who initially built a strong *left/right coalition* to pass the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (H.R. 2431).

Based on the interview data, the larger goal of the *left/right coalition* was to get human trafficking legislation passed in order to: (1) protect victims of trafficking; (2)

prosecute victims of trafficking; and (3) prevent trafficking into the United States through various means (such as public information campaigns and educational programs for would-be victims before leaving their countries of origin).

It must be noted that according to informants, the members of this coalition did not all necessarily have the same goals or agendas, other than getting some form of trafficking prevention legislation passed. The debates and in-fighting within this coalition seem to have been, for the most part, ideological and were based around the prostitution versus human trafficking debate. In other words, the strongest members of the coalition (radical feminists) did not see a clear difference between sex work and human trafficking. The radical feminists also wanted to focus primarily on victims of sex trafficking in the legislation, largely ignoring victims of trafficking into other forms of labor.

"Actively looking for a new issue to take on…"

According to informants, the *left/right coalition* did not develop around the human trafficking issue in particular, but previously existed as the religious freedom coalition. The religious freedom coalition managed to get the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (H.R. 2431) and its amendment of 1999 (Public Law 106-55) passed. The Religious Freedom Act seeks to promote freedom of religion and conscience throughout the world as a fundamental right, assist religious and human rights NGOs in promoting religious freedom, and to identify and denounce regimes that prosecute their citizens or others based on religious beliefs.

The religious freedom coalition had so much success with the development of the Religious Freedom Act that they actively searched for new issues to take on as a coalition. After the religious freedom legislation passed, according to an informant, "it established an appetite for building hard left/hard right coalitions and to get things done." The coalition specifically targeted human rights issues, which they perceived as being neglected by the left. A left/right coalition consisting of conservative Christians, liberal Jews, and human rights groups was put together as an experiment. Michael Horowitz was the coalition builder and was the driving force behind it.

One informant, when asked about her involvement in the making of the TVPA shared,

> *What we saw was that once you put together the hard left and hard right, you can capture the soft middle. [Then] we looked at the universe of the worst religious persecution scenarios; we were looking for another human rights issue to take on after the passage of the Religious Freedom Act…something to transport the coalition over. We chose Sudan. It was a good left/right issue. It was good for the left because of the genocide, and organizing against war, and peace building. It was good for the right because of the religious persecution in the South and the fact that [the Southern Sudanese] were being enslaved…here we had all the elements that would capture the left and the right…It was the perfect issue and that's how we started out with the slavery issue…You could go across the country and hear pastors and rabbis talking about Sudan and ending the war against slavery…we thought, OK now is the time, we could do the trafficking*

legislation. We had successfully introduced the slavery in Sudan issue. It was time to introduce the trafficking issue. It was 1998. We thought, we can do this, we can start this movement.

Another informant, when asked about how she became involved in the making of the TVPA, mentioned that she remembered having conversations with other coalition members discussing what issue they might take on after the religious freedom legislation. This informant remembered asking, "What are the human rights issues that the left are not picking up on? Why are they not picking up on human trafficking?"

Some informants believed that the trafficking movement had not taken off because of the feminists. From the informant's perspective,

The liberal and radical feminists had been cannibalizing each other over the prostitution issue. They were completely stymied over it. When coalitions go bad, they eat their own. These are highly ideological people; they just rip each other to shreds and won't stop at anything. As Conservatives, we can shame them into working with each other. When Conservatives started taking this issue, the feminists were shamed.

"What are the human rights issues that the left are not picking up on?"

According to informants, the reason that conservative Christians initially became involved in human trafficking as an issue was because of their involvement in the religious freedom coalition and their involvement in the Sudan issue. The coalition, which had gained momentum, was actively looking for another issue of concern for conservative Christians to tackle. Human trafficking seemed like the perfect issue: the liberal feminists and Democrats were not paying attention to trafficking at that time, and they could put a conservative twist on the issue by equating prostitution with human trafficking.

Another informant who was part of the *left/right coalition* said,

[*Human trafficking] was picked up by this fledgling coalition of mainly conservatives and faith based organizations that had had a success in the recent past in passing a law on religious liberty. They weren't really looking for a new project, but this one hit them. [Name withheld] brought that to his coalition, and they had decided that they wanted to do something…*

One respondent described the lens through which they were seeing this, when she was asked how her organization got involved in the making of the TVPA.

What are the human rights issues that the progressives and the left are not picking up on? Why isn't the progressive movement picking up on human trafficking and speaking out on it? It's the same reason the women's movement wasn't. They had decided that this issue was not in their best liberal interest to push on…and so this fledgling group picked it up…We were strategizing over the long term and we said, well, we don't have to bring them together as one happy coalition, in fact that will never work because they were too uneasy with one

another over these other [social] issues. The faith-based organizations didn't like the women's organizations because of the pro-abortion stuff. The women's organizations were absolutely adamant about all of this anti-abortion stuff. So we had to decide to set those two things aside and we decided the best way to do that was to have a loose coalition and one person would be the conduit for each one…the first draft [of the legislation] in 1998 changed over the next two years and there was a lot of compromising.

"We weren't ever having these discussions out loud…"

The neo-abolitionist agenda was much more nuanced and subtle, so that the real issue of abolishing prostitution was just too volatile to be discussed openly. As mentioned previously, the abolitionist agenda was kept hidden by some members of the *left/right coalition*, even from other coalition members. In fact, one of our informants mentioned that the prostitution debate was under the surface. This informant also said, "We all knew what we were about [in favor of abolishing prostitution] but we weren't ever having these discussions out loud." The neo-abolitionists were not openly discussing the goal of eradicating all forms of prostitution as part of the larger human trafficking debate, but rather, this collective goal was kept under the surface until the TVPA legislation was passed.

"We've created a monster…"

According to some informants, the relationships among many members of the *left/right coalition* seemed tenuous at best. As mentioned, some initial members of this coalition did not agree with the hard-line coalition members on the definition of trafficking and other points of debate during the making of the legislation.

Another informant revealed the tensions in the left/right coalition when asked about debates during the making of the TVPA, mentioning that

There was a lot of slanderous stuff going on—some of the most hardball politics I've ever seen. People, the big guys…they will tell you the human trafficking movement is the meanest, most difficult movement as far as hurting their own. We have created a monster. Our humble little group has gotten a taste of getting something done and it has gotten mean. Majority Republican in both houses and Bush came in. People became little kings after Bush came in…then it gained momentum to the degree that it has.

Informants explained that some members had since left the coalition and some had completely left working on human trafficking legislation. Others remained in the coalition, but with a very strained relationship with the hard-line coalition members. The following is what one informant said about this powerful coalition in action:

I felt like it was a very impressive coalition and at the same time it was difficult. I think what made it work was there were buffer zones and we, in fact, were a buffer zone. I think that a lot of the groups that we worked with wanted to stay away from other wings of the coalition because they really do have such disagreements and we would share those [disagreements].

"Hijacked by this weird agenda…"

Ultimately, it seemed that the hardliners pushing the abolitionist agenda alienated some members of this coalition. One informant, who was angry over the ideologies that existed in the coalition said,

> *I was always interested in the domestic violence connection to prostitution, all prostitution. It marginalized the anti-slavery movement. We just passed the largest slavery bill [the TVPA], and for God's sake, now that you have a momentum going, you want to "deep six" this thing by turning it into a weird agenda against prostitution, right when you have traction on this thing. It gets people geared up on this ideological thing. We have 144 new countries that adopted protocols. America allowed it to get hijacked by this weird agenda. It hurt a lot of the coalition building and served to marginalize...*

The unlikely partnerships that formed the *left/right coalition* served to push the passage of the TVPA legislation. However, many informants were in disagreement with the ways in which certain underlying agendas surfaced and led to an anti-prostitution crusade.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to identify coalitions and examine coalition identities of policy players involved in the making of the TVPA, in order to gain a better understanding of the competing motivations behind the making of the legislation. What we found through our research was that there were more players who were interested in protecting ideologies and pushing an anti-prostitution agenda, than there were players who were interested in having strong legislation to protect actual victims of human trafficking. The underlying moral agenda to abolish prostitution and other conservative motives led to unlikely partnerships (between Republicans, conservative Christians and radical feminists), forming the *left/right coalition* whose voice had the greatest influence on the formation and passing of the TVPA.

It's imperative that we acknowledge the ways in which the TVPA legislation was constructed and formed by a moral agenda, in order to understand why current efforts to address trafficking are futile and unproductive. Although the TVPA was the most comprehensive and far reaching legislation that was passed to combat human trafficking at the time, and despite the large amount of funding provided by the U.S. government that has been invested into the protection of trafficking victims, few trafficking victims have actually received protection under the TVPA, especially in consideration of the original (and unreliable) estimates of trafficking victims that were provided by the U.S. government. It has been more than ten years now since this legislation has been implemented and since its enactment, $500 million dollars have been spent or allocated for anti-trafficking programs (McGaha & Evans, 2009), with little success. The data presented by the federal government during the making of the TVPA estimated that there were as many as 50,000 persons trafficked in the United States every year and 700,000 people per year trafficked globally (Footen, 2007; McGaha and Evans, 2008). However, later those numbers were revised to an estimate of between 18,000 to 20,000 people

trafficked in the U.S. annually, and then later revised once again to between 14,500 and 17,500 (Footen, 2007).

Recently some scholars and those in the media have blamed the lack of protection of victims, not on ineffective legislation or poor implementation of the TVPA, but on the lack of actual victims. Victims are not being helped because the victims don't exist, despite the high estimates of trafficking victims provided by the U.S. government and the task forces that exist in every state to find trafficking victims and root out perpetrators of trafficking crimes (we do acknowledge that victims may be hidden). According to Weitzer (2011), several myths surround human trafficking such as: trafficking is a "mammoth" problem, trafficking is a growing problem, and trafficking and prostitution are the same phenomenon. It has been suggested that the human trafficking problem in the U.S. has been over exaggerated by those on the far right (conservative Christians) and those on the far left (radical feminists) in order to push their own anti-prostitution/anti-sex worker agendas. The discourse on human trafficking and the anti-trafficking moral crusade is a vehicle used to push this agenda. We believe that this assertion can be supported by our interview data.

What seems most unfortunate about the TVPA is that it was passed in a fervor of outrage and hysteria by several strong coalitions with a highly ideological base and millions of dollars have been thrown into anti-trafficking efforts by the federal government with few results. As McGaha and Evans (2009, p. 3) note, "the problem lies within the context of how the need for the legislation was presented and the zealous response to the issue." In addition, anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking groups have officially partnered and collaborated with government agencies, while those who do not share the same ideological perspective have been excluded and denied funding (Weitzer & Ditmore, 2010). Under the Bush Administration, the morally-driven coalitions have infused their ideology, not only in formation of the policy, but in law enforcement, research agendas, scholarly articles, media reports, social service provisions, and agency practices. Millions of dollars are being authorized by the government for the creation of task forces, the criminalization of customers, and the surveillance of internet-based businesses, while the anti-prostitution pledge of the TVPA cracks down on prostitution and ignores the need for larger structural changes within our society.

CONCLUSIONS

Trafficking, as a social issue, needs to be re-conceptualized and understood from a different framework so that we do not continue to oversimplify and sensationalize the same trafficking narrative that the *left/right coalition* utilizes to push their agenda. Legislation needs to be amended to eliminate anti-prostitution ideology and to support anti-oppressive approaches to addressing forced or deceptive working conditions. A more socially just perspective would (1) seek to understand and address socio-economic conditions that promote sex work with consideration for gender, race, ethnicity, and other embodied identities; (2) focus on all forms of un-free labor, as opposed to just focusing on the sex industry; (3) acknowledge the diverse experiences of sex workers in various aspects of the sex industry, without privileging specific narratives to support a moral agenda; (4) be mindful of the multi-layered experiences of migrants in the sex industry;

and (5) identify and implement concrete ways in which to provide comprehensive and meaningful services that enhance worker's health, safety, agency and control over their working conditions (Weitzer & Ditmore, 2010).

There is a need to acknowledge and address structural issues of inequality and oppression which lie at the root cause of social problems (such as trafficking). Alternative labor rights and migration frameworks need to be taken into account when understanding the trafficking phenomenon. Diverse perspectives and global voices need to be honored and incorporated when formulating and implementing policy related to human trafficking so that the trafficking discourse isn't dominated by governments and organizations of the global North.

Underlying motives, moral agendas & unlikely partnerships have worked in full force to silence individuals, communities, organizations and alternative ways of understanding and conceptualizing human trafficking. The U.S. trafficking discourse and the corresponding policy needs to be re-evaluated, de-constructed and re-focused to address global and local structural issues that lead to conditions of un-free labor. The trafficking phenomenon and its complexity much be situated in the broader context of labor migration in our globalized economy before we even begin to implement national and local ways to address the issue.

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Training for my Life: Lived Experiences of Dislocated Workers in an Advanced Manufacturing Training Program

Marquita R. Walker

Abstract: *This qualitative paper explores the lived experiences of one group of workers dislocated because of globalized trade policies who completed a hybrid Advanced Manufacturing Training Program (AMTP) by taking advantage of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), a federally-funded program for retraining workers dislocated because of trade policies. The research questions focus on how satisfied these workers are with the services and programs provided by TAA. Focus groups and survey instrument results indicate these workers found TAA services and processes cumbersome and time-consuming and actually had the effect of discouraging their education, training, and self-employment. The consequences of their dislocation as it relates to TAA experiences are increased frustration and dissatisfaction with the TAA program. Serious consideration for TAA policy changes should be deemed of utmost importance.*

Keywords: *Advanced manufacturing training, dislocated workers, lived experiences*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has created an environment in which American firms seek to lower labor costs by moving production offshore, forcing American workers to compete for work with workers worldwide. US government free trade policies, which promote this competitiveness, offer to American workers dislocated by trade policies opportunities for retraining through federally-funded Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), a training program which provides 104 weeks of paid training for workers certified as dislocated because of import competition. This paper explores factors which impacted thirteen displaced workers from the Navistar Engine Plant and Foundry in Indianapolis, Indiana. The thirteen workers were certified to participate in TAA. Through a focus group, their satisfaction with the TAA program and services from workforce dislocation to workforce reintegration is measured. Their stories reflect one local solution to the global problem of import competition.

BRIEF HISTORY OF WORKER DISLOCATION

Periods of worker dislocation continue to increase especially during times of economic downturns. Dislocated and displaced workers are defined as "persons 20 years of age and older who lost or left jobs because their plant or company closed or moved, there was insufficient work for them to do, or their position or shift was abolished" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010a). Long tenured displaced workers are those who have worked at least three years with a firm. Dislocated workers lost 51 percent of their jobs following the 1973-1975 recession, 64 percent of their jobs following the 1981-82 recession, and 85 percent of their jobs following the 1990-92 recession (Koppel & Hoffman, 1996, p. 114). Continued production cutbacks due to increased off-shoring and

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outsourcing estimated around "two million permanently displaced workers" (Beneria & Santiago, 2001, p. 78) by 1997. In 2010, the number of permanently displaced and dislocated workers in the United States was 6.9 million (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010b).

During the time of economic expansion from 1993 to 1994, sometimes called the "New Economy," many workers were still displaced through plant closings and layoffs (Knapp & Harms, 2002). (Hipple, 1997) posited that during this period over "2.4 million displaced workers reported they had lost their jobs because their plant or company had closed down or moved" and another "one-fourth cited 'slack work' as the reason for their job loss" (Hipple, 1997). Three in ten workers reported their "individual position or entire shift had been abolished (Hipple, 1997).

A more current analysis of displaced workers suggested their plight had not improved. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), the number of long-term unemployed workers who have remained jobless for 27 weeks or more is 5.8 million while involuntary part time workers numbered 8.6 million. Involuntary part-time workers experienced reduced hours and were unable to find full time work. There were 2.5 million marginally attached or discouraged workers available for work and not currently looking for work because they believed no work existed.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics divided the U.S. into geographic regions for purposes of reporting job loss. The East North Central region in which Indiana is located had the second highest job loss of any US region losing 1,268,000 jobs as of January, 2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010c). Manufacturing workers in this region who produced durable goods lost 328,000 jobs during this period (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010c). Indiana manufacturing employment contracted by 25 percent from June 2006 to December 2009 (Joint Economic Committee, 2010b, p. 8).

Indiana relied on manufacturing for "19% of all employment" (Joint Economic Committee, 2010a, p. 5). Most of these manufacturing jobs were in durable goods such as "transportation equipment, machinery, fabricated metal products, and primary metals" (Joint Economic Committee, 2010a, p. 1). Indiana's reduction in jobs in durable manufacturing contributed to the national durable manufacturing job loss of "two millions jobs between June 2006 and December 2009" (Joint Economic Committee, 2010a, p. 6).

The increase or reduction in orders for durable goods is an economic indicator of whether the overall economy is growing or shrinking. In Indiana since December 2009, there is some growth in durable goods manufacturing from restocking inventories but not new orders. A subsector of durable goods, transportation equipment, has seen 22,000 jobs added between December 2009 and December 2010 (Joint Economic Committee, 2010a, p. 10). Most firms' inventories reached pre-recession levels around January 2010 so new growth came from export-related demand with "over one-third (35.9 percent) of all jobs supported by exports in the manufacturing sector" (Joint Economic Committee, 2010a, p. 14).

Decision of Dislocated Workers to Participate in Training Programs

Based on the theory of human capital in which individuals invest in skills and knowledge so the value of their labor produces economic gains, dislocated workers make choices to participate in training programs based on the program's "impact on future earnings, time remaining in the trainees' work lives, and direct and indirect costs of going to school" (Jacobson, LaLonde, & Sullivan, 1993, p. 51). Older displaced workers have fewer years remaining in the workforce, so they have less incentive to enroll in training programs than do younger workers (Heckman, Lalonde, & Smith, 1999; Jacobson, 1993; Knapp & Harms, 2002).

Participation in government subsidized programs depends on individual motive. If we study the reasons displaced workers take advantage of these programs, and then explore displaced workers' perceptions of the ease or difficulty of accessing the programs, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these programs, then stakeholders can better understand how to fashion polices which deliver better payoffs for their investments.

Why Workers Become Displaced

Workers may lose their jobs for many reasons: changes in technology, plant or company closures, insufficient work, changes in demand for goods and services, inept management, economic downturns, or for some other reason (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010c). There is little scholarship concerning exactly why workers are displaced, but there is growing evidence that workers do lose their jobs because of import competition (Addison & Fox, 1995; Kletzer, 1998).

Such is the case with over 1650 workers at the Navistar Engine Plant and Foundry in Indianapolis, Indiana. Over the last six years, all Navistar workers, represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW) Locals 98 and 226 have become dislocated through import competition thus making them eligible candidates for Trade Adjustment Assistance, a federally funded program to retrain workers who have lost their jobs due to import competition. During 2009, Locals 98 and 226 applied for certification through Workforce Development for the final group of employees who received layoff notice, and certification was granted. Some of these dislocated employees then begin to complete and file the necessary paperwork to comply with TAA requirements to receive educational monies.

The training programs eligible for TAA assistance have to be on an approved state-wide occupational training provider list in order to receive monies from TAA. Educational providers must submit an application to Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC), Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and demonstrate successful training and placement in high-demand occupations. Approval comes from DWD.

Economic Rationale for Subsidizing Dislocated Workers

Job loss is costly not only to the worker but to society. Joblessness costs society because fewer workers are contributing to the tax pool from which the government

operates. When tax coffers are empty, fewer monies are available for operational expenses, and fewer social welfare programs can operate. Therefore, governments have an incentive to discourage joblessness by initiating training programs to reintegrate workers back into the workforce. Another reason to subsidize dislocated workers is to provide more skilled workers in order to alleviate shortages of workers in certain arenas and to minimize poverty by increasing the earning power of low income workers (Ashenfelter, 1978). Joblessness is also costly in terms of decreased output and productivity and increased incidence of physical and mental health problems, financial problems, and crime (LaLonde, 2003).

Social Rationale for Subsidizing Workers

When workers are displaced, they suffer from lost income streams and lost economic rents as well as losses during the adjustment period (Leigh, 1995). According to LaLonde (2003) joblessness creates or increases the incidence of "substance abuse, crime, and broken homes, as well as costs associated with the loss of individuals' self-esteem that is thought to come from work" (LaLonde, 2003). A social cost of displacement also occurs when powerful interest groups block socially beneficial programs such as free trade policies and new labor saving technology.

Government Response to Dislocated Workers

To increase jobs in a still fragile economy, the states need targeted policies to bring manufacturing jobs to Indiana and ensure there are skilled workers to fill those jobs. Toward this end, Congress and the Obama Administration passed The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2010 which channeled "$ 1,250,000,000 for grants to the states for dislocated workers employment and training activities" (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009).

This increased funding provided money for the creation and delivery of new educational programs which met the requirements of TAA; all course content delivered by training providers must include theoretical and practical instruction which would prepare workers to secure future "green" or technical jobs as outlined by the Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor. A joint effort by Navistar management and UAW Locals 98 and 226 created such a program for dislocated workers from the Navistar facility who were certified for TAA benefits. The bulk of the training program, which would revolve around practical and hands-on application in manufacturing, was delivered by a local community college. Higher level thinking skills, team development, and problem-solving courses were delivered by a research university, and lean manufacturing courses known as Six Sigma were delivered by a technological institution. This hybrid training program met the requirements of and was approved by IPIC and DWD and paid for with TAA monies.

Firms' Response to Dislocated Workers

Firms are often hesitant to tell workers about impending reductions in workforce for several reasons: (1) the firm doesn't want the community to know it is downsizing for

fear of consumers seeking other vendors; (2) the firm does not want its workers to look for work elsewhere while still employed with them (Casey, Miller, & Johnson, 1997); (3) the firm fears equipment and property might be damaged (Bray, 2002).

Who Participates in the Programs?

Most of the literature concerning TAA training programs looks at the economic impact of training dislocated workers to reintegrate into the workforce. Decker and Corson (1995) examined "the pre-layoff characteristics and post-layoff labor market experiences of two nationally representative samples of TAA program participants" (p. 758) with the objective of identifying the types of workers who utilize TAA training and to determine the benefits participants receive. They reported findings that the TAA program training did not have a significant positive impact on the earnings of the participants "at least in the first three years after the initial Unemployment Insurance claim" (p. 773). Their comparison of two samples of dislocated workers, pre- and post-1988, reflect dislocated workers experienced significant wage losses after being laid off, and those who were reemployed earned less than in their previous job.

Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan (1993) studied 65,000 workers displaced from the aerospace and wood product industries in the state of Washington between 1990 and 1994. Of the fifteen percent of dislocated workers who attend retraining programs, the younger participants tended to be white, displaced from the aerospace industry, and better educated. Older participants tended to be from the wood products industry. Participants who attended training programs were found to have "lower than expected earnings relative to comparably educated non-trainees" (p. 53). Thus, the participants who attended training programs are not representative of the broader sample of dislocated workers.

Another study conducted by Jacobson, LaLonde, and Sullivan (2005) looked at the returns to retraining displaced workers over the age of 35 using the same data from Washington State in the 1990s. Younger workers' and older workers' earnings after community college training are compared. Though fewer older workers participate in community college classes, both groups' "quarterly earnings [are] similar" (p. 398) and "retraining seems likely to have been a sound investment" (p. 409). They conclude that older workers "acquire new skills about as effectively as do younger workers" (p. 406) but the social net benefits, though still positive, are less robust because "community college schooling is heavily subsidized by taxpayers" (p. 409).

HISTORY OF NAVISTAR

Navistar, a premier manufacturing facility on Indianapolis's east side, formerly known as International Harvester, employed nearly 2, 000 workers in its facility, which consisted of an engine plant and a metal casting foundry, in the 1990s. The engine plant produced diesel engines for Ford Motor Company, their primary customer, while the foundry, owned by Navistar and known as the International Casting Corporation (ICC), produced metal castings for diesel engines for Ford and other customers as well. The nationwide decline in manufacturing affected the Navistar plant's workforce, and by

2005, the plant employed around 1,100 workers in the engine plant and 550 workers in the foundry.

In 2007, the Ford Motor Company sued the Navistar plant for raising its products' prices without explanation and not sharing in the warranty cost on its engines. The dispute was resolved when Ford decided to make its own diesel engines in Mexico. As the country slumped into an economic recession, the demand for pickup trucks nosedived, and in May, 2008, "Navistar laid off 500 assembly workers because of low demand" (McLaughlin, 2009).

In January, 2009, Navistar International Corporation, based in Warrenville, Illinois announced the closure of the Navistar east side 1.1 million square foot engine plant and foundry by the end of 2009. Previously contracted through 2012, Navistar began winding down operations but continued to produce diesel engines for Ford through 2009. Navistar worked with the automaker on a number of projects including two existing joint ventures which expanded operations into China and India and an engine-supply agreement in South America in an effort to diversify its product offering (McLaughlin, 2009). Ford and Navistar agreed to end their contract on December 31, 2009.

The engine plant closed in December, 2009, but the ICC foundry found a way to maintain its existence without the 73 year relationship with Ford because it produced engine blocks for other customers. This allowed a delay of the foundry's closing.

In April, 2010, Navistar International set the anticipated closing date for its Indianapolis iron foundry for July 16, 2010 at which time 220 employees lost their jobs. Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices about the foundry's closing were filed with Indiana's Department of Workforce Development. Scheduled layoffs included a total of 176 workers on July 2 and 24 workers on July 16 (IBJ Staff, 2010, April 28). This meant the remaining workers in the plant were notified of impending layoffs.

Worried about their jobs, these workers looked to their union for information. The business agent for UAW Local 98 was instrumental in helping them maneuver through these difficult times. Local 98 became command central for these dislocated workers who needed to know their contractual rights during lay-offs and plant closings as well as options available to them for assistance from Navistar, the UAW, and the government.

The business agent was active in securing Andre Carson, Congressman for Indiana's 7th district, to intervene with WorkOne, the state's one-stop career center, on behalf of the dislocated Navistar workers; the business agent and the Congressman met with and informed these union members in January, 2010 of their eligibility for TAA assistance.

About 3-4 months before being laid-off, the business agent encouraged them to enroll in the newly developed hybrid Advanced Manufacturing Program. At that time there were around 150-300 laid-off workers eligible for TAA. About 40 of these workers took the HVAC heating and air, welding, or electrical tracks while others opted for training in heavy equipment maintenance. Forty workers opted for the AMTP. Other workers chose not to take advantage of TAA assistance.

In order to qualify for the AMTP, workers had to test out of basic math and reading requirements at a ninth grade three-month level. Those opting for the AMTP who tested below that standard had to complete basic education classes that were held at Local 98's union hall.

In an effort to assist both dislocated Navistar management and union workers, Navistar and the UAW worked together in providing assistance by installing a bank of computers at Local 98's union hall in order for all dislocated Navistar workers to file TAA paperwork and work on adult basic education classes. This in-house joint effort grew from the necessity of providing services to a growing crowd of dislocated workers in a field already crowded with thousands of dislocated workers. Mornings at the union hall are devoted to Adult Basic Education classes while afternoons are left open for filing paperwork.

In order to qualify for TAA, workers had to be dislocated from their jobs because of import competition and file a group certification petition with the TAA and be certified (America), file an individual TAA application through the WorkOne career center, meet several deadlines, submit all required forms in a timely fashion, and enroll in an approved trainer program. Because of the huge numbers of dislocated workers flocking to WorkOne centers to file for unemployment benefits and file TAA paperwork, Navistar and the UAW were instrumental in bringing a satellite WorkOne office to Local 98's union hall. Staffed with unemployment personnel and one TAA coordinator, this local office alleviated some strain on Navistar workers who would otherwise have to travel to a WorkOne center and wait in congested lines for services.

Because of the huge number of individual TAA applications being processed through the WorkOne centers, the [TAA] coordinators and WorkOne centers were overwhelmed by applications, so the process took longer than usual. According to the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute (2001), the vast majority of TAA petitions had long processing times. The TAA legislation required an investigative period of 40 days (Employment and Training Administration Services Act, 2002), but from January 1, 2009 to March 1, 2011, the national average processing time was over 102 days. This elongated processing time had a deleterious impact on workers who are unable to utilize their full benefits under TAA until approval, were delayed in beginning their training programs, and adversely suffered from decreased morale.

The UAW, which represented the Navistar workers, negotiated several packages for workers laid off in 2008 and those affected by the engine plant's closing. In 2009, Navistar offered to continue the foundry's operation if UAW Local 226 agrees to a reduced wage and benefit package. Navistar reported it needed reductions to remain cost competitive in the market. A ratification vote for this contract was rejected by Local 226 members on August 17, 2009.

On July 15, 2010, Navistar and UAW Local 226 negotiated and accepted by a 58% majority a new five-year contract covering 250 workers that included wage and benefit reductions. The new contract that extended through July, 2015 reduced vacation time, holidays and wages, and included a buy-out for older workers. The new pay structure was $17 per hour for production jobs and $23 for skilled trades and technical positions (IBJ

Staff, 2010, April 28).Though the foundry continued to be operational; there was a four to six month shutdown while Navistar expended it backlog of parts.

In April, 2011, PurePOWER Technologies (PPT), LLC, based in Columbia, South Carolina and which produced diesel power systems, emissions control systems, and industrial metal castings announced it would take over the Navistar foundry and produce diesel structure components. This move resulted in recalling 120 dislocated workers from the foundry with plans to recall 30 more by June, 2011. Long term plans included a $19 million dollar investment in the firm and hiring 100 more workers by 2014 (Todd, 2011). Workers were recalled according to seniority beginning in June, 2011. The companies also continued to collaborate on a range of initiatives, including their existing Blue Diamond Truck and Parts joint ventures and their diesel engine supply agreement in South America.

The future of the Navistar/PPT has currently been somewhat stabilized by the forgiveness of a debt owed to the city in 2010. PPT applied for and received a five million dollar personal property tax abatement from the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC). Recognizing the casting facility acted in good faith during a severe economic downturn as the reason for nonpayment, the city's MDC restructured the debt in anticipation of future investment by the facility (Olson, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

Institutional Review Board approval was granted for this study prior to data collection. Data collection included returned survey responses and focus group participation. Utilizing convenience sampling,[1] 14 students enrolled in the hybrid AMTP offered in fall, 2010 were mailed requests for participation and consent forms during summer, 2010. Thirteen students initially agreed to take part in the study that involved completing a survey instrument which asked for demographic information and requested their participation in a focus group. One student opted out of the program very early. Eleven students returned the survey and 5 participated in the focus group. Survey results denoted demographic data that consists of age, gender, length of service at Navistar, years of education, and consent to participate in a focus group.

Table 1: Demographic Survey Data for Dislocated Worker Participants from Navistar

Number of returned surveys	Average age of participants	Gender	Average tenure at Navistar	Average years of education	Participate in focus group
11	45 years	Male: 7 Female: 4	11 years	11	5

[1] The use of convenience sampling does not ensure the small number of participants is a representative sample of dislocated workers from the Navistar plant.

The focus group met with the PI at a local restaurant to discuss their history with Navistar and their involvement with TAA. The focus group met for two hours during which responses from participants were recorded via notes taken by the PI. These notes became the basis for the data analysis. The following questions were asked during the focus group:

1. Please tell me about your experience after you found out your job/position was going to be eliminated.
2. Tell me about your experiences in filing for and receiving training assistance through the TAA.
3. Tell me about your experiences in taking the AMTP.
4. Tell me about your experiences in securing future employment as a result of receiving certification in Advanced Manufacturing Training.

A hand analysis of the qualitative responses utilizing lean coding (Creswell, 2009) resulted in three themes reflecting the lived experiences of students' satisfaction with the services and programs provided by the TAA. These themes evolved from participants' concern and apprehension, discouragement, disillusionment, disorganization, and uncertainty concerning the application process, the structure and organization of the program, and the outcomes of the program.

DISCUSSION

All thirteen dislocated workers participating in this study were members of UAW and had lifetime recall rights. Prior to layoff, they each made around $21.50 per hour and had good benefits. They had an excellent 90/30 insurance plan, a cost of living allowance (COLA), a night shift differential, and four weeks of vacation pay after ten years of service. They each participated in the company's 401k with a 6% company contribution match. Uniforms and corresponding laundry service were provided to them every two weeks at a cost of $6 per week. Optional overtime was available to them from 1999-2006. After 2006, overtime became scarce, and they each worked only eight hours per day Monday through Friday.

After they were laid off from Navistar, they drew state unemployment benefits as well as supplemental unemployment pay, a contractual benefit. At the time the focus group was conducted, all had been certified for TAA assistance, engaged with the TAA process, and were nearing completion of their AMTP.

Three themes relating to participants' satisfaction with TAA services and its programs emerged from interpretation of participants' responses: 1) processes involving certification and application to the TAA program; 2) the structure and organization of the AMTP; and 3) outcomes from the AMTP. The negativity associated with participants' lived experiences as told through their narratives suggests an overall dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the TAA process and the AMTP. The first theme involved the processes in which participants engaged after learning of the plant closure, their

subsequent dislocation, application for TAA certification and training and engagement with the training program.

Processes Related to Certification and Application to the TAA Program

The first finding suggested workers were concerned and apprehensive about the processes related to certification and application to the TAA program. In response to focus group question one which asked workers to tell about their experiences after they found their jobs/positions was going to be eliminated and question two which asked workers about experiences in filing for and receiving training assistance through the TAA, workers confirmed their concern and apprehension about upcoming layoffs, who to turn to for help, where to go to get information, and how to apply for TAA assistance. Participants recount: "About nine months prior to being laid off, we were notified we were going to be laid off" and "There were rumors going around the plant that the facility was closing, but we couldn't get a straight answer from Navistar management. Navistar stalled about work going out of country." The uncertainty associated with not knowing management's future plans was complicated by the difficulty in applying for TAA assistance. Once certified for TAA assistance, which was facilitated by Navistar management and the UAW locals, the process of actually qualifying for training monies began.

Participants were discouraged and frustrated by the many TAA requirements administered by WorkOne in order to qualify for assistance. One participant reported, "We filled out lots of forms. One form asked questions like: how will you support yourself during the time you are in school? What contingency plans have you made to pay your bills?" Another participant said:

> *We had to take adult basic education classes before signing up for TAA. We had to pass math and reading tests. There were probably about 40 people interested in taking the Advanced Manufacturing Track. We would meet at Local 98's hall where there were computers and work on filling out the TAA forms. The business agent was a great help to us. He encouraged us all the way. We would not have been able to complete the paperwork if it were not for him.*

The number of forms and upcoming deadlines seemed overwhelming to these participants and contributed to their sense of disillusionment about the necessity and value of completing a training program.

Each participant met with a TAA coordinator in order to receive the necessary forms and apply for training. One participant reported he was discouraged from applying for training from an approved TAA educational provider by the TAA coordinator with whom he worked even though he was approved for TAA assistance. He related the TAA coordinator discouraged his application because "she didn't think I was smart enough to complete the program and that I would fail." He said the process of getting approved for TAA was difficult enough without having to deal with coordinators who tried to discourage application for training in which you were interested. So this participant entered the AMTP instead of a program he preferred. This account reflected some issues with TAA coordinators in general. In talking with several TAA coordinators, they

reported no training or experience in dealing with TAA legislation and processes. One TAA coordinator said:

> *One day I was working in the unemployment office, and the next day I was transferred to another department and became a TAA coordinator. I was given no training. There isn't even a handbook for the coordinators. I was lost.*

This type of employee transfer between various state departments suggested some of the confusion and disruption during the time the Navistar dislocated workers were applying for TAA assistance could have been reduced or eliminated had trained staff been available to handle the applications. The subjective nature of a determination of "how smart" a dislocated worker might be made by an untrained TAA coordinator could have a negative impact on the worker who is already distraught about his/her future. The dislocated worker, already determined to be eligible for approved provider training, now had to adjust his/her plans to enter a program that was not his or her first choice.

Engaging with the TAA coordinator on site at Local 98, the study participants reported the TAA coordinator explained the process, deadlines, and forms to them. One participant reported:

> *She told us we had to talk to/contact at least three other people in a field we thought we might want to enter and interview them. We really didn't know what questions to ask them though. It was hard to find these people.*

The confusion these workers felt during this process was obvious. Full of frustration over the operation of the process, it was clear the workers felt adrift without a life raft. Each participant felt helpless in finding employers to interview and knowing what questions to ask them. Another participant described this as "phone booking." He said he would just open the phone book and find some name associated with some manufacturing facility and call them and ask them if he could interview him or her. Some of them talk to him; some of them do not. One very frustrated participant responded:

> *The TAA agents' advice was terrible. I was so frustrated; I went home and threw the papers down. I said I wasn't going to go through all that to go to school. The TAA program discourages workers who want to get an education. I was discouraged because I had to write an essay, contact 3 colleges I might be interested in going to, find out the cost, and interview people in the field in which I was interested. I did a lot of phone booking; trying to find workers to interview was a problem. I was given a questionnaire and the interviewee had to respond. The requirement was to turn in 3 interviews. The essay was about you; why should you be allowed to get TAA assistance. You had to report that you had looked and couldn't find a job and how was I going to support myself until school was completed. The deadline for submission was only two weeks. The entire packet had to be completed and submitted which included a resume.*

The excessive numbers of forms and deadlines to complete, file, and comply with TAA guidelines posed a challenge to dislocated workers. This cumbersome process did not

contribute to the overall wellbeing of dislocated workers and discouraged them from availing themselves of TAA assistance.

Structure and Organization of the AMTP

The second finding suggested participants were discouraged and frustrated with the structure and organization of the AMTP. Participants' narratives about their experiences in taking the AMTP reflect discouragement and frustration with the content, timing, delivery, and instruction of the bulk of the program.

Participants began taking classes in the AMTP in May 2010. One participant said, "The curriculum presented to us by the community college, the technological university, and the research university looked good, and we were encouraged by the business agent and others to move forward with the classes." Initially the classes were held by the community college from 1-4 pm, Monday through Thursday at Local 98's union hall. Limited hours at the hall were available because Adult Basic Education classes for dislocated workers upgrading their basic skills in order to qualify for TAA training were being held there during the morning hours. From the start, these limited training hours prolong the length of the training program. Two month's into the program, Local 98's union hall was sold, so the community college classes move about two blocks away to UAW Local 226's union hall. This move introduced uncertainty into the training program because the workers were never sure where they were going to meet. Communication from the community college was sparse and untimely. Workers might show up for a scheduled class only to find the class was cancelled or moved without notification. There were no textbooks provided to the students and little communication between the instructors and the workers. The workers regretted their enrollment in the program. One participant reported:

> *The curriculum looked good, but there was no consistency in the program. Students never know in advance where their classes are to be held, when they are to attend, who their instructors are, and we have received no/few books concerning their instruction. Computers are limited, so we often have to share a computer. Many of the instructors are not knowledgeable about the classes they are teaching, and there is no feedback concerning students' tests or grades. The community college program coordinator told us that employers want workers with critical thinking skills, math, computer skills, etc., but we are not getting that kind of training in this.*

Another participant said:

> *The program fell apart because of inconsistency with classes. The community college could not provide instructors who were knowledge[able] about the specifics of the courses. For instance, an instructor who was a (retired) math teacher was pulled in to teach Intro to Manufacturing.*

Yet, another participant explained, "I feel we were pushed to fast without the time to learn. We have all been pushed through and get out of our lives. I feel we were being

rushed, pushed, to get us out of their lives." The depth of frustration resounded in this participant's statement:

> *[The community college] rushed me through, so I feel I'm a bad product. I'm supposed to represent [the community college] and I'm a failure. What's that all about? We would like to see the program be a success and not a failure.*

Reiterating this frustration, another participant said:

> *I wished I could have gone into heavy equipment operator, a four month class, instead of this. At least I would have been done by now. I think the program is a failure.*

All participants responded they were satisfied with the instruction provided by the technological and research universities' curriculum. Those pieces of the training program, which totaled five weeks of instruction, were provided by trained professionals who supplied books and material and delivered quality instruction in a timely fashion in adequate facilities. There were no negative comments about those pieces of the training program.

The general sentiment reflected from participants' narratives was their frustration with the community college's content and delivery of the program complicated by their discontent with continually filling out forms and meeting deadlines to comply with TAA requirements. Noncompliance with TAA requirements meant dismissal from the program and termination of all future TAA benefits so participants always felt pressured to comply for fear of losing future training monies. This created an environment in which participants felt they were set up for failure because of the inappropriateness of the training content and delivery coupled with the TAA requirements to complete and verify components of training by certain deadlines.

Outcomes from the TAA Program

The third finding reflects participants' satisfaction, actually their dissatisfaction, with the outcomes associated with the training program such as securing employment and maintaining their living standards.

The participants in the AMTP completed the program in July, 2011. What began as a 10-month program evolved into a 14-month program. The 13 students finishing the program received certification in 10 areas of Advanced Manufacturing which should have given them an advantage in the job market. Disillusioned and frustrated with the length of time it took to finish the program and the disorganization of the community college's training, these participants hoped they would be recalled to the Navistar/PPT foundry because they saw little prospect for work in Advanced Manufacturing elsewhere. One participant explained:

> *I go in once a month and talk to the TAA counselor. I tell her I'm dissatisfied. I don't know what she does with that information. I don't think anyone in our class has the confidence to go out and get a job.*

Another participant said:

> *If called back to the factory, the [advanced manufacturing] training ends. Then on the job training begins when we go back to work. The company pays for that.*

Participants' narratives suggested a general dissatisfaction with their overall training and the likelihood they would find work at comparable or higher wages after the training was completed. There was also dissatisfaction about the certifications they received. Their general criticism was that the cost of their program was comparable to the cost of a degree program from an accredited college; they felt their efforts and energies would have been better spent in applying for acceptance to an accredited institution of higher learning and completing a terminal degree. This was not an option for them at the time of their layoffs because the time frame to complete a degree would have been elongated thus delaying their reentry into the workforce, and they would have to be accepted to an institution of higher learning with a certain level of credentials they did not have.

As of this writing, several of the workers in the AMTP have been recalled to work at Navistar/PPT, and several more are planning to return soon. They are thankful to be returning to work even though they will have a reduced wage and benefit package. One participant mentioned the uncertainty of the future:

> *If they [Navistar/PPT] call us back, and they lay us off again, our insurance runs out. We had one year of insurance [under the old contract], and we had life time recall rights. The new contract is for five years.*

The lived experiences of these dislocated workers from dislocation to reintegration into the workforce and the adjustment of their living standards to new wage and benefits packages suggested training programs currently available need revision to better meet the training needs of dislocated workers and potential employers. Further research into restructuring TAA policies is necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

The lived experiences of workers dislocated because of globalized import competition from the Navistar engine plant and foundry who completed an AMTP through TAA reflected a general dissatisfaction with the processes, services and programs, and outcomes associated with TAA. Survey and focus group results indicate these workers found TAA services and processes cumbersome and time-consuming and actually had the effect of discouraging their education, training, and self-employment. The consequences of worker dislocation as it relates to TAA experiences are increased frustration and dissatisfaction with the TAA program. A general sense of failure surrounded these workers even though some workers will return to work with reduced wages and benefits. This exploration suggested a serious need for changes in the application, implementation, and administration of TAA policies. Recommendations for TAA policy changes included an increase in training funding from the federal government, a streamlined and simplified in person or online application process with less paperwork and fewer deadlines, a dedicated training program with competent

instructors, support staff, and up-to-date materials, and an assessment plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program.

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An Interdisciplinary Approach to Developing Innovative Teaching Strategies for Responding to Global Disasters

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Abstract: *This paper summarizes the development of an interdisciplinary Faculty Learning Community (FLC) bringing together the Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work and Government and Public Affairs, Department of Homeland Security to develop an in depth, comprehensive pedagogical approach to the many issues associated with disaster risk reduction. As the title suggests, this is an interdisciplinary team that explores learning and demonstrates learning models. This particular FLC focuses on understanding the antecedent conditions and root causes of disaster events. We explore best practices to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for such events in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum with an emphasis on homeland security and social work. The FLC is an example of a non-traditional educational model providing content on disaster risk, response, and global impact. This particular FLC was committed to bringing together appropriate expertise from the academic setting as well as inviting community members and organizations into the classroom to share the "lived experience" and intuitive knowledge about disaster.*

Keywords: *Globalization, disaster relief, human rights, faculty learning community, interdisciplinary, natural disaster*

The impact of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Boxing Day 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, 9-11, and the Gulf Oil Spill provide painful reminders of the vulnerabilities of communities to disaster risk. These events highlight the fact that natural, health-related, technologic and human-induced disasters are on the rise worldwide, including statistically-probable but unanticipated catastrophes as well as moderate-scale repetitive events. The responsibility of educational programs, including social work and other disciplines to provide opportunities for students to connect global content is magnified during a crisis. Educational programs are struggling with how to infuse already packed curricula with new knowledge and skills related to combating social injustices while responding to environmental devastation. One potential mechanism for addressing this issue is to provide opportunities for students to engage in learning about global injustices outside the traditional classroom setting. This may

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include bringing those who have experienced disasters into the classroom for testimony in combination with response from experts on disaster and social problems.

This paper summarizes the development of an interdisciplinary Faculty Learning Community (FLC) bringing together the Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work and Government and Public Affairs, Department of Homeland Security to develop an in depth, comprehensive pedagogical approach to the many issues associated with disaster risk reduction. As the title suggests, this is an interdisciplinary approach to exploring learning and demonstrating learning models. This particular FLC focuses on understanding the antecedent conditions and root causes of disaster events and explores best practices to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for such events in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum, with an emphasis on homeland security and social work. The FLC is an example of a non-traditional educational model providing content on disaster risk, response, and global impact. This particular FLC was committed to bringing together appropriate expertise from the academic setting as well as inviting community members and organizations into the classroom to share the "lived experience" and intuitive knowledge about disaster. Ultimately, this increased opportunities for students to learn from enhanced and highly interactive curriculum. The FLC also served as a vehicle for building collaborative partnerships for faculty at the school of social work with academics from across and outside the university.

In order to engage students in this approach to learning in non-traditional classrooms, the partners developed a case study approach to learning. This paper begins with a review of the literature and establishes the case for using new and innovative approaches to learning, including a description of the FLC development and process. We focus primarily on the Haiti earthquake as a case study given its magnitude and because it was a catalyzing event in terms of the FLC development. Also, other subsequent case studies will be highlighted, to include British Petroleum (BP) Oil Spill/Hurricane Katrina Aftermath, and Guatemalan mudslides.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent trends in globalization are a challenge to the social work profession as a whole (Lyons, 2006) and in turn this has created unique pedagogical challenges for disaster preparedness in health and human services curriculum. Social workers practice in an environment where they come in contact with global social injustice frequently and they have "an ethical responsibility to the broader society to promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments". This expectation is articulated in the National Association of Social Workers [NASW] Code of Ethics, which emphasizes the need for social workers to advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs, promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice (NASW Code of Ethics, 1999, p. 8). As a result, the goal of educating future social work and human services professionals to respond as ethical and competent practitioners, including advocacy and human rights considerations for vulnerable peoples continues to be challenge.

As a global profession, social workers should be aware of both the global and local concerns facing our profession (Healy & Link, 2011; Lyons, 2006). Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers are only a few of the populations which social work has invested heavily and participatory inclusion of marginalized people in self determination (e.g. planning for and responding to disaster) is a core value for social workers (Cook-Craig et al., 2010; Nash, Wong, & Trlin, 2006). Teaching and learning strategies that focus on issues of diversity, globalization and disaster risk reduction in a non-traditional classroom setting provides an opportunity for students to be educated in a " new field of practice" (Cook-Craig et al., 2010, p. 345) with specialized skills at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels that addresses the unique challenges faced by these populations.

Nagy and Falk (2000) stress the education implications of addressing social problems that are caused by international crises and the growing tendency to solve problems by using policy approaches that are the result of an international cross-fertilization of ideas. As such, the study of global social work can better prepare students for working with diverse populations with a variety of social problems, many of experience issues related to social justice dimensions and inequality. This not only includes new and innovative solutions, but also multi-disciplinary approaches to the problems.

As communities continue to struggle while coping with international and national disasters, social work professionals will need to be prepared to address the myriad of issues related to the trauma associated with disasters. The literature on the relationship between disasters and mental health, find that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was most frequently be observed and PTSD is considered to be "probably the most debilitating psychological disorder that occurs after traumatic events and disasters" (Satcher, Friel, & Bell, 2007). The stressors associated with disasters and traumatic events are numerous—including special considerations for children (Gammonley & Dziegielewski, 2006) and often the condition goes unaddressed in the immediate disaster response and later undiagnosed in the long term.

Even simple grief and loss is important for social workers to understand more fully in the case of disasters. Grief and loss can be experienced and expressed in a variety of ways that include physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, social, and spiritual dimensions (Corr, Nabe, & Corr, 2003); also loss of family, loss of status in community, fear (Potocky, 2008); and, violence against women (Enarson, 1999). Often grief and loss behaviors differ across race, gender, ethnicity, and cultural groups thereby creating even greater challenges for delivering competent health and human services.

The frequency and disturbing toll of natural disasters around the world have increased exponentially during the last 30 years (Emergency Disaster Database, 2007). Schools of social work are poised to partner with other disciplines to engage students in practice that combats social justices, confronts human rights abuses, and promotes global citizenship.

BEGINNING WITH HAITI AS A CASE STUDY

The earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 was one of the most devastating moments in the contemporary history of the Americas. Globally, millions witnessed the

event as outsiders looking in through the lens of international media. Images of dazed and confused Haitians desperately searching for the family and friends among the rubble were profound and deeply troubling. The social justice and human rights dimensions of Haiti's poverty and pre-earthquake infrastructure—including simple and inadequate building codes—became discourse as the news covered the tragedy. For many US citizens, the gross social inequality in this neighboring nation-- poorest of nations in the Western Hemisphere (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2010) -- became real, in their personal understanding for the first time. A collective shock occurred as consciousness was raised about not only the grief, loss, and trauma, but also the global social stratification and economic inequality in which Haiti is entangled. For many, Haiti became a case study of poverty, globalization, international debt and related social justice dimensions and human rights abuses.

As we searched for a way to put the disaster into perspective, students wanted to know more about Haiti and how to intervene and offer more assistance. The sheer volume of information about Haiti, in the immediate and the aftermath of disaster were difficult for most to digest. And, fundamentally, many were called to action through voluntary donations and other forms of 'helping' as a personal coping mechanism. Most needed a 'debriefing' to process the graphic images seen in the media in order to resolve secondary trauma from bearing witness to the disaster (Cunningham, 2004). Exploring the causes and consequences of Haiti's poverty became a source of discourse on college campuses across the USA.

Recognizing this need, several student groups combined resources to develop an event entitled *Forum on the Disaster in Haiti: Early Reflections on Humanitarian Assistance and Beyond* held at Virginia Commonwealth University. The event took place within two weeks of the disaster and a key speaker invited to participate was a trained professional social worker (MSW-level) who had recently returned from an emergency trip home to Haiti to search for lost family members. As a guest speaker, the personal and lived experience of this trip to Haiti offered insight into the depth of the tragedy, and was documented as testimony to which a panel of experts responded. Panelists included a social work faculty member, a school of government faculty member, an executive director of a small organization focused on empowerment and development work in Guatemala, and a staff member of Oxfam who joined the panel via video-telephone communication. The overall program was facilitated by faculty members in the school of social work. The students who participated were those involved in sponsoring the event, including the Association of Black Social Workers and an "Americas Interest Group" called "La Milpa." Also, several social work classes joined the event. Finally and importantly, members of the community participated including the director of the local chapter of the American Red Cross. This element of local relevance was an added value because it gave practical solutions for local community for Haitian living locally, and the Red Cross is the leader in disaster assistance.

Review of Panel Discussion

The key speaker for the event, a Haitian born MSW began with his personal story of losing a brother and sister-in-law in the quake, showing photos of the family home that

was left in ruin. He had the unfortunate task of searching for the remains of his family lost under the rubble. Talking about this trauma helped the audience understand the transnational relationship between many Haitians living in the USA and the island nation. He reflected on the nation's history of slavery and debt obligations to France in which is well over 50% of the national budget went to debt repayment (Johnson, 2009). This fact was undoubtedly a surprise to many in the audience and it illustrates economic inequality in a way which is undeniable and brings to bear issues of colonialism in real and pragmatic terms.

The Oxfam America representative talked about her experience on the ground in the nation in the early days and she focused on community capacity and hope. She reflected on the human condition in such extreme circumstances, talking about the public health threats in the make-shift camps for homeless Haitians while reflecting on the many issues, as well as opportunities. Many students were surprised to learn that Oxfam had closed its donation system because they had reached financial saturation in terms of their organizational capacity to respond to the crisis (Personal communication, Coco McCabe March 24, 2010).

A social work faculty member then presented on a policy paper (Rotabi & Bergquist, 2010) focused on responding to the problems of orphaned and vulnerable children in the nation, emphasizing the importance of preventing human trafficking. Included was the highly publicized attempt to abduct children for intercountry adoption into the USA (Thompson, 2010). Also, *Restaveks*-- children who are sold into child labor in Haiti—were also discussed with considerations for culture and social class. This particularly complex discussion was framed with the United Nations Alternative Care of Children Agreement (2009), which provides a framework for understanding international standards of child care and protecting orphaned and vulnerable children. Related guidance includes use of institutions for care of children verses family based solutions, all within the value system of the best interests of the child. Further, some guidance is found in this international instrument for disaster situations, including evacuations of children for medical reasons.

Our panelist from the school of government reflected on the bigger picture of disasters, reminding us that responding to disaster is something that all nations must have a plan. The circumstances in Haiti, as underscored, can happen anywhere and we must ask ourselves if we are personally ready here in the USA. Also noted was the fact that the international relief community is being pushed to the limit by the unparalleled intensity, frequency and scale of natural disasters and catastrophes. He recalled that in 2009, 335 natural disasters occurred worldwide, killing 10,655 persons, disrupting the lives of 119 million others, and causing over US$ 41.3 billion economic damages. Asia accounted for nearly nine-tenths of global reported natural disaster victims and more than a third of total worldwide economic damages (Vos, Rodriguez, Below, & Guha-Sapir, 2010). These events highlight the fact that natural, health-related and technologic disasters are on the rise worldwide, including statistically-probable but unanticipated catastrophes as well as moderate-scale repetitive events. Finally, the panelist acknowledged that disaster research has made great strides since the pioneering work of disaster behavior (Prince,

1920) and hazard mitigation (White, 1942); adding, the debate continues over "What is a disaster?" (Quarantelli, 1998).

Our final panelist was a community partner who presented on the colonial history of the island nation, reminding us how US foreign policy has led to significant problems in the neo-colonial era in which global policies continue to enslave the people of Haiti. Comments specific to hope for the Haitian people to be given an opportunity to have a voice in rebuilding their nation with their vision and cultural value system setting the agenda was presented. This particular heart-felt presentation was a good wrap-up to content about global oppression and empowerment.

Finally, students from the social work program enrolled in a Crisis Intervention class, provided comments on their assessment of local resources for disaster intervention. The Wiki page developed by the class for the assignment was also identified, illustrating the use of technology to communicate about disaster and respond appropriately. These students modeled 'learning in action' and their project was open to the audience for further contribution and consideration.

Haiti Disaster a Catalyst for FLC Development

It should be clarified that this first event was not *officially* developed as a FLC activity. It was, actually, a catalyst which brought together a group of faculty, students, and community members. This forum was not only a one-time success, but the involved faculty agreed to develop a "Haiti Six Months Later" event in the Fall of 2010. Ultimately, the result was the development of the FLC itself which executed this second event as well as several other case studies over 2010-2011 academic year, including consideration for the important question posed earlier, "what is disaster?"

The learning content specified in the FLC reflected core values of the social work profession: *service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity* and *competence* (NASW, 1999). Additionally, the FLC learning activities were in alignment with core competencies outlined in the *Educational Procedures and Assessment Standards* (EPAS) from the Council on Social Work Education (2008). Seven core competencies reflected in the FLC are: *EPAS* 2.1.2, apply social work ethical principle to guide professional practice; 2.1.3, apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments; 2.1.4, engage in diversity and difference in practice; EPAS 2.1.5, importance of advancing human rights and social and economic justice; EPAS 2.1.8, engagement in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services; and 2.1.9, respond to context that shape practice. These standards were integrated throughout the FLC event described below. See table for summary of core competencies and application of practice behaviors embedded in these disaster education activities.

Haiti Revisited Six Months Later

This second event "Haiti Revisited Six Months Later" summarized that what was known about the earthquake and subsequent humanitarian and development assistance. Strengths and weaknesses were explored with reflections from many of the same

panelists and participants from the first event. An enhancement for this particular event was the involvement of undergraduate students in the school of government who were given a class assignment that involved constructing poster presentations, describing the impact and progress of the earthquake on the Haitian people six months later. Those presentations were juried by University faculty, and were later displayed on campus.

The power of this second event was reflective capacity. Also, organizing faculty had more time to actually implement the event. As a result, the student poster assignment was integrated into the activity. For many of the undergraduate students participating, this was a first opportunity to present their work in a large forum, using their voice and creativity to illustrate core concepts and knowledge related to the history of Haiti, earthquakes as a disaster experience, and post-disaster responses.

MUDSLIDES IN GUATEMALA

Later in the fall of 2010, mudslides in Guatemala became an emergent disaster opportunity for consideration when well over one hundred people perished as a result of heavy rains and resulting mudslides in this Central American nation. Drawing upon the resources from our Haiti FLC, we partnered with the local organization the *Highland Support Project* to bring to campus one of their community health promoters to present on her lived experience of responding to the mudslides. This particular health promoter, an indigenous woman, was invited to campus to present photographs of the devastation. The focus of the presentation was for her to give personal testimony based on what she saw and experienced in the aftermath of the disaster. The event was structured so that she not only had 'voice', but the concept of self-determination was clear in her presence—our guest speaker was speaking for herself and the indigenous communities that she serves.

This speaker spoke also of the dynamics of help from outsiders, including faith-based approaches which are encroaching upon traditional religious practices and beliefs of Mayan Indians. This particular aspect of the testimony underscored the power and oppression that obstructs self-determination of indigenous peoples as they struggle with poverty and the devastation of disaster. When faith groups seize upon desperation and offer disaster assistance with expectations that long-term relationships and opportunities related to proselytization will be formed, the power to preserve traditional faith beliefs and rituals is at risk if not under attack (Manewal, 2007). Additionally complicating to the issue are elements of colonialism and social stratification which were a part of the discourse given the fact that Guatemala has some of the greatest structural inequality in the Western Hemisphere and indigenous people bear the greatest injustices (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). All of these complex elements were brought together in a powerful testimony of not only despair, but also hope as community resilience was ultimately a critical part of the rebuilding discourse.

GULF COAST OIL SPILL AND THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA

Given the recent disasters of the Gulf Coast, the FLC held in the Spring of 2011 focused on the deleterious impact of the BP Oil Spill of the Gulf Coast, while reflecting

on the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Students and faculty alike participated in a 2.5 hours discussion on the implications of policy and practice on these disasters, with an emphasis on the impact of minority and vulnerable populations. The goal of the event was to elicit discussion on how to improve disaster preparedness in the U.S. and to educate students on existing policies i.e., the Robert T. Stafford Act (2007), and practices that influenced the handling of Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill. An expert panel of clinicians and policy practitioners were convened to highlight areas specific to mental health symptoms and treatment in children and families, social and economic impact these disasters had on the region, and the lack of communication among policy-makers specific to levels of authority. The discussion specific to policy practice focused on the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (2007), Public Law 93-288, which highlights provisions of the Act related to Emergency Management and Case Management Services. A limitation of this policy as it relates to the case management feature is there are no guidelines specific to training case managers to practice in a culturally responsive manner. This has major implications for minority populations that are impacted by disaster.

Panelists provided an overview of the two provisions and engaged students in a dialogue about the connection between policy and practice, and how often one shapes the other. Student were encouraged to participate in policy practice to include advocacy via letter writing, making phone calls, coalition building, and grassroots organizing. One of the panelists, a policy professor in the school of social work, engaged participants in a discussion specific to the lack of federal policies in place specific to the handling of Oil Spills (questions were raised around responsibility for clean-up, timeliness of the cleanup, and response to the families affected), all which ultimately impacted the Gulf Coast communities economically, physically and emotionally. Resources specific to federal initiatives to improve conditions for those impacted by these two disasters were also discussed.

The guest panelist from Florida State University, college of social work (via Skype) spoke about changes made to the Stafford Act regarding case management procedures in a natural disaster. Discussed was the provision of case management services after a disaster occurs and the need for culturally competent case management training for social workers that provide such services, particularly in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf oil spill. A second guest panelist from the school of social work that specialize in treating trauma in survivors of disaster led the participants in a discussion on best practices for intervention with trauma victims. The discussions referenced the levels of trauma experienced by Hurricane Katrina victims, and drew parallels of grief, loss, displacement, loss of community, and loss of value for those impacted by the oil spill. Participants shared their personal reflections and stories of family and friends impacted by the disasters, reflecting on grief and loss, displacement, health concerns, and lack of communication related to available resources.

Following the panel discussion, the FLC led a segment on a “call for action” which encouraged participants to engage in critical thinking to explore ways in which they could aid their communities in disaster preparedness. This discussion included identifying available resources, locating volunteer opportunities, and engaging in the

development of new policies and research avenues aimed at increasing social workers response to future disasters.

Table 1: Application of Education Standards to Disaster Response for Haiti Earthquake, Gulf Oil Spill and Guatemalan Mudslides

Human Rights Issues	Gathering Knowledge & Applying Values	Application of Knowledge and Values	Core Competencies
Haiti: Alternative care of children and child trafficking	*Knowledge:* Analysis of orphaned and vulnerable children/institutional care *Values:* Importance of kinship care, culturally relevant care, and practice of not removing traumatized children from their communities	Witnessing testimony of a Haitian who searched for his family member's bodies in the rubble Use of assessment and social work values to arrive at a just and ethical intervention for orphaned and vulnerable children. Critical thinking and discourse about global social inequality, extreme poverty, humanitarian and development assistance in addition to international debt load	2.1.2; 2.1.3; 2.14; 2.15; 2.1.8; and 2.1.10
Gulf Oil Spill: Clean water and work rights related to fishing, etc	*Knowledge:* Identification of causes and consequences of deep sea drilling and connections to healthy oceans *Values:* Dignity and worth of the person and social justice	Critical thinking about global corporate rights over individual and family rights and social workers role in response to economic justice and trauma, including substance abuse, unemployment, depression, and suicide.	2.1.5 and 2.1.9
Guatemalan Mudslides: Indigenous population rights in context of deforestation & global rainfall changes	*Knowledge:* Identification of causes and consequences of environmental rainfall changes (global warming). *Values:* Dignity and worth of persons—especially vulnerable populations like indigenous people and their self determination.	Social planning analysis as related to effective responses to environmental derogation in the context of global warming and international humanitarian and development assistance. Implications for indigenous populations and the inherent dilemmas. Critical thinking about global corporate rights over individual and family rights and social workers role in response to economic justice and trauma including, substance, tribal rights, and depression.	2.14 and 2.19

LESSONS LEARNED

Disaster resilience has become a topic of intense discussion in the natural resources and policy research communities where resilience is defined as the capacity of a system, community, or society to successfully adapt to extreme events. Hence, a disaster resilient community is able to withstand these external shocks, persist, and rebuild itself when necessary, using the hazards associated with sea level rise and climate change as an opportunity to build back stronger (UN/ISDR, 2002). The resilience concept should be embraced by disaster educators that are working with communities to improve decision-making under conditions of uncertainty and rising risk: applications range from "safe-fail" engineering systems to robust financial instruments (i.e. portfolio hedging) for coping with catastrophe. The most valuable disaster management strategies are robust despite rapid changes in environmental variables and unanticipated outcomes. This emerging and holistic concept of community disaster resilience requires educators to recognize that lives and property can be secured through sustainable local pre- and post-disaster planning in advance of an extreme sea-level event, just as homes raised above the expected flood elevation ("homes on stilts") are better designed than many non-elevated structures to absorb the shock of an inundation event. Disaster resilience can help communities to overcome pathological behavior (including unsustainable livelihoods, institutional rigidity, social dependencies, political hegemony, and ecological degradation) by viewing human culture as embedded within nature; dependent on it, and capable to harm it. However, despite decades of conceptual debates there remain challenges related to the definition and operationalization of disaster resilience, particularly in the context of mitigating and adapting to the impacts of sea-level rise and disaster losses continue to mount.

Bringing these concepts to life in the graduate and undergraduate classroom can best be achieved by:

- Bringing in speakers who could speak in the first person--giving testimony for their experience--was not only moving, but it brought difficult realities into the classroom including grief and loss.
- Using technology which allowed for our panel discussions to be expanded with experts from organizations like Oxfam. This kind of expertise is invaluable and with emerging technology for classroom facilitation, there will be more opportunities for interactive engagement with practicing professionals involved in crisis management, etc.
- Developing an interactive setting which engaged students in a manner that encouraged their use of professional voice, applying social justice and human rights principles to practical application of disaster response including humanitarian and development assistance.

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Gendered Immigration: Implications and Impact on Social Work Education

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Abstract: *Gendered immigration is a frame of reference for contextualizing the need for gender-specific immigrant services. Like other immigration societies, the United States disproportionately pays less attention to immigrant women. This article is a conceptual examination of the critical challenges faced by immigrant women from a global perspective. Special attention is given to the importance of social work education regarding service delivery structures for an increasing number of immigrant women in the United States.*

Keywords: *Gendered immigration, immigrant women, immigrant services, social work and education*

INTRODUCTION

Since the last half of the 20th century, the landscape of immigration in the United States has been reshaped by non-European female dominance. Currently, women constitute half of the total 95 million international migrants and accounted for 55.4 percent of the total immigration population in 2000 (UNFPA, 2006). Approximately half a million women immigrate to the United States each year. The majority of female immigrants to America originate from Asia, South America, and Africa (Houstoun, Kramer, & Barrett, 1984).

Despite the increasing number of female immigrants, there has been disproportionate insensibility to gender-specific migration experiences, diversity in policy agenda setting, and human service delivery systems (Espín, 1999; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Pittaway & Pittaway, 2004; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Hondagneu-Sotelo (1999) noted that feminism and immigration were rarely coupled in the public sphere, although they are two of the most radically transformative forces that have significantly reshaped immigration in the United States. As noted by several immigration studies scholars, social work practitioners and various social science scholars are among the few public figures who are aware of the needs and strengths of women immigrants, and who theorize and share immigrant women's stories while illustrating the importance of the intersection of immigration and gender (Agger, 1994; Berger, 2004; Pittaway, 1999; Veer, 1992;). Thus, it has become more crucial to recognize that women immigrants have been situated in a critical position where powerful resistance is represented by multiple discrimination and oppression against them. This discrepancy is clear where unavailability and the inadequacy of immigration services, especially gendered-specific immigration services coexist with underutilization of services.

The primary focus of this article is to contribute to what Pedraza calls "gendered understanding of the causes, processes, and consequences of migration" (1991, p. 304),

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and to contribute to social work knowledge on how gendered immigration experience affects immigrant women's acculturation and their relationship with human services organizations. While Witmer and Culver (2001) have criticized the overemphasis on pathogenic aspects of immigrants and revealed the resilience of immigrants in their work, knowledge on gendered immigration is equally important. The latter perspective includes not only information about the challenges that immigrant women face, but it also highlights the strengths that immigrant women utilize to cope with these challenges.

Understanding the challenges and needs of immigrant women call for attention and protection from the host society and mobilization of political, social, fiscal, and psychological resources. In addition to the aforementioned challenges, a greater vulnerability of immigrant women stems from a lack of access to necessary human capital, barriers to uncertain legal status, and a supportive human services sector. These challenges, coupled with the stress of motherhood in a new setting, culminate into the essence of why it is important to understand and study immigration from a gendered perspective. Espín (1999) stated that because of the role that mothers play in culture preservation and gender norm transformation, the strengths perspective not only leads to successful acculturation of the first generation of women immigrants, but it also brings positive effects on second and third generation of women immigrants. More appealingly, from a macro perspective, the United Nations *Security Council Resolution 1325* addresses the importance of women's strength and participation in finding strategies to stop wars (UN, 2000). Therefore, the acknowledgment of immigrant women's strengths and the roles that this strength plays in the resettlement process for them and their families is important for the development of policies and programs that provide the needed assistance for successful resettlement.

Ultimately, this article will draw attention to the following aspects that are required for a better understanding of gendered immigration from a social services perspective: (1) critical assessment of our knowledge construction of gendered immigration; (2) examination of the critical challenges faced by women immigrants; and (3) impact and implication of gendered immigration from a social integration perspective on social work education.

EPISTEMOLOGY OF GENDERED IMMIGRATION STUDIES

Knowledge about gendered immigration and gender specific treatment in resettled countries has been developed among U. S. social scientists since the 1970s. This knowledge construction has taken an interdisciplinary research approach that has traditionally integrated demography, sociology, women studies, politics, social work, and nursing. This has culminated into three stages: women's perspective, gender perspective, and transnational feminism. The stages illustrate a transformation of our knowledge among the immigrant women population. They each highlight various aspects of growth in our understanding of the challenges, strengths and processes that are inherently a part of the resettlement process.

The key focus of the "women's perspective" stage is "women and migration" (Hondagneu, 2003), which reveals prior characteristics of immigration studies: women

exclusion and invisibility, androcentric biases, and gender discrimination. During this period, the image and voice of immigrant women began to enter into the sphere of immigration studies, especially women as a measurable variable in quantitative immigration studies on labor markets and earnings comparisons. Furthermore, during this early stage of knowledge construction, feminist scholars began to address the nature of multi-oppression of immigrant women, the otherness of immigrant women and men while emphasizing the otherness of immigrant women. In response to the complexities of immigrant women and their resettlement outcomes, a gender perspective was expressed in a 1984 Special Volume of *International Migration Review* on Women and Migration. This response led to knowledge creation of the second stage of gender specific migration research.

In the second stage, "gender and migration" replaced "women and migration" as a key theme in immigration studies. The gender perspective suggests that a gendered society, not women alone, positioned not only the cause, but also the treatment of women's disadvantaged resettlement processes and outcomes. Research at this stage began to recognize intra-group differences. At this point, immigrant women were viewed as another outcome of gendered perspectives. Therefore, within the context of immigration studies, immigrant women were no longer viewed as a homogeneous group. Instead, it acknowledged that there is great diversity among immigrant women in relation to their resettlement outcomes within the context of their socioeconomic status, women's liberation, health and mental health status, and gender relations from their specific cultural context. This evolution in gendered immigration led to transnational feminism, the third stage of gendered immigration.

By the mid-1990s, transnational feminism emerged as a part of the transnational perspective of immigration research. From a transnational perspective, immigration acknowledges the fact that people are engaged in their home country and receiving country simultaneously which results in a back and forth movement of people, goods, money, services, and ideas between nations and states (Mazzucato, 2006). Although this perspective is not a new phenomenon within the realm of immigration, new technological advances have made the movement of communication between large distances possible with much greater frequency, speed and regularity than in the past (Mazzucato, 2006). Through this wave of understanding, the simultaneous perspective of immigration from a transnational immigration stance has led to newly informed scholarship with a focus on the transnational feminist perspective of immigration. Women and their role in back and forth movement across nations and states goes beyond earlier labor market studies that were conducted during the first stage of gendered immigration knowledge development. (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; 2003; Mazzucato, 2006).

The development of transnational feminism is rooted in postcolonial theory and it is defined as a contemporary feminist praxis in the globalization era (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Kaplan, Alarcon, & Moallem, 1999). This approach pays attention to the intersection of national boundaries, class, race, gender, and sexuality. Transnational feminist agenda theorizes a global communication network that facilitates transnational dialogue among women in the world. Research on disadvantaged immigrant women and human service delivery which employs transnational feminism is tied to the following

theories to better understand and serve immigrant women: gender relations, migration theory, identity theory, acculturation theory, globalization theory, post-positivism, otherness theory, and empowerment theory (Agger, 1994; Berger, 2004; Meguid, 2006; Pittaway, 1999; Veer, 1992).

The aforementioned enriched theoretical approaches allow immigration study from a transnational feminism perspective to concentrate on the intersection of mobile women across national boundaries and nations. Furthermore, it is differentiated from international feminism in that it focuses on transnational feminism networks. That, in turn, offers the desirability and possibility of a political solidarity of feminists across the world. For human services professionals, transnational feminism offers a space to obtain knowledge for and from immigrant women networks and dialogues, which contextualizes migrant women experiences while facilitating solidarity amongst migrant women (Mohanty, 2003). More importantly, this perspective serves as an entry point for researchers to begin to truly see, hear, and understand the diversity of immigrant women's experiences and the complexities that play a significant part in supporting or hindering their successful resettlement.

COMPLEXITIES AND DIVERSITY OF GENDERED IMMIGRATION

Since 1965, the high degree of diversity among immigrant women has been a great frustration for those who seek a single theoretical framework or service model for understanding the experiences of all immigrants. In fact, some researchers refer to this unfamiliar diversity as inconsistent findings in immigrant studies (Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). This frustration stems from stereotyping, an assumption that treats immigrants as the "other" without differentiation. Recent research illustrates the frustration of immigrant women due to ignorance of diversity by the conventional wisdom of the host society (Berger, 2004; Peleikis, 2000). Murty (1998) noted the challenges of racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity among immigrant women, and recognized the positive effects of the awareness of the diversity by the host society as an aspect of designing appropriate and responsive health care delivery structures.

Building from the existing body of knowledge on immigrant women, this section draws on three complexities with an understanding of diverse perspectives of gendered immigration: education, violence, health and mental health, and access to services as major aspects of women's immigration experience. As transnational feminism suggests, all immigrants experience social, cultural, and psychological difficulties when they crossed geopolitical borders despite differences in gender, age, class, educational background, professional status, and personality. Excitement, culture shock, loss, feeling of rejection, sense of alienation, confusion, feeling of being out of control, and acculturation stress are typical psychological effects of immigration among voluntary and forced immigration (Berger, 2004; Espín, 1999). The "gender-specific immigration experience" is the first complexity of immigrant women that provides an insight into their experience through their lens.

Gendered immigration adds the gender indicator to highlight individual aspects of immigration experiences and argues that immigrant women share common immigration

experiences which differ from immigrant men. These experiences include lower social status, higher rate of dependence on the social welfare system, higher rate of health and mental health issues, traumatized pre-immigration and post-immigration experience, multiple family and work responsibilities, barriers to health services, social services, and education (Agger, 1994; Fowler, 1998; Gany & Bocanegra, 1996; Jensen, 2006; Meyer et al., 2003; Veer, 1992).

Gender-specific immigration experiences cannot simply refer to disadvantages because this perspective falls in line with the past pathogenic aspect of immigration studies that scholars have worked to change through continued knowledge development (Witmer & Culver, 2001). Current research, however, that includes the voice of women immigrants, illustrates women immigrants' extraordinary resilience, flexibility, and effective problem solving skills (Agger, 1994; Berger, 2004; Pittaway, 1999; Pittaway & Pittaway, 2004). Despite multiple oppressions, immigrant women generally adapt faster to their new environment than their male counterparts. The immigration experience empowers immigrant women's negotiation power and gender role expectations with both the home culture and the host culture (Berger, 2004; Mazzucato, 2006; World Bank, 2006). Research also shows that immigrant women often remit more financial support to their extended family in their home of origin more than men. This, in most cases, is a gender shift within the women's cultural context (Berger, 2004; World Bank, 2006). Although in general, these aspects of gender-specific immigration experiences have been reported across various ethnic immigrant groups, new scholarly knowledge also provides an opportunity for acknowledging and understanding the diversity within and across immigrant women.

Education

The first complexity that highlights the within-group diversity among non-European immigrant women is that they are more diverse in their countries of origin, socioeconomic status, education background, and professional status. In 2000, 69% of Indian immigrants aged 25 or older reported having college degrees, almost three times the proportion of the native population. During the same time period, only 4.2 percent of Mexican immigrants had graduated from college (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Zhou, 2002).

Immigrant women can be found in both highly skilled professional specialty occupations and unskilled labor-intensive occupations. Studies show that 51 percent of Indian immigrants are in professional specialty occupations, twice the proportion of native workers. The proportion of Mexican immigrants who reported having such jobs was fewer than 5 percent (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Zhou, 2002). Meanwhile, female immigrants from the Philippines and Jamaica are concentrated in nursing (primarily as Certified Nursing Assistants-CNA), and those from Mexico and Central America are disproportionately concentrated in domestic work or menial factory jobs (Zhou, 2002).

Ager, Ager, and Long (1995) examined the gender experience of Mozambican refugees and found that gender inequalities exist in education, income, work burden, and health**.** Portes and Rumbaut (2006) research provides evidence that immigrant women's income and education levels are statistically significantly lower than their immigrant

male counterpart. In addition to their inferior educational status, immigrant women are also disproportionately affected by various type of violence as a part of their immigration process that can be traced from their country of origin to their new host country. That leads to various levels of stress and trauma for these female immigrants.

Violence

Research on domestic violence against immigrant women have focused on Asian, Mexican, Central American, and South American women in family reunification. Frye et al. (2005) found that in New York City, an immigrant's background was associated with intimate partner perpetrated homicide. From 1990-1999, over 40 percent of the reported homicides were among immigrant women and 54.4 percent of all intimate partner homicides were immigrant women. Both of these statistics indicate that immigrant women are at a higher risk of violence, especially intimate partner violence. Orloff (2002) and Raj and Silverman's (2002) work showed evidence that immigrant women became extremely vulnerable to domestic violence due to their immigration legal status.

Ward and Vann (2002) and Jansen (2006) reported gender-based violence in refugee settings where women's bodies were called a battleground. Although rapes and sexual violence are the top two identified forms of gender-based violence that refugee women experience in situations of armed conflict, other gender-based violence also greatly contributes to refugee women's disproportionate vulnerability. Child sexual abuse, forced or coerced prostitution, sex trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation are determinants of refugee women suffering, social stigma, and a wide range of health and mental health concerns. For many, they suffer violence in silence in their home country that in some cases continues in the host country (Meguid, 2006). The violence in their home country can be linked to those in refugee camps where some women also experience intimate partner violence as a backlash to their redefining gender roles which is a major aspect of post-immigration stress for women immigrants from various parts of the world (Jansen, 2006; Meguid, 2006; Nicholson, 1997). In fact, Espín (1999) found that most immigrant women identified a change of gender role expectations as a major consequence of immigration that can be positive and negative for women and their families. These shifts in gender roles and family commitment have forced women to remain trapped and isolated in an abusive relationship since their legal status and family structure is totally controlled by the abusive intimate partner.

Health and Mental Health Factors

Current research illustrates that immigrant women were healthier at the point of their initial arrival in their host country. One common explanation is that of the health requirements mandated through immigration law. However, after their arrival, immigrant women experience higher health risks when they suffer physical exhaustion and psychological distress as a result of migration and access disparities within the health care setting (Meleis, 2002). Immigrant women commonly experience psychological distresses, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), victimization, adaptation strategies, and identity changes (Berger, 2004; Frye et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). Some emphasize negative physical, emotional, and mental health

outcomes of migration and acculturation, and depict "loneliness and depression as a feature of everyday life" (Anderson, 1987, p. 422). Portes and Rumbaut (2006) documented the association between immigration and mental disturbances through history, and pointed out that specific acculturation led to widely different mental health outcomes.

Several studies have also highlighted the health and mental health needs of refugee women and suggest that refugee women may be at greater risks than other immigrant women as a result of their migration experience (Gagnon, Marry, & Robinson, 2002). Like refugees, asylum seekers are forced to flee their country of origin as a result of war and human rights abuses. Many of them experienced politically motivated rape, sexual slavery, prostitution, female genital mutilation, and other forms of gender-related persecution. Studies have found that women refugees who survive gender-based violence normally suffer poorer physical conditions and post-traumatic stress that is directly connected to re-victimization of violence in their host country (Jansen, 2006; Meguid, 2006; Nicholson, 1997).

The incidence rate of PTSD among female asylum seekers is very high. Although international tribunals have included gender-related claims, the extent of coverage in the United States for gender claims is inconsistent with international norms (Bastien, 2002; Meguid, 2006). In fact, many female asylum seekers are traumatized by the detention experience, which is usually ignored by the host country. Bastien (2002) examined the physical and psychological impact of long-term detention on women asylum seekers and found double standards in the treatment of women and men asylum seekers around their living conditions, process time and support in understanding the process.

The World Health Organization (WHO) identified seven common mental disorders among refugees and asylum seekers: depression, acute psychosis, chronic or long-term psychosis, mental disorders caused by hurtful and frightening events, mental disorders caused by beatings or other injuries to the head, emotional disturbances associated with intense fear and worry, and emotional disturbances related to poor sleep (1996). In light of this knowledge, most resettlement agencies lack the funding needed to screen for any type of mental illness and counseling services. This is leaving a number of immigrants, specifically women, with the lack of support and services needed to cope with the mental challenges that are brought on by their past experiences and current acculturation process.

Aranda et al. (2001) tested gender difference in depressive symptoms among Mexican Americans and found that immigrant women differ from men in terms of the sources of stress and social support associated with depression. For immigrant women, family and marital relationship were identified as significant sources of stress and social support. Others have also found that family context was a determinant of women's health (Nimmagadda & Balgopal, 2000). The health and well-being of immigrant women is further compromised because of how they view and define health. Meadows, Thurston, and Melton (2001) found that immigrant women in their study viewed "health" as a physical experience, while abuse, emotional and mental health were not seen as part of illness, though they spoke freely about their feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety, and the traumatized past. These findings are consistent with other qualitative studies

emphasizing the physical and mental health of immigrant women (Berger, 2004; Gruner-Domic, 2000).

Different conceptualizations of health and mental health indicate the degree of health and mental health inequality and disparities among immigrant women. Meleis (2002) claims that the host society misinterprets immigrant women's responses to illness and health, and states that the result is that immigrant women experience greater health risks than their non-immigrant women and immigrant men counterparts. The lack of available and affordable gender specific immigrant services, gendered health disparities and higher rates of barriers to quality health care and mental health services lead immigrant women into greater health risks (Meleis, 2002).

Access to Services

Meleis' work highlights the fact that immigrant women rarely have their own access to health care and other human services in general, and to health insurance in particular (2002). Immigrant women who have access to services are less likely to have chronic illnesses (Gany & Bocanegra, 1996; Kelaher, Williams, & Manderson, 1999).

Compared with other demographic groups of the population, immigrant women shared a common status of access and utilization of health services and social services. Research suggests that immigrant women make considerably less use of mental health care services than native-born women (Meleis, 2002). Moreover, immigrant women more frequently use social work facilities and women's crisis intervention centers than native women. Furthermore, they consult social work agencies and women's crisis intervention centers nearly one and half times more frequently than mental health care services. Research shows that age and language has an impact on the service utilization of immigrant women (Have & Bijl, 1999; Kelaher et al., 1999). Meanwhile, an Australian study showed that predictors of health service utilization were different for men and women. While age and lack of English proficiency appeared to be barriers to health service use for immigrant women, visa category and country of origin were more important determinants of health service use for immigrant men (Kelaher, et al., 1999).

Beyond age and English proficiency, research has identified three other main barriers to immigrant women's use and access to human services: socioeconomic status, legal restrictions, and cultural norms (Have & Bijl, 1999; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Malgady and Zayas, Kaplan, Turner, Romano, & Gonzalez-Ramos (2001) implied cultural and linguistic factors in psycho-diagnosis. While evaluating the impact of linguistics, Ziguras (2001) found that the use of bilingual staff directly led to less use of crisis intervention services and hospitals, better long-term improvement in social functioning, better compliance with medication, and greater satisfaction with services and its cultural sensitivity.

An in-depth understanding of immigrant women and their need for human services and barriers to access to such services can be extremely beneficial for U.S. social work professionals as a foundation for facilitating better service delivery structures. This knowledge, combined with a deeper understanding of the gendered immigration process can be used to design stronger curricula that include a micro and macro perspective.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Although most U.S. social work programs are struggling with the inclusion of various aspects of diversity and international social work practice, the understanding of gendered immigration can no longer be ignored. As we continue to embrace the "good" aspects of globalization, we cannot ignore the challenges that we have as a global society from an increasing pull toward global understanding. This increased need for continued understanding of the global environment is most apparent in work with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Nash, Wong, & Trlin, 2006). Increasingly, literature on globalization and international social work practice and education specifically links social work practice to resettlement, issues of citizenship, inclusion and participation in civil society (Nash et al., 2006). According to Powell (2001), civic social work is defined by a concern for the rights and needs of citizens—immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees seek integration (as opposed to assimilation) in their host country. They often join the poor and oppressed in an ongoing struggle for genuine inclusion and participation in an effort to exercise their civic right as well as duties. This new civic practice moves our educational learning as social workers away from the practice of assimilation into the practice and understanding of social integration.

Social integration has been defined by the United Nations as an inclusionary goal, implying equal opportunities and rights for all human beings (UN, 1994). Therefore, this perspective of social integration as a means for becoming 'more integrated' also implies improving life chances (UN, 1994). This civic and social integration approach as a part of social work practice with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers is the foundational aspect of a new field of practice. From this perspective at a macro level, this new field of practice involves human rights, social justice and advocacy work, while at the meso level, community work plays an essential role, and at the micro level problem-solving with individuals and their families occurs (Nash et al., 2006). Thus, as a profession, we must begin to re-examine our social work curricula and begin to take a more inclusive approach to understanding the dimensions of gendered immigrations and how it intersects with our human services delivery systems and policy structures. This approach will need to take on a micro, mezzo, and macro frame of professional knowledge, skills, policy, and advocacy perspective. This perspective means that we need curricula that go beyond classes that include immigration aspects and gender dynamics as a topical area---we now need classes that are specific to understanding these issues and dynamics from a gendered perspective. As a profession, from a global perspective, we are the common thread within and across societies that play an integral part in the resettlement and cultural adaptation process with respect to immigrant women and their families. Therefore, social workers have to move to the front line of this struggle to ensure that the voices of immigrant women are heard and become the common bond across regions to create one voice for the rights of immigrant women as a part of their citizenship in a civic society. Furthermore, our professional commitment to integration (with inclusion and participation in all spheres of various social activities), rather than a focus on assimilation, from new settlers and the host population is a critical component to the successful outcome of the resettlement process (Nash et al., 2006).

While arguing that social work practice with refugees and immigrants requires specialized knowledge of the significantly unique issues of these populations, Potocky-Tripodi (2002) provides a very comprehensive account of best practice that are essential to this new and challenging field. In fact, she has systematically explored the many factors that practitioners need to recognize as important in the lives of this client group while using an analysis that reflects the micro, meso and macro levels of service (Nash et al., 2006; Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). According to Potocky-Tripodi (2002), a good practitioner should be informed about human rights and social justice issues, as well as international and local law surrounding immigrants and refugees' service delivery systems available to their clients. They should also look at key problem areas such as health, mental health, family dynamics, cultural diversity, language, education and economic circumstances and must be culturally competent to understand these aspects from a gendered perspective. Following the same perspective, Powell (2001) has proposed 10 core practice principles that inform civic social work as a new form of practice. The most prominent among these principles are social inclusion, trust and respect for clients and for their views on what works for them in order to promote users' participation and empowerment that is missing at various levels in our current practice with immigrants and refugees. Potocky-Tripodi (2002) and Powell's (2001) work challenges social workers to broaden their perspectives while acknowledging the centrality of citizenship and inclusion as a part of their professional commitment to immigrant and refugee populations. This approach also acknowledges the importance and impact of working with this population from a gendered perspective that highlights the new knowledge structure for understanding the diversity of women in this population. Furthermore, it provides the profession with a foundation for creating a curriculum that is inclusive of these issues to ensure that we have trained workers able to address the many challenges that the population faces. These include challenges that impede upon women's ability to successfully resettle in their new civil society and become its active participants.

This approach gives social work students and practitioners an opportunity to further understand the impact of the policy beyond dominant societal groups. Furthermore, this perspective can be viewed at the micro and macro level as an important component for ensuring that these women become a part of the helping system structure within the agency and community setting. For this fact, the call for social workers to understand and specialize as migration professionals is long overdue. The time to commit, strategize, and implement this perspective is "now." As social workers, we can change the impact of globalization and immigration on women. In turn, this will change the immigration process for the entire family.

CONCLUSION

This article has reviewed some of the existing body of knowledge on gendered immigration and its theoretical development. Based on transnational feminism, three attributes of immigrant women are depicted to gain a better understanding of immigrant women and their contexts. The article finds that in general, research has rethought, reconstructed, and reexamined gendered inequality and equality, and made immigrant women's voices heard, and their image seen. From a transnational perspective, focus has

been placed on the institutions and identities that immigrant women create through their simultaneous engagement in two or more countries adding to their voiced experiences (Mazzucato, 2006). On the other hand, there are a number of biases in gendered immigration research. Diversity and strengths perspective are key values for gender-specific immigration practice, policy, research, and education. This article suggests that a subcategory of gendered immigration should be included in social work education to create a better understanding of working with this population from a social integration perspective that allows them to fully become a part of their new society. As a profession, participation in future research on gendered immigration and the inclusion of gendered immigration in social work curriculum are two important and necessary next steps for the profession of social work. The aforementioned will give social workers an opportunity to better understand and engage in the diverse dimensions that immigrant women encounter as they engage in their new surroundings. Furthermore, increased participation in research and practice with immigrant women will increase our professional status in the international gender-specific immigration human services domain that is rapidly increasing globally.

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Expanding Our Community: Independent and Interdependent Factors Impacting Refugees' Successful Community Resettlement

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Abstract: *Evidence suggests that despite the aid from resettlement agencies, many refugees find the resettlement process extraordinarily stressful and have reported significant negative mental and physical health outcomes. The literature on refugee resettlement often focuses on the challenges that these individuals encounter in their new environment. However, less research has focused on community barriers and lack of support issues that can prevent refugees from resettling in the U.S. Using qualitative data collected from Burmese and Burundian refugee groups, this article examines the impact of social structures on the resettlement process. Results indicate that gaps in service delivery such as employment and housing are affected by support from the resettlement agencies and the refugees' social support network. Results of this study contribute to the knowledge based on how best to assist refugee families.*

Keywords: *Refugee resettlement, refugee families, service provision, community, and socialization*

INTRODUCTION

According to the latest United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], (2010) statistics, there are 43.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Of the millions who are displaced, 15.2 million people are classified as refugees. The UNHCR (1951) defines refugees as:

> anyone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion outside of their country of nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of their country (Article 1A[2]).

Unlike other immigrants who have a choice about their future environments, many refugees have little knowledge of the location or the culture of their new host nations. Most have been forced from their home countries, living in transitional housing, and are uncertain about their future before they resettle in a new country (Singer & Wilson, 2006). While residing in refugee camps, many are tortured, starved and beaten, exposed to a variety of infectious diseases, raped, and/or experience harassment before coming to their new environment (Costa, 2006; Weinstein, Sarnoff, Gladstone, & Lipson 2000). When refugees arrive to their resettled communities, they often have significant physical

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and mental health needs that must be acknowledged during the resettlement process. Furthermore, they must also deal with the loss of extended family and kinship networks, which are imperative to successful resettlement.

Resettlement Process in the U.S

Resettlement in the U.S. is an arduous process that can cause significant strain on the individual. According to the latest Department of State statistics, the United States is the largest host nation for resettled refugees with an estimate of 3 million individuals in 2010 (U.S. Department of State, 2010). As part of an agreement between the government and refugee agencies, upon arrival, refugees are met at the airport in the United States by resettlement agency personnel. At this point, refugees are provided with furnished apartments, appliances, climate-appropriate clothing and some foods typical of the refugee's culture. Shortly after arrival at their new environment, the agencies are required to assist the refugees with applying for a Social Security card, registering children for school, enrolling adults in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, arrange medical and psychiatric appointments (if applicable), and connect them with needed social or language services. The resettlement agencies also collaborate with the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement to connect families with long-term cash, medical, and food assistance programs that provide support to refugees for six months (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

Given the trauma that refugees are exposed to before their arrival in the U.S., it is imperative that they receive the appropriate resources and services from resettlement agencies. For families from non-western countries, issues such as new language acquisition, employment training, medical attention, education and access to community resources are a high priority (Deacon & Sullivan, 2009; Lewig, Arney, & Salveron 2010; Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbényiga, & Grace, 2012; Willis & Nkwocha, 2004).

This article assessed the services that refugee families received from several resettlement agencies in a Mid-Western state during the resettlement period. Primarily, we focused on the impact of support structures on the community of two different ethnic groups, Burmese and Burundians, and propose solutions that can increase refugees' well-being and quality of life in their new community settings. Furthermore, we delved into discussions of how support from agencies and social networks assist refugees to ensure their well-being.

Refugee Support Structures

Research suggests that interactions with family members, peers, friends, and professionals play an essential role during transitional periods (Simich, Beirser, Stewart, & Mwakarimba, 2005). More specifically, support from social networks can improve individuals' wellbeing, provide assistance, and bring comfort during times of uncertainty (Bosch & Bergen, 2006; Carlson, McNutt, Choi, & Rose, 2002; Oetzel, Duran, Jiang & Lucero, 2007). These studies demonstrate that perceptions of support and/or actual supportive networks can mitigate harmful outcomes such as substance abuse, alcohol use, and mental health issues. The absence of social support have been linked to heightened

levels of stress, anxiety, depression, suicide, as well as an increase in physical health problems (Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2003; Oetzel et al., 2007). Studies on immigrant populations indicate that during resettlement, informal sources of support such as friends and family reduce stress, improve well-being, increase access to employment, education, and other basic needs, and foster a strong sense of belonging amongst members of similar ethnic background (Simich et al., 2005). In the context of refugees, very few studies exist that focus specifically on the importance of social networks and other support structures in refugee development. However, Schweitzer and colleagues (2006) found that the presence of kinship networks and social support were better determinants of Sudanese refugees' mental health than the utilization of support from a wider community. They also found that refugee kinship ties with their extended family were important sources of both emotional and instrumental support (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2003).

Similar results were reported by Simich and colleagues (2003) who found that informational, instrumental, and emotional support are ranked as high priority during resettlement. Both these studies suggest that refugees were comfortable seeking aid from a member of their community than from resettlement agencies and other community organizations. Furthermore, this study also suggested that the lack of meaningful supportive relationships from both formal sources, such as resettlement and community agencies, and informal sources, such as friends and family, decreases refugees' well-being. For example, participants who were isolated from relatives and peers in their new environment often experienced depression symptomatology, often taking medication to cope with the challenges of resettlement. Results also indicated that refugees who were able to find individuals and agency staff who empathized and shared their experiences were better able to cope with the stress that occurs during resettlement (Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, 2003).

Another study by Simich and colleagues (2005) highlighted the importance that service providers and policy makers who work with refugees place on the importance of good supportive networks during the resettlement process. Results from focus groups with service providers and policy makers demonstrated that refugees with social support are better able to share their experiences and problems, reduce stress, and feel empowered. They are also more effective at building community supports to assist other newcomers from similar ethnic backgrounds facing comparable circumstances. Service providers and policy makers also recognized the importance that different types of support have on refugees' successful resettlement. For example, information support was seen as critical because refugees are better able to share and disseminate information about resources in the community. Emotional support decreased isolation and loss of kinship ties, helping build connections with others in their new environment, particularly with those who may have also experienced similar issues. Affirmation from other peers and family members allowed refugees to become empowered to meet new challenges.

The results from the aforementioned studies illustrate the importance of supportive structures to assist refugees' in their well-being and adjustment to new communities. Given there is limited knowledge about newly resettled refugees from different ethnic

groups in the United States, this study adds to the research knowledge on experiences of refugees from diverse ethnic groups.

Resettlement History of Burmese and Burundians

Burmese and Burundians were chosen for this study for three reasons. First, they represented the two largest newly resettled refugee groups currently residing in neighboring mid-west cities. Research indicates that cultural barriers make it difficult to recruit study participants from refugee populations. Thus, recruiting from populations that are highly represented in the area increases the likelihood of having a representative study sample. Second, there is limited knowledge of the Burmese and Burundian's adaptation patterns. Finally, the emphasis on Burmese and Burundian refugees was due to the differences in migration histories between and within both groups. Differences such as ethnicity, education level, and socio economic status (SES) are believed to be contributing factors that lead to different adaptation patterns in the resettlement process. The culmination of these three factors led to a larger study which investigated various resettlement factors from an individual, family, and group perspective as a means to understand and provide recommendations for agencies who work with these newly resettled populations.

Historically, refugee resettlement in the United States was typically linked to European and Central Asian countries. Current estimates indicate that the U.S. has resettled over 900,000 refugees from former Soviet Union countries, and neighboring nations (U.S. Department of State, 2010). However, given the political turmoil, economic instability, and religious persecutions that have impacted East Asian and African countries, reports indicate that there are new waves of refugee populations that are entering the U.S. (Adepoju, 2006; Docquier, Lohest, & Marfouk, 2007). In particular, over 1.3 million refugees from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma (currently known as Myanmar), and other neighboring Asian countries are currently residing in the U.S. with recent reports estimating that the U.S. will grant an additional 18,500 ethnic minority Burmese asylum in 2011 (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

Burmese refugees were displaced from what is now called Myanmar. Under orders from the Burmese government, the military perpetrated gross human rights violations such as forced labor, arbitrary execution, destruction of food crops and forced relocation of villages that belonged to ethnic minority groups such as the Karen and Chin (Lang 2002; Wright, 2008). Many of the refugees fled to camps in Thailand or Malaysia where they lived as unauthorized immigrants until the United Nations made them eligible for resettlement processes. While residing in refugee camps, the Burmese faced discrimination, forced labor and relocation, poor wages, killing of family members and a lack of basic human rights protection from the Thai or Malaysian governments (Draminsky-Petersen, Worm, Zander- Olsen, Ussing, & Harding, 2000). Another study found that many Burmese refugees in Thai camps reported experiencing high levels of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (Cardoz, Talley, Burton, & Crawford, 2004).

Refugees from Africa who have resettled in the U.S. have primarily been from Somalia (nearly 95,000) or Ethiopia (over 45,000) as reported by recent statistical data

(U.S. Department of State, 2011). Since gaining its independence from Belgium in 1962, Burundi has been rifted with ethnic tensions, civil wars and coups d'état. Ethnic tension, class warfare, and military coups between the Bahutu and Batutsi have led to destruction, death, and displacement. As is typical in most conflict situations, hundreds of thousands of people were killed; rape was used as a strategic weapon, and numerous violations of human rights were committed (Hoofnagle & Rothe, 2010). Those who were not killed fled to neighboring Rwanda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Daley, 1991). It is estimated that more than 150,000 refugees fled from Burundi in 1972 and another 400,000 in 1993 (Haver, Hatungimana, & Tennant, 2009). Similar to the Burmese refugees, Burundians from Rwanda and Tanzania encountered several challenges such as lack of food, little security, exposure to high stress, and constant harassment from government officials during their time in camps (International Crisis Group [ICG], 1999; Verwimp & Van Bavel, 2005). For example, Whitaker (2002) found that many refugees living in Western Tanzania experienced a shortage of food, water and proper health care facilities. In fact, rising food prices for staples such as sugar, salt, and grain had resulted in further financial instability. Many refugees were forced to work as cheap laborers for Tanzanian farmers often taking food as payments rather than money. Furthermore, Whitaker (2002) found that the camps were associated with drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, increased incidence rates of HIV and STIs, and illegal activities.

While the literature on refugee resettlement is sparse, particularly with respect to specific groups' adaptation processes, studies have highlighted the importance of support from peers and formal institutions in refugees' successful resettlement. This pilot study examined the impact of newly formed interpersonal relationships on resource acquirement. Our aims were to: (a) examine the impact of formal and resource support on refugee well-being; (b) study the extent to which informal support impacts successful resettlement and; (c) compare ethnic difference in support structures. Given that both groups, Burmese and Burundians, have experienced years, in some cases, decades of instability, research must look beyond individual level challenges and focus on the impact of agency support and social networks on resettlement from a group perspective.

METHOD

The data analyzed for this paper was part of a larger qualitative study that examined the adaptation and resettlement experiences of refugees from Burma and Burundi. From the overall sample (n=36), seventeen were female and nineteen were male. The mean age at the time of the interviews was 39 years old with a range between 19 and 58 years old. From the total sample, thirteen participants (5 women and 8 men) were Burmese. All Burmese women were married and three of the men were single. Of the married couples, four had at least one child ($\mu = 1.75$) and none of the single males had children. All of the Burmese participants with children resided with all of their children in the same household. The mean age for the Burmese was 29.8 with a range between 19 years old and 38 years old. Most of the participants in the sample had been displaced from Myanmar for less than three years and were either ethnic Karen or Chin. All of the Burmese had at least a primary school education with an average of eight to nine years of

formal schooling. Many of them had professional jobs or were students prior to fleeing Burma or Thailand. All of our participants spoke the Chin dialect or Burmese.

Twenty-three adult Burundians (12 women and 11 men) were recruited for this study. Of the total number of Burundian participants, nine were couples with children, two were single parent families, one male had no children, and two did not mention children in their interviews. Most had been farmers or small trades people with little or no formal education, and many were young (under 21 years of age) when they fled Burundi. The mean age was 45.2 years old at the time of the interviews with a range between 33 and 58 years old. Many of the families (95%) in the sample still had family members back in Burundi or had children from other relationships (adults and small children) that were not currently residing with them. Often, these parents were and continued to be financially supporting families (i.e. parents, siblings, and other children) in Burundi, Tanzania, or Rwanda. Overall, our participants from Burundi had spent 30-35 years in exile before being resettled in the United States. All of the Burundian participants spoke Kirundi and very little English. Since the focus of the study was to examine refugee resettlement, all participants (both Burmese and Burundians) had to have been in the U.S. for more than 120 and less than 180 days. This is because after six months, refugees are viewed as being independent and not in need of or eligible for guided services through the refugee resettlement agencies.

Recruitment and Selection

Potential participants were recruited through two Mid-Western State resettlement agencies. The Principal Investigators (PIs) of the study worked with agency staff to recruit Burmese and Burundian refugees. To be eligible, participants had to be 18 years or older and had been resettled in the area within the last 180 days. A list of potential participants was compiled by agency staff and sent to the PIs. All identifying information was replaced with case numbers (not connected to their agency specified case number), so the investigators only saw demographic information such as country of origin, gender, and the number of people in their household. The PIs targeted matched pairs (husband and wife) as potential participants for their study. This criterion was included in the sampling frame because the investigators were interested in examining the gender differences related to the resettlement process. By examining the experiences of couples, the PIs hoped to capture the dynamics of family relationships.

Once a potential participant was selected, the agency staff contacted the individual and provided detailed information about the study. The prospective participant was told that the purpose of the study was to examine the services they received and to learn more about the support given within and outside the agency during their resettlement period. They were then asked if they would like to be part of the study, knowing that their participation was voluntary with no penalty if they chose not to take part. In addition to the description of the study, potential participants were also told of the benefits which included a $40 gift card as compensation and the opportunity to have their experiences heard. If the individual wanted to participate in the study, the agency staff asked their permission to share their contact information with the PIs. This recruitment protocol was necessary because of the agency's IRB requirement. Confidential information such as

names and contact information could not be given without the permission of the individuals. In an effort to protect the rights of the participants, the PIs were required to obtain IRB approval from the agencies and the university. During the recruitment process, the PIs worked with one person of contact at each agency. This was done to build and facilitate trust between the researchers, participants, and agencies. By using one person to contact participants, the PIs hoped to ease the fears of participants about the research process and build a relationship between the agency and participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were interviewed individually in their homes by either upper-level undergraduate or graduate students, who had been trained to converse with these specific refugee populations and the translators. All interviewers received training on the interview protocol, background information about the cultures of the participants, and text transcription. Furthermore, all interviewers had a strong research, academic, and community practice background. The students had taken courses in working with culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse populations. The interviews were conducted in the Chin dialect or Burmese (for the Burmese) or Kirundi (for the Burundians). Interviews were digitally audio recorded (time ranged from one to two hours) and then transcribed. At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the research and the focus of the interview were explained. Since literacy was an issue for some of the participants, verbal consent was required. The interviews were semi-structured in that they focused on a series of open-ended questions related to participants' adaptation and resettlement experience. Participants also responded to questions that were related to their lives prior to coming to the United States, the services they received from the resettlement agencies, outcome experiences, family interactions, cultural support (e.g., sources and types of support , recommendations related to service delivery and demographic information). There was no tension between the interviewer, translators, and interviewees. This was also true even in cross-gendered interviews. Data collection spanned over seven months and also included focus group sessions as a part of the larger study.

After the interviews were transcribed, they were entered into NVivo qualitative coding software (Bazeley, 2008). Three members of the research team were responsible for the data analysis. Using qualitative content analysis, coders read the interviews to get a general sense of the content. Next, a coding scheme based on the interview framework (e.g. needs, barriers, and support) was developed. For this study, meaningful themes were any statements that two or more participants mentioned related to the established coding scheme. Coding for the first interview had low (33%) inter-rater reliability. This led coders to revise the coding schema and the inter-rater reliability for the same first interview changed to 88%. This process was repeated for the second and third interviews, with inter-rater agreement at 91% and 90% respectively. Each coder coded the rest of the interviews separately.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of interpersonal relationships in refugee resettlement; specifically, the impact of agency and social support that

individuals receive. The results of this study are presented in three parts. First, we discuss the impact of agency support; second, the types of resource support received and finally, network support on refugees' well-being. Furthermore, the unique experience of two ethnic groups, Burmese and Burundian, are also discussed. In order to protect participants' identity, the researchers have used pseudo-names in the findings section.

Impact of Agency Support

Not surprisingly, refugees' biggest and primary source of support came from resettlement agencies and staff members. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, these agencies were the first to meet with refugees when they arrived and were responsible for providing adequate housing, employment, and healthcare services to families. In addition to providing and connecting refugees to resources, agency staff also provided emotional support and acceptance. Ernest, a 50-year-old Burundian male, echoed the voices of many refugees who looked to the agencies as part of their support system in their new environment:

> *This place where the refugee resettlement agency settled me, and then accepted me and then accepted to help me. So I doesn't want to move to somewhere else that I doesn't know anybody, I doesn't know if I gets help when I move... The first part was love. The refugee service people in refugee service they showed what love towards me and towards my family. They provided food. They provided me the house to stay in and then this house we are living in. I can't even mention all kind of good stuff they give, they provided then to us… Health Assistance, Okay. When I arrive here for the first few days they give us malaria medication. And then they took us to the hospital for screening and then for vaccine, different shots. Now we are over the six months they will have to be by their own, we don't speak English, we don't know even how to make appointment, how to follow up the appointment, we will have a big problem if they can be by themselves, we will not going to be able to take care of ourselves to go especially for to the hospital, follow up the doctor appointment. I still, I may still need help for that [doctor's appointment]. They provided the service but it's not yet time to tell us go by yourself because the English... We came here, we didn't know anybody, and we didn't know what, but now. The refugee [agency] was able to help us, to resettle us.*

Ernest's excerpt illustrated refugees' dependence on their resettlement agencies. Whether it was finding housing, connecting them to health care services, or providing courses to learn English, these agencies were the first to contact refugees during their resettlement. More importantly, agency staff represented a new type of family. For instance, in the case of Ernest and his family, who have been displaced from family and friends for decades, staff members become part of their extended family. Agency staff showed them love and acceptance following their arrival in a foreign country. In some instances, refugees often cited their caseworkers as their friends who visited them when they were ill. Kwan, a Burmese male, recalled his caseworker coming to visit him at midnight when both he and his roommate had food poisoning. Thus, when the resettlement period is over and agencies deem refugees independent and not in need of

extensive aid, refugees lose more than resources, they also lose a pivotal member of someone they now consider part of their family, and an important extension of support. Donathe, Ernest's wife, recalled that after the agency stopped supporting them, she could not leave her house. She said, "I don't know what to do, I don't know [anyone]". For individuals who have spent years (some decades) displaced, the loss of contact with agency staff adversely impact their wellbeing.

The loss of agency support as a source for access to services and a supportive network was a prevalent theme in most interviews. The typical resettlement period spans six months. The participants interviewed for this study were nearing or were beyond the six-month mark for receiving support from the agencies. This loss impacted Burmese and Burundians differently. For the Burmese participants, they were more likely in need of additional assistance with finding English classes or employment services. For instance, Aung expressed concerns about the agency's upcoming six month deadline. He said:

> *And the other difficult thing for me is that job, finding a job… there are several Burmese clients here now but only couple of people who have a job so the rest of them are here still [working with the agency] and then after 6 months our case will be ended then who will continue to help us. The agency may not be responsible for us when the case is over to find a job and things so job is so difficult.*

The Burundian participants also struggled with learning a new language, and obtaining employment. However, their needs compounded with additional requirements such as food, appliances, and subsidized rent assistance, placing the Burundians in a more vulnerable position. Elizabeth and Martin, a Burundian couple, both mentioned that they have asked for extended help from the agency given that both were unemployed with six children living with them in the U.S. with a baby on the way, and a son to support in Tanzania. Elizabeth said:

> *I'd tell them just to extend time or just to teach people like me a lot of time, not like six months not like something like that. Or to help people like me who come here, like in this situation, to help me just to extend help that they give us. Like those, that money that they give us to buy food or I need to buy soaps, everything cause six months [is] not really enough for somebody like me.*

The excerpt above illustrates the importance of resource support even after the six-month deadline. Due to a sluggish economy and low employment opportunities, only 64% of sampled participants (Burundians and Burmese) were employed. Most of them were employed either part-time or on a sporadic basis. Knowing that the agencies would soon withdraw support and services or knowing they had already withdrawn support led the Burmese to express disheartenment. One participant mentioned that due to his lack of employment opportunities, he may be perceived by others in his community as lazy despite his efforts to gain employment. Furthermore, the emphasis that the Asian culture places on the husband to be the provider for the family had led to some male participants to feel shame and discouraged because they could not provide the necessities for their families.

The feelings of inadequacy were also expressed by the Burundian participants. Their families were larger than the Burmese, thus the loss of resource support was more detrimental. Furthermore, many of the Burundians financially support family members in Africa with the aid they receive from the agencies. Thus, the loss of agency support is also linked to their inability to provide assistance to other family members still living in refugee camps.

Impact of Resource Support

In addition to losing agency support, issues related to language acquisition, employment, obtaining community resources and housing were common service gaps noted in most of the interviews. Results indicated that some of these gaps were a result of lack of support that many refugees encountered during the resettlement period. The biggest concern for the Burmese and the Burundians was language acquisition as part of the agreement with the federal government stipulates that agencies are required to provide English courses to refugees. However, our data revealed that while all were enrolled in ESL courses, the majority had stopped attending classes before the courses were over. The lack of support that both ethnic groups experienced played a role in their discontinuation of the courses. Below are excerpts from two participants, one Burmese and one Burundian who expressed frustration related to the English courses in which they were enrolled. Aung, a Burmese participant said:

> *Um even though [the agency] has provided ESL classes that have been good, but I wish they way they provided us [the classes] ,,,,for instance okay nobody can speak Burmese language [in the classroom] then we're not allowed to speak Burmese language in the class than… all [of us are at] different levels and then some of us don't know anything, even one word that what they're talking, what they're talking [in the classroom]… then when they [other people in the class] explain to us what the teacher was saying in Burmese then the teacher give us punishment again so then nothing is really beneficial so for [the] future.*

Ornella, a Burundian participant said:

> *Yes, they show me the class where I can took[take]- - English classes but the problem was the communication. I was in the class, but when the teacher talk about something I don't know what is that [what is being taught]… From ESL classes, there is no help for me. Because even the teacher tried to teach me, I don't understand anything. So, but, for sewing circle, it's okay. Because I had an interpreter in the sewing circle. But in the ESL class no, there is no interpreter.*

Many participants expressed concern about how the classes were taught and so they stopped attending the course even before their six month resettlement period ended. More importantly, the instructor's insistence that the class only be taught in English indicated that they felt little support attending the classes. In the case of Ornella, she stopped attending the English classes and instead found a sewing group in which she could communicate with other members of her ethnic group. The sewing groups, which were not created to teach English, however, were a source of social support for her. Emmanuel,

a 47 year-old Burundian man, found the class and the instructor disrespectful because his unique needs were not being heard:

> *They [the staff at the resettlement agency] don't respect me. This [ESL instruction] doesn't match my culture. Because they know that and we told them that we really need somebody who speaks our language to tell, but they didn't look for somebody who, they didn't even want to look for somebody who can [speak our language]. Yeah and teach us. It's doesn't really, it's not, they didn't, it's not respect for us or they didn't listen to us, something like that.*

The lack of support that our participants received during these ESL course led to feelings of frustration and disrespect. This, in turn, dissuaded them from attending the ESL classes. Speaking English is an integral part of acculturating in the U.S. It is linked to finding employment, increasing people's social support and a host of other resources. It was not surprising that many of the participants from both ethnic groups stated that their lack of experience with the English language prevented them from becoming independent U.S. residents.

Housing was another concern also linked to the support that refugees received during the resettlement period. Common issues related to housing included paying rent, living in dangerous neighborhoods, or not having any furniture in their homes. For instance, Min-Tun and her family mentioned that they stopped receiving resource support from the refugee agencies three months after their arrival. Due to the lack of assistance, they struggled to pay their rent and buy food. She said:

> *Oh, so no I didn't get anything starting from after three months… I would be very happy if somebody ask me, you know "how can I help, something" because right now I want to get assistance to cover for the living stuff, I mean, the basic thing is the food stamp for the whole family because right now only my husband has a job and after they are paying renting fees all [the money] is gone.*

Victor and his wife, Kamariza, both mentioned that the house they stayed in had no furniture, microwave or other basic necessities such as soap, or adequate food. Victor said:

> *I think that we can follow the American culture, yeah um but um [in the] house you have chair [s], you have tables, but we don't really they didn't give us those chairs [or] tables. Everything you see [here] they are even broken. I took them (pointing at chairs) from the outside, people they throw them away and then I took them and put them in the house. We didn't get the support we supposed to get like we don't have microwave, we don't have toaster or something like that.*

Kamariza echoed her husband's words and further mentioned that the lack of furniture in their home impacted their family's ability to associate with other Burundians.

The link between housing and social support highlights several challenges to refugees' wellbeing. First, the agencies have placed families in housing they cannot afford. In Min-Tun's case, she repeatedly asked for her agency's support in either paying the rent or helping to find affordable housing. She mentioned that she would welcome

someone from the agency asking her if she needed help. The second challenge was the poor state of the apartments and lack of furniture in refugees' homes. This problem was not limited to individual functioning, but also linked to social support and isolation. Kamariza and her family do not socialize with other families due to their embarrassment over not having a place for guests to sit. This may not seem important from an American perspective. However, in some cultures around the globe, not being able to welcome guests into their home can be viewed as disrespectful and lead to individuals being ostracized within their own cultural groups. Furthermore, Victor, Kamariza's husband, links his lack of furnishings to being non-American. This is due to his assumption that real Americans have furniture and his lack of furniture meant he did not see himself as part of the dominant group and culture. From his perspective, although he and his family have finally made it to the United States—a free and safe country, they have not found a home, community or identity that fits them.

Social Support and Supportive Networks

While needs across the two groups were parallel, as noted in the previous sections, we did notice a disparity in access to resources that was directly linked to refugee groups' social ties. Overall, we noticed that the Burmese participants were better able to meet most of their basic needs, while the Burundians were struggling to obtain basic resources such as adequate shelter, sufficient food, or proper medical care. This disparity may be rooted in the perceived preferential treatment that some refugees received over others. For instance, Ninnette, a Burundian woman, expressed her frustration with the agency that resettled her family:

> *They give me no money they were giving others so they didn't help me. I don't trust them cause they didn't help me like others. They didn't treat me like others…. I was dreaming of speaking out to [the agency] to, yeah, cause to say, we came under same condition as other refugees. I go in their house I found they have money you [the agency] give that money to them you always give them money every week but you didn't give that money to me. If I knew English I should come to court.*

Ninnette, like many Burundians, does not understand why her family's rent is not subsidized, why she does not have workable appliances, or why she does not receive employment aid? Even the Burmese participants noticed the preferential treatment that they received over others. Min-Tun recalls meeting another refugee couple who were not receiving any assistance from their resettlement agency.

> *Like us they resettle some of our friends and um some relatives also in the city, but totally different from the way from us. So they [the other agencies] don't care, it seems to me that they don't care [about] their clients that much, they don't visit them. Because, my wife, a place where we attended ESL together with the other couple [re] settled by the other agency, they told us that one day in the class, ESL classes they didn't have anything to eat, even rice. Rice is staple food for Asians and they didn't even have rice to eat, nothing. They [the agency] just brought them to the apartment; they just left [them] there. No food, no telephone*

and nothing so they [the other couple] almost um they were starving… The[ir] black neighbors who are also immigrants probably [dealt with the same issue] and then they almost beg for food.

These two excerpts illustrated the amount of support that refugees received differed by families, ethnic groups and within agencies in the same area. In the case of Ninette, she expressed that she would like to take the agencies to court due to perceived unfair treatment. However, her limited grasp of English prevented her from seeking judicial action and equality in fair access to resources and supports.

Due to inequality in obtaining resources from the refugee agencies, participants were actively seeking help from their supportive networks. For the Burmese, supportive networks are typically family and church members. Min Tun mentioned that due to the large Burmese community in the area, she is able to attend school and plan for the future. For instance, she mentioned, "our plan, so far, is that my mother-in-law would take care of the kids when I go to school and once we can save money, we want to support [provide] some money to my mother-in-law". Furthermore, she expressed that due to the services she received from her agency, she is able to host other families at her home. This is a role that she enjoys because she is able to provide assistance to newly arrived families.

Providing support, either emotional or tangible, was a common theme within the Burmese community. Often the Burmese utilized their support systems to provide childcare assistance, emotional support and requisite services. Lwin mentioned that his neighbor, who was sponsored by another resettlement agency, relied on him to provide support:

Because the lady whom I just said who is living across the street, across hall, and she was sick because she's pregnant you know like couple months; she's sick and she called the case manager at [the other agency] and then they told her that um if she were dying [to call] and if she's just like regular sick don't call us [the agency], but only if you're really, really emergency and really dying then call us. So that's what that lady told me again, [this is] the way [other agency] responded to her so that made me so upset.

Lwin and his family stepped in to aid the pregnant woman often taking her food and helping her get prenatal medical care. All of these services were supposed to be provided by the agencies. Instead, the Burmese community is coming together to help each other.

The Burmese, in addition to providing support to family and friends, also received support through religious institutions. Although the Burmese participants knew few people when they first arrived, their common religion and language allowed them to connect with other Burmese families. Through this networking opportunity they were able to receive clothing, food, furniture, and emotional support. For instance, both Aung and his wife, Suu-Kyi, mentioned multiple opportunities that Burmese have to engage in networking. Aung said, "we, our Burmese community, have worship services Saturdays, every Saturday night. We call [go to this church]… even among Chin different dialects

and different opinions". These churches were places that Burmese families could connect with each other and share integral services and needs.

In contrast, the Burundians did not receive the same support from the community agencies as the Burmese. To counter this lack of assistance, the Burundians often relied on other people outside of their family unit to provide resources. Previous excerpts illustrated that Burundians got assistance from their neighbors to acquire material goods such as food and furniture. Others got items they needed from the streets often picking necessities like furniture from other people's garbage. One major source of support for many Burundians was the interpreters used in this study. In one interview, the interpreter mentioned that as the only Burundian living near participants, he sometimes brings the families food. He said, "I [the interpreter] give them food, I bought food for them when they were hungry and I give them clothes, shoes. I was advising them, I was telling them many things about life". The interpreters were responsible for coordinating any social gathering between the Central African refugees. These gatherings were often a collage of different African people. However, due to barriers such as transportation, language, and communication, the events were often cancelled or had low attendance. For instance, the interpreter mentioned:

> *The reason why I say no [the reason why there were no cultural events is] I work with them [I coordinate the cultural events] most of the time… So, hmm, that event never happen, didn't happen… I don't know the date yet [for the next cultural event], but we're trying to do that but for now no.*

The reliance that many Burundians have on the interpreters does present a challenge for the interpreter. In one interview, the interpreter expressed remorse that he had to cancel a scheduled appointment to help another Burundian the day his wife went into labor.

As illustrated above, help-seeking strategies differ by ethnic groups. Our Burmese participants had more sources for support than the Burundians. This difference in supportive network is due to the proximity in which the agencies resettle ethnic groups. The Burmese were more likely to be resettled close to each other; while the Burundians were spread apart. Given that many refugees do not have adequate transportation, often relying on buses for travel, the Burundians had a harder time forming connections with other families from their ethnic group. Furthermore, the Burmese community had access to religious institutions, which tailored services to their ethnic group. As stated in previous excerpts, services were held in multiple languages and dialects for the Burmese. This was not the case for the Burundians; in fact, none of our participants mentioned attending church services held in their native language. Several reasons could be attributed to the lack of community resources available to Burundian families. The language barrier that many refugees encountered may have hindered Burundians from learning about services available to them. While the Burmese also encounter these language challenges, the fact that they were resettled (in large numbers) near each other may have caused better organization in the community to tailor some of their services to the group.

LIMITATIONS

There are several caveats to the findings of this study. First, the interviews were collected with interpreters recruited from the resettlement agencies. As stated earlier in this research, interpreters were hired because of their connections and knowledge of their respective communities. Although participants provided valuable information about their experiences with the agencies, they may have felt some pressure to frame their responses in a more positive light due to the relationship between the interpreters and the agencies. The researchers were aware of the precarious position that the participants were placed when hiring interpreters connected to the agencies. Thus, the importance of confidentiality was emphasized at various phases of the study to both the interpreters and the participants. In addition to issues of confidentiality, concerns over recruitment may also be a limitation. Recruitment of participants was done with the help of the resettlement agencies. Thus, these results only reflect the perspectives of refugees who rely or have relied on resettlement agencies. There is anecdotal evidence from our interviews that suggests that not all refugees utilize the agencies' services. However, due to our recruitment strategies, we were not able to capture such experiences in this study. Finally, this study failed to capture the long-term relational impact of social support on both populations. Future research should examine the long-term impact of these challenges on refugees and their families.

DISCUSSION

Despite the limitations found in this study, the interviews do illuminate several important findings. First is the importance of "the agency" as a source of emotional and resource support during the resettlement period. As illustrated in the excerpts, agency staff represents a new family for refugees. Back in their home countries, it would not be unheard of for families to depend on their kinship ties to help get valuable resources and emotional support during times of war and displacement. This practice is continued when refugees come to the U.S., and often the agency staff becomes family. As pivotal as the resources are to refugees, the emotional support that the agency provides is just as vital. The six-month deadline removes an integral part of their resettlement-the agency worker who is viewed as family member who is a central link to refugees creating a community may not be available anymore. During the first year of resettlement, many refugees do not know other families. The agency staff fills in this gap. Thus, when that support is gone, the loss is doubly impactful in that families have lost a networking resource and a key person who is their connection to vital emotional support.

The second important finding from our data is impact of agency support on individual functioning and extended family ties. Individuals from non western families typically depend on familiar ties to help them cope during times of need. So, when families move to the U.S., they often support other relatives in their countries of origin. In our sample, the Burundian families mentioned that they supported children, parents, siblings and in-laws back in Tanzania using funds given to them by the agencies. When the agency is no longer financially supporting or providing rental subsidizes to families, many relatives in the country of origin are also negatively impacted. While it is not the

agency's responsibility to provide aid to extended families, it is important to understand the cultural context that influences this behavior. Both ethnic groups respect traditional values, which encourage them to put the community's needs first ahead of their own. To delineate from this tradition means that the individual rejects their cultural heritage and is turning their back on other people who have assisted them in times of crisis. If it becomes known within the American refugee community that an individual is withholding or not giving support to relatives who are struggling to survive back in their home countries, that individual could be ostracized and cut off from his or her ethnic community.

The third important finding from our interviews is the importance of community ties to refugees' well-being. The excerpts above indicate that when agency support ends, individuals depend on other family members, friends, and churches to fill in the support gap. Our Burmese participants were resettled close to each other; thus, they were able to provide resources and emotional support to other families. Furthermore, since they received adequate help, they were able to provide same to other newly resettled members of the community. This was not the case of the Burundian participants who were resettled away from each other. Due to distance, the Burundian participants were not able to form community ties with each other. Thus, they had more difficulties creating a home and a community with individuals of the same ethnic background. Furthermore, the link of support observed in the Burmese sample did not develop in the Burundian community.

Taken together, these findings also highlight the need and importance of social workers in the resettlement process. First, social workers in their interactions with refugees know the unique challenges that each ethnic group encounters during and after the resettlement period. Their firsthand knowledge could be used to inform policy related to successful resettlement for families. In our sample, social workers like the first author of this article could inform policy makers about the importance of developing a community in order to help families get resources and support from community organizations. Furthermore, social workers also have the capacity to locate and work with key individuals in these marginalized groups who can be trained to become leaders for their respective communities. Working with the leaders, social workers could help bridge the gaps in service delivery and foster new avenues in which refugees can get services from the community while staying connected to their ethnic groups.

To conclude, community and mutual support are necessary aspects for well-being. In cases where individuals have undergone tremendous trauma, strain and upheaval, these ties become doubly important as it is now connected to resources and acculturation. Refugees typically leave their home countries due to lack of resources and are in need of a safe community environment. Coming to the U.S., the loss of these community ties and social support make it difficult for them to acclimate to the new culture and community environment. When resettling refugees in the U.S., agencies must take into account the importance of these factors. As suggested in the excerpts, having proximal support such as having family members or others from the same ethnic group nearby helps refugees cope with the stress of resettlement. Thus, future resettlements must work toward building a community for these families. This can be accomplished by resettling members of similar ethnic groups in close proximity to each other, facilitating more networking within ethnic groups, and encouraging other community organizations to

provide services that fit the cultural expectations of refugee groups while giving them an opportunity to sustain and create new anchors that will ultimately strengthen their community connections. In conclusion, social workers and other service providers need to better understand the diverse array of experiences that refugees face so they can better tailor service and supports that will fit the unique needs of different ethnic groups.

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Evaluating the Mental Health Training Needs of Community-based Organizations Serving Refugees

Jennifer Anne Simmelink
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Abstract: *This exploratory study examines the mental health knowledge and training needs of refugee-serving community based organizations in a Midwestern state. A survey was administered to 31 staff members at 27 community based organizations (CBOs) to assess the ability of staff to recognize and screen for mental health symptoms that may interfere with successful resettlement. Of the 31 respondents 93.5% (n=29) see refugees with mental health issues and 48.4% (n=15) assess refugees for mental health symptoms – primarily through informal assessment. Mainstream organizations were more likely than ethnic organizations to have received training related to the mental health needs of refugees. Results indicate that while refugee led CBOs recognize mental health symptoms of refugees they may be less likely to assess mental health symptoms and refer for treatment. Policy recommendations for improving CBO services to refugees are offered.*

Keywords: *Refugees, community based organizations, mental health training, ethnic organizations*

INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of the Refugee Act in 1980, more than 2 million refugees have resettled in the United States (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2010). By definition, refugees are fleeing chaotic and cataclysmic events (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2008). Those who flee war and political instability may have faced torture, imprisonment, rape, beatings, witnessed the killing of family members and the destruction of their homes. Many refugees have spent years in refugee camps where conditions can be just as brutal as in the country from which they fled (UNHCR, 2008). As a result of these traumatic experiences, refugees resettling in the United States are at increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and other psychosocial symptoms (Johnson & Thompson, 2008). Resettlement stressors such as the lack of English language skills, living wage jobs and affordable housing can exacerbate mental distress (Corvo & Peterson, 2005) and untreated mental illness in newly arriving refugees can limit successful resettlement (Mitschke, Mitschke, Slater, & Teboh, 2011; Potocky-Tripodi, 2003). It can be difficult for health or social service professionals who work with refugees to recognize mental health symptoms, make appropriate referrals or treat mental health symptoms because of differences in language and culture (Kirmayer et al., 2011).

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The United States provides federal funding to community based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide support to resettling refugees through a range of social services including job training, English language classes, and assistance with housing. To secure and maintain funding, CBOs must ensure their refugee clients meet federal measures of successful resettlement outcomes including finding stable employment with health insurance, reducing reliance on public welfare, learning English and making progress toward citizenship (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2010b). Federal guidelines stipulate that funding to CBOs for resettling refugees must be used primarily for employment related activities and mental health services are not included in approved employment related activities, leaving little money left in budgets to address issues like mental health or exposure to trauma and torture (Public Welfare, 2006). In addition, there is little funding for or provision of technical support and training in serving the mental health needs of refugees. Consequently, CBOs may struggle to recognize and meet the mental health needs of resettling refugees, leading to difficulties in successful resettlement. Proper recognition, assessment and treatment of mental health symptoms in newly resettling refugees has the potential to increase successful resettlement outcomes, but CBOs need to be properly trained and supported in this endeavor.

This paper presents findings from an exploratory study of the mental health skills and training needs of staff at mainstream and ethnic CBOs that serve resettling refugees. A better understanding of the training needs of federally funded social service agencies that serve refugees can lead to more targeted and effective technical support.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Refugees in the United States

In 2011 56,419 refugees from more than 20 different countries resettled in the United States (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). This number is down from 74,602 in 2009 (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2010). The primary countries of origin for incoming refugees were Iraq, Burma and Bhutan. Nearly one-half of all incoming refugees resettled in California, Texas, New York, Arizona, Florida or Michigan.

Many refugees resettling in the United States have been living in refugee camps for many years with little access to employment or education (UNHCR, 2008). Many refugees come from rural, agriculture-based communities and have few employment skills that translate to an urban, post-industrial society like the United States. These conditions can further prolong successful resettlement, particularly for older refugees.

Exposure to Trauma and Risk of Mental Health Symptoms

Refugees, by definition, are fleeing violence, oppression, civil war or, increasingly, famine and natural disasters. Many refugees have been exposed to traumatic events like violence, rape, torture, imprisonment or forced relocation. Exposure to these events increases risk of developing mental health symptoms including PTSD, depression and

anxiety (Johnson & Thompson, 2008). As refugees languish in refugee camps for five, ten or even twenty years, the lack of employment or access to adequate education can contribute to mental health symptoms like depression (Johnson & Thompson, 2008). Even after resettlement in a third country refugees can face long and difficult periods of acculturation. Language barriers, lack of employable skills, lack of transportation, culture shock, generational gaps and isolation can all contribute to difficulties in resettling and exacerbate war-related trauma or resettlement related depression and anxiety (Porter & Haslam, 2005).

Several studies describe prevalence rates of trauma and torture, as well as symptoms of war and resettlement related mental and emotional distress among refugees. Between 25 and 69% of Somali and Oromo refugees in the study reported experiencing torture (Jaranson et al., 2004). Karen refugees from camps in Thailand report multiple traumatic experiences including forced relocation, hiding from soldiers in the jungle, missing family members, torture and rape (Cardozo, Talley, Burton, & Crawford, 2004).

Exposure to these types of traumatic experiences increases the risk of PTSD, depression, anxiety and other mental health issues in resettling refugees. Prolonged exposure to trauma or the experience of multiple traumas is highly correlated with the development of PTSD in refugees. In a meta-analysis of 181 surveys that included 81,000 refugees from multiple countries Steel and colleagues (2009) found rates of PTSD at 30.6% and rates of major depression at 30.8%. Recent research on the long-term effects of exposure to war trauma and torture indicates that PTSD and depression can be long-lasting and debilitating (Carlsson, Olsen, Mortensen, & Kastrup, 2006; Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, & Chun, 2005). Left untreated, these mental health symptoms can prevent stable resettlement (Beiser & Hou, 2001; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Marshall et al., 2005).

Mental health symptoms that developed during flight and in refugee camps can interfere with successful resettlement in the United States and are often undiagnosed and untreated. Challenges to recognizing mental health symptoms in refugees include language and communication difficulties, cultural differences in health beliefs and behaviors, differences in family structures, intergenerational conflict, and social status (Kirmayer et al., 2011).

Mental and emotional distress from pre-flight and migration as well as from the acculturation process can interfere with successful resettlement in third countries. Often during resettlement war-related trauma is one of several issues facing refugees (Davidson, Murray, & Schweitzer, 2008). Past trauma is often ongoing because many refugees have left friends and family members behind in home countries or refugee camps. Upon arrival in the United States refugees need to quickly learn a new cultural, legal, social and economic system. At the same time, they are coping with multiple losses of home, family, culture and language. Many refugees experience acute mental health symptoms upon arrival in a resettlement country that decrease over time (Beiser, 1988; Tran, Manalo, & Nguyen, 2007). Other refugees, frequently those who have experienced higher levels of war trauma, have a greater risk of developing mental health disorders after resettlement (Steel, Silove, Phan, & Bauman, 2002).

There is evidence that refugees who have difficulty with acculturation and resettlement have worse resettlement outcomes. These difficulties include changes in social roles (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003), unemployment and financial difficulties (Beiser & Hou, 2001), and social isolation (Miller et al., 2002; Mollica et al., 2001). In a large meta-analysis Porter and Haslam (2005) found that refugees from countries with continuing or flaring violence and refugees with a marked decrease in social status after resettlement did worse in terms of markers of successful resettlement than refugees who resettled with material security and stable housing.

Mental health symptoms, if left untreated, can continue to interfere with resettlement even decades later. In a study of 568 Cambodian adults interviewed two decades after resettlement, Marshall et al. (2005) found that refugees continued to have high rates of PTSD (62%, weighted) and depression (42%, weighted). In addition, the study found that people who are older, have low English language proficiency, are unemployed or are poor have higher levels of PTSD and depression.

Supporting Successful Refugee Resettlement

The United States recognizes the unique needs of resettling refugees and US refugee admission policies have been adapted to provide funding for resettlement-related social services. The Refugee Act of 1980, which created the first permanent statutory basis for refugee admissions, also created the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), a department of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The US Department of State allocates funds annually based on refugee admission numbers to ORR. The ORR then awards these funds to states through grants to community based agencies that provide resettlement services including reception, housing, employment, English language training and education. In fiscal year 2010 ORR awarded a total of $171 million in discretionary grants (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2010a).

To receive grants through ORR, CBOs must demonstrate that they have met certain outcome goals related to refugee economic self-sufficiency. These goals include ensuring a significant number of resettling refugees enter employment, remain employed for 90 days or longer, reduce or terminate their reliance on cash assistance, and receive health benefits through full-time employment (ORR, 2010). This heavy emphasis on employment-related activities can prevent agencies from having time and resources to address mental health symptoms related to war trauma, torture or the stress of resettlement that may interfere with employment.

Development and Focus of Ethnic Community Based Organizations

Ethnic community based organizations, often called mutual assistance agencies (MAAs) in the academic literature, have a long history in the United States and the US has long relied on ethnic community based organizations to provide social services and to support incoming refugees (Hein, 1997). Ethnic solidarity theories (Breton, 1964) posit that these organizations provide a base for leadership, welcome and support newcomers through employment and financial resources, and facilitate successful resettlement (Hein, 1997). Ethnic solidarity theory has been challenged by research that indicates immersion

in ethnic communities has a negative long-term impact on refugees' economic self-sufficiency (Majka & Mullen, 2002). Ethnic organizations may lack access to mainstream resources making it more difficult for refugees to achieve self-sufficiency. In addition, by providing federal funding with specific criteria about how the money should be spent and on what, the federal government ends up setting priorities for ethnic communities that may not match their needs. For example, funding may prioritize employment-related activities, channeling an organization's efforts towards training rather than other services, including mental health services (Hein, 1997).

While ethnic organizations provide essential supportive services for refugees, particularly in the first few months of resettlement, by accepting federal resettlement funds, their programs become significantly limited to government-determined outcomes. The omission of mental health services from federal definitions of successful refugee resettlement means ethnic organizations are less likely to provide these services. Training and technological support from the federal government also focuses on employment related services, meaning ethnic organizations are less likely to receive training in recognizing and addressing mental health issues in refugees. Although ethnic led CBOs might recognize the effects of trauma in refugees, they may lack the knowledge and resources to address these issues.

Untreated mental health symptoms interfere with meeting the outcomes outlined by the federal government in defining successful resettlement. CBOs and refugee social service agencies lack training to provide support for refugees with mental health symptoms. Refugees who struggle with mental health symptoms long after resettlement are at risk of ending up on long-term disability. Research indicates that early intervention can significantly reduce the risk of long-term mental health symptoms such as posttraumatic stress disorder (Foa, Keane, Friedman, & Cohen, 2009). Providing CBOs with training and material support to address refugees' mental health needs may significantly improve resettlement outcomes.

METHOD

This study is an exploratory examination of the mental health skills and training needs of mainstream and ethnic community based organizations that serve refugees. The purpose of the survey was to determine if community based organizations are serving refugee clients with mental health issues and if so, to assess the knowledge and ability of staff to recognize and screen for trauma-related mental health symptoms that may interfere with the successful resettlement of refugees.

Sample

This study uses a convenience sample of 31 staff members at 27 community based organizations that have contracts with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to provide services to refugees in a Midwestern state. In 2009 the ORR provided formula or discretionary grants to about 70 CBOs in this state. The survey was given at a quarterly meeting of agencies convened by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The survey was introduced and endorsed by the State Refugee Coordinator as part of a community based

needs assessment and was exempt from institutional review board approval. Job titles of individuals completing the survey included program manager, executive director, staff attorney, and direct service personnel. The sample favors metro-based organizations; however, some rural organizations are represented.

Survey Instrument

The survey was designed by the authors and self-administered via pencil and paper. Participation in the survey was not mandatory and information about organizations that were present at the meeting but chose not to complete the survey was not collected. Identifying information including name of the person filling out the survey and job title was collected with the survey. Respondents took about 20 minutes to complete the survey.

The survey contained primarily yes/no questions including: "Do you ask your clients if they have been exposed to war trauma or torture in their home countries?", "Do you see clients who suffer with mental health or stress related problems that affect their ability to successfully adjust to living in the United States?", "Does your agency assess clients for mental health problems or symptoms either formally through a questionnaire or informally through conversation?", "Would you find it useful to have a tool for identifying mental health symptoms that your clients struggle with?".

Three questions asked about referring clients for treatment for mental health issues. First, respondents were asked: "Do you refer clients to other agencies for assistance with treatment of mental health symptoms?" Next, respondents were asked to rate their clients' success at connecting with those referrals on a Likert scale of 0 (Not at all successful) to 3 (Always successful). Finally, respondents were asked to list any barriers their clients experience when trying to access services for mental health concerns.

Three questions asked about training related to the mental health needs of refugees. First, respondents were asked: "Has your agency received any training on serving the needs of war trauma/torture survivors?" Second, respondents were asked to rate how knowledgeable their staff is in understanding and serving the needs of war trauma and/or torture survivors on a Likert scale from 0 (Not at all knowledgeable) to 3 (Extremely knowledgeable). Third, respondents were asked to rate their interest in receiving training or consultation for their agency staff on specific topics related to torture and war trauma on a Likert scale from 0 (Not at all interested) to 3 (Extremely interested). Respondents were given space to add additional written comments after each question and were given space at the end to write additional thoughts, comments or suggestions.

Analysis

Because this is an exploratory study and data is limited, descriptive statistics and crosstabs were performed. Analysis was completed using Stata statistical software, version 11. Responses were analyzed in two ways. First, responses were aggregated and analyzed as a whole. Second, responses were categorized by organization type. Organizations that responded to the survey were divided into two categories: mainstream community based organizations (CBOs) and ethnic community based organizations.

Mainstream CBOs were defined as community-based non-profit or government agencies/departments established for purposes other than refugee resettlement but that now provide significant services to refugees. These include schools, legal services, housing services, voluntary resettlement agencies and other social service agencies. Ethnic-led CBOs are community-based non-profit organizations that were founded by and are run by refugee communities to provide social services to resettling refugees.

FINDINGS

Demographics

The sample included 31 respondents from a total of 27 organizations; 13 mainstream community based organizations were represented and 13 ethnic organizations were represented. One respondent did not identify their organization. The 31 respondents were evenly split between the organizations with 15 respondents from mainstream organizations and 15 from ethnic organizations. Table 1 outlines descriptive statistics of responses to the survey.

Table 1: Description of Survey Sample (n=31)

Organization Demographics	**n**	**%**
Mainstream CBO	15	50.0%
Ethnic CBO	15	50.0%
No Response	1	3.3%
Mental Health		
See clients with mental health symptoms	29	93.5%
Ask about exposure to trauma/torture	18	58.0%
Assess mental health symptoms	15	48.4%
Culturally valid screening tool would be useful	27	87.0%
Referrals		
Refer for mental health treatment	23	74.2%
Rated likely or extremely likely to connect with referrals (n=23)	17	74.0%
Knowledge and Training		
Have received mental health training	11	35.5%
Rated knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable about serving war trauma survivors (n=27)	12	44.0%
Rated interested or extremely interested in training (n=24)	21	88.0%

Assessing War-related Mental Distress

Overall, 93.5% (n=29) of respondents see clients with mental health symptoms while 58% (n=18) ask clients about exposure to trauma or torture and 48.4% (n=15) assess for mental health symptoms either with a standardized questionnaire or through informal conversation.

Need for a Culturally Grounded Mental Health Screening Tool

Respondents were asked if they would find it useful to have a culturally relevant tool for identifying mental health symptoms in their clients. Eighty-seven percent (n=27) of respondents indicated that a tool would be useful. The majority of respondents who indicated they currently assess clients for mental health symptoms reported doing so through either informal conversation or with the state's TANF program self-report questionnaire. The questionnaire is a self-report depression screening tool used with the state's application package for TANF grants. This tool was not designed for use with refugees and is not cross-culturally validated.

Referring Clients for Treatment

Respondents were asked about referral practices. Twenty-three (74.2%) CBOs refer their clients for treatment for mental health symptoms. Respondents were asked to rate their clients' success at connecting with these referral agencies on a scale of 0 (Not at all likely to connect with referrals) to 3 (Extremely likely to connect with referrals). Seventeen (74%) agencies reported their clients are likely or extremely likely to connect with referral services.

Nineteen respondents identified barriers to accessing stable psychosocial treatment. This was a short answer question and most participants gave multiple responses. Nine respondents (47.4%) identified a lack of interpreters or linguistically appropriate provides as a barrier to accessing treatment. Nine (47.4%) respondents identified stigma as a significant barrier. Five (26.3%) respondents identified cultural differences in definitions and treatment of mental health symptoms as a barrier. Other barriers listed included lack of transportation (n=5, 26.3%), cost or lack of health insurance (n=3, 15.8%), lack of culturally appropriate treatment or providers (n=3, 15.8%), and difficulty navigating complicated mental health systems (n=3, 15.8%).

Knowledge and Training

Eleven respondents (35.5%) reported received training related to serving refugees with war trauma/torture exposure. Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of serving the needs of war trauma/torture survivors on a Likert scale of 0 (No knowledge at all) to 3 (Extremely knowledgeable). Twenty-seven respondents answered this question and 44% (n=12) reported they are knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable about serving the needs of war trauma/torture survivors.

Twenty-four organizations rated their interest in receiving training about serving refugees with war-related mental health symptoms on a scale of 0 (Not at all interested)

to 3 (Extremely interested). Twenty-one (88%) reported they are interested or extremely interested in receiving training.

Differences between Mainstream and Ethnic CBOs

Crosstabs show areas where differences may exist in responses between mainstream and ethnic CBOs. These crosstabs indicate areas for further study. Mainstream CBOs may be more likely than ethnic CBOs to want a tool for identifying mental health symptoms that clients struggle with. Mainstream CBOs may be more likely to refer clients for mental health treatment. Mainstream organizations may be more likely to have received training on serving the needs of war trauma/torture survivors. It is important to note that these differences are not statistically significant and simply point out areas for future investigation, rather than real differences. Table 2 below displays differences between mainstream and ethnic CBOs in this particular study.

Table 2: Differences between Mainstream and Ethnic CBOs

	Mainstream CBO [% (n)]	Ethnic CBO [% (n)]
Ask clients about exposure to trauma/torture	78.6% (11)	53.3% (8)
Assess mental health symptoms	53.3% (8)	46.7% (7)
Would like a culturally validated screening tool	100% (15)	73.3% (11)
Refer clients for mental health treatment	92.9% (13)	60% (9)
Have received training	53.3% (8)	13.3% (2)

Note. Overall N for Mainstream CBO = 15 and for Ethnic CBO = 15.

Mainstream and ethnic organizations also identified different types of barriers to successfully connecting to mental health services. Eight mainstream organizations identified refugees' stigma against mental illness as a barrier to successfully connecting with referral resources whereas ethnic CBOs did not identify this issues as a barrier. Mainstream organizations cited language issues, transportation, fear, lack of culturally appropriate providers and lack of knowledge about how the mental health system works as the primary barriers to accessing services. Ethnic organizations listed language, lack of culturally appropriate providers and cultural differences in refugees' perceptions of mental illness and treatment as the primary barriers to accessing services.

Short Answer Responses

Each question allowed space for respondents to write short answer comments and there was space at the end of the survey for additional thoughts or comments. Respondents were also asked to write short answer responses to the type of assessment tool they used for screening refugees for mental health issues and to the barriers that their refugee clients might face when trying to access services for mental health treatment.

These responses were analyzed thematically, making note of both similarities and frequencies of responses as well as anomalies or disparate responses. Three themes emerged in these comments: identification of training needs, lack of culturally appropriate referral services, and specific barriers to accessing treatment for mental health symptoms.

Although the survey did not ask for written comments in the questions about training needs both in this section and in the general comments section multiple organizations mentioned training needs as being a salient issue. One agency commented that a culturally grounded mental health assessment tool would be helpful "if staff are trained [to use the tool] and can take next steps". Four organizations that had received training in the past commented that it was several years ago and while they appreciated the knowledge, they felt they needed more. In the general comments section of the survey three organizations commented that they were seeing growing numbers of refugees in their areas and needed training to address their specific needs. One of the respondents wrote "In our community we have a growing Somali and Sudanese refugee population and we basically have no culturally competent referral system. I would love to be a part of any upcoming trainings on mental health."

DISCUSSION

This study explores whether CBOs who serve resettling refugees see clients with war-related mental health issues and whether or not they have adequate training and knowledge to assess and refer refugees for mental health issues. Results indicate that most of the respondents do see refugees with war-related mental distress at their agencies. However, only about half of respondents' agencies actually assess refugees for mental health issues and when they do, they use informal conversation rather than a standardized instrument. While many organizations refer refugees to treatment for mental health issues, they identify significant barriers to successfully connecting with those referral services. There appears to be a strong interest in having a culturally relevant, brief, accessible screening tool for assessing mental health issues, and training on refugee mental health issues is needed. Few agencies, particularly ethnic agencies have received training on refugee mental health issues, and perceived knowledge of how to meet refugees' mental health needs is low.

Study results indicate some significant differences between mainstream and ethnic organizations. Mainstream organizations are more likely to refer clients to treatment for mental health issues, more likely to have received training on refugee mental health issues, more likely to want a culturally relevant tool to assess refugee mental health issues, and more likely to name stigma as a barrier for refugees to receiving mental health treatment. The commonly held belief that mental health stigma prevents refugees from connecting with services was not confirmed by the ethnic CBOs in this survey.

These findings are not surprising given the structure of federal funding for refugee resettlement services. Guidelines for federal refugee resettlement funds focus primarily on employment-related activities and leave little room for programs or activities that address mental health issues. While the Office of Refugee Resettlement has committed

funding for training CBOs to meet employment-related needs of refugees, little commitment has been made to training organizations to recognize and address symptoms of war related mental distress that may interfere with obtaining and retaining employment. By earmarking most of federal resettlement funds for employment-related activities, federal guidelines significantly influence the focus and programmatic planning of refugee-serving CBOs.

Despite the fact that refugee led CBOs recognize mental health symptoms that their clients are struggling with, ethnic CBOs are less likely to have received training, less likely to refer their clients to mental health services, and less likely to want a culturally relevant tool for assessing mental health issues. This is not surprising considering ethnic CBOs are less likely to be connected to mainstream resources and agencies from which mental health training typically comes and may be unaware that treatment resources exist to help their clients. The competitive nature of federal grants for resettlement services makes it difficult for mainstream and ethnic CBOs to be motivated to collaborate and share their unique knowledge with each other (Majka & Mullen, 2002).

Mainstream organizations are more likely to have had training but this does not significantly impact their perception of agency knowledge. It is clear that more training is needed for both mainstream and ethnic organizations. However, this training cannot be a "one-size-fits-all" model. Ethnic organizations have specific training needs, as do mainstream organizations. Mainstream organizations might have more training and access to mental health resources, but less knowledge of cultural expressions of distress and language ability. Ethnic organizations may be well-steeped in cultural knowledge but lack information about mental health issues and resources. Training programs need to be targeted to the specific needs of each type of organization.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this exploratory study have a number of implications for refugee resettlement policies and for social work practice with refugees. Federal funding for resettlement services prioritizes employment and employability as a primary indicator of successful and stable resettlement. Research on the traumatic experiences and related mental health symptoms of refugees that are currently resettling in the US indicates such symptoms are likely to interfere with successful resettlement for a significant portion of new arrivals (Carlsson et al., 2006). Unrecognized and untreated mental distress in refugees could be a significant barrier to gaining and maintaining stable employment. Addressing refugees' mental health needs in the initial stages of resettlement could lead to more robust resettlement outcomes. This is only possible if there are funds available to support the requisite training and referral needs of CBOs that work with resettling refugees. Federal funds could be earmarked for a more broad definition of employment-related activities to allow funding to be spent on mental health programs connected to employment success.

Social work practitioners who work with refugees are uniquely positioned to provide training and referral resources to CBOs. There is a significant shortage of trained social workers from refugee communities. If more people from refugee communities are

recruited and trained in meeting the mental health needs of resettling refugees they could effectively integrate evidence based models of care with culturally competent practice at both mainstream and ethnic CBOs.

Finally, there appears to be a missing link between ethnic and mainstream CBOs. Mainstream CBOs with long histories in social services may have significant knowledge and awareness of general mental health issues, but lack the cultural grounding or training in recognizing those symptoms in refugees from non-Western backgrounds. Conversely, ethnic organizations are uniquely positioned to serve refugees from a culturally grounded and linguistically relevant base but lack access to and knowledge of mainstream mental health resources. Both types of organizations may stand to gain significantly by learning from each other.

Study Limitations

This study was limited by the small sample size and the exploratory nature of the survey. About half of the total number CBOs receiving ORR funding in this state are represented, giving a low response rate which further limits the study. Sophisticated statistical analysis of results is limited. The use of a convenience sample of participants in a quarterly meeting also limits the study. Some of the organizations represented in the study are large with multiple departments and staff. To gain a more full understanding of the training needs of an entire organization, this survey would need to be administered to more than one representative from more than one department. Despite these limitations the study points to the need for targeted training for CBOs that work with refugees at risk of war-related mental health symptoms.

Future Research

Research about the mental health training needs of mainstream and community based organizations serving refugees is limited. Research needs to focus on a better understanding of the unique training needs of ethnic community based organizations as well as mainstream organizations. Research and programs that foster communication and interaction between mainstream and ethnic community based organizations is needed. A better understanding of the variability in training needs within organizations, particularly large organizations with multiple departments and programs, could foster more targeted and effective training programs.

Many CBOs report a need for brief, culturally relevant mental health screening tools, indicating a need for future research on the development and utility of such tools. CBOs would also need training and support in using these tools as well as support in referring and following up with refugees who screen positive for mental health symptoms. Research is needed to understand how to best support both ethnic and mainstream CBOs in successfully using mental health screening tools and referral resources to maximize resettlement outcomes.

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In the Wake of Japan's Triple Disaster: Rebuilding Capacity through International Collaboration

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Abstract*: Natural disasters occur when the destructive forces of natural events, such as earthquakes, flood, and volcanoes, overwhelm the capacities of communities. In the winter of 2011, Japan, a model for disaster-preparedness, was shaken by one of the largest earthquakes on record, a ten-story tsunami, and a nuclear emergency on par with Chernobyl. In the acute stages of the disaster, the Japanese government officially asked for help from a number of countries. During this time period, international collaboration played a key role in providing help to survivors in the form of medical assistance, food aid, and psychosocial support. As provision of aid evolved into capacity building, national and local Japanese government agencies, in partnership with local grassroots non-profits, assumed most responsibilities, and international organizations transitioned into new roles. This paper will present a study of the collaboration facilitated by a global non-profit humanitarian organization between international faculty and local partners in Japan.*

Keywords: *Japan, natural disaster, international collaboration, capacity building*

INTRODUCTION

When natural events such as earthquakes, floods, and volcanoes overwhelm the capacity of communities to respond, natural disasters are the result. Natural disasters can result in a massive loss of lives and property for those involved, and it is forecasted that these losses will continue to rise as global population increases and people are forced to move into higher risk regions (Bourney, 2005; Cutter & Emrich, 2005).

International collaboration around natural disaster mitigation and recovery is typically associated with disasters in developing regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian sub-continent, and Southeast Asia. Comparatively, developed countries generally have policies, strategies, programs, and resources in place for disaster mitigation and response. Yet they too can be overwhelmed by natural hazards when the devastation is sufficiently extreme. In these situations, even the best-prepared countries can benefit from international collaboration, especially in the acute and early capacity-building stages of disaster recovery. Such was the case for the Japan's Triple Disaster of 2011.

The goal of this paper is to draw attention to the role that international collaboration can play in the management of massive disaster in developed countries. As a case in point,

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it will focus on collaborations facilitated by International Medical Corps between its partners in Japan and international disaster specialists both in the early emergency response phase and the following stage of capacity building efforts. The article will first sketch the events and severity of Japan's Triple Disaster along with the relevant aspects of Japan's disaster management infrastructure. This will be followed with a description of International Medical Corps, a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening health care capacity after disaster, the international guidelines it follows, and the research base for the psychosocial programs that were introduced in the Japanese context. The next section will describe the collaboration that resulted in the conference, and this will be followed by reflections on the role that social work can play on international and trans-disciplinary teams within the context of international disaster response.

METHODOLOGY

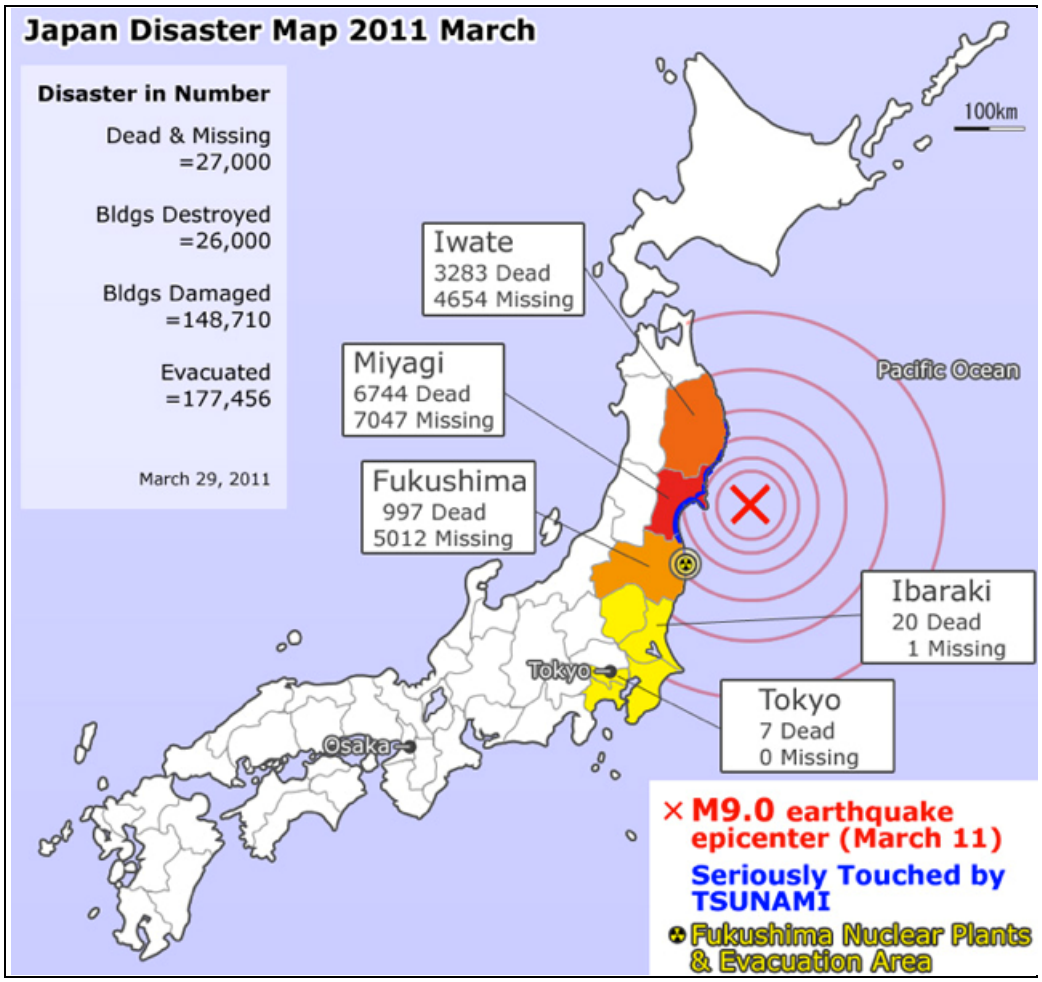
Since the purpose of this article is to describe the collaboration between local partners and international faculty as facilitated by an international organization in the context of Japan's Triple Disaster, a case study approach was adopted. Case studies are particularly good for providing "holistic and context sensitive" analyses (Patton, 2002, p 447). The construction of a case study generally involves three steps: 1) The collection of case data; 2) the organization of the data into a case record; and 3) the development of the case record into a narrative (Patton, 2002).

Data was collected from sources including publicly available reports and documents, presentation materials, and the observations and reflections of the authors, all of whom participated in the organization and presentation of the "Healing a Community: What can we do for our children?" conference held in Sendai, Japan and hosted by Tohoku University School of Education's Department of Clinical Psychology. The collected data was then organized into the following narrative describing the evolution of the collaboration.

JAPAN'S TRIPLE DISASTER

On March 11, 2011, a Magnitude 9 earthquake, the largest in the history of Japan, occurred 130 km off the coast of the main island of Honshu (Asian Disaster Reduction Center, 2011). Within ten minutes, a wall of water swelled up, in some places as high as a ten-story building, and slammed into the coast, wiping away bridges, homes, and even entire communities that traced their history back hundreds of years (Earthquake Research Institute, University of Tokyo, 2001; cited in Norris, 2011). News sources estimated that over 400,000 people were left homeless with approximately 25,000 dead, injured, or missing (Central Broadcasting System/Associated Press, 2011). In contrast, the Kobe earthquake of 1995 resulted in approximately 6500 deaths.

Figure 1. **Map of the Disaster Area as of March 29th, 2011** (From http://file.jishin.yamatoblog.net/map_damage.jpg)



Despite being one of the most prepared nations for massive natural disaster, difficulties were compounded by the meltdown of at least three of the six reactors of the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear power station, creating a nuclear emergency on par with that of Chernobyl. Plumes of radioactive material drifted over large portions of Japan, with radioactive cesium recorded as far north as Japan's northern island of Hokkaido and increased radioactive readings at least as far south as Tokyo. Another 170,000 people were forced to evacuate from a 12-mile radius due to the uncontrolled radiation releases (Harlan & Mufson, 2011; Physicians for Social Responsibility, n.d.). One government estimate put the total cost of rebuilding at over 300 billion USD, making it the most expensive natural disaster of all time (Zhang, 2011). In the words of Prime Minister Naoto Kan, "In the 65 years after the end of World War II, this is the toughest and most difficult crisis for Japan" (CNN Wire Staff, 2011).

Japan requested aid from Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and the United States. By the following week, 128 countries and 33 international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) had offered support (Nebehay, 2011). International Medical Corps, a global leader in disaster response, was one of the earliest responders to the call for help, beginning the first stages of coordination with the Japanese government, Japanese non-profit organizations, and local communities within 48 hours (International Medical Corps, 2011b). In the immediacy of the first few weeks, International Medical Corps worked along with local partners PeaceBoat, Second Harvest, Bond & Justice, Kamaishi Emergency Response Center, and Kesennuma Emergency Response Center to deliver food, medical supplies, and communications equipment to areas affected by the disasters.

A needs assessment concluded that one of the best ways International Medical Corps could collaborate was to provide support and training for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. Partnering at the request of the Japanese government with the Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL), International Medical Corps thus started the first stage of the Train the Trainers model for Psychological First Aid and facilitated collaborations between international faculty and local partners, culminating in a conference on mental health and psychosocial support for children after the disaster hosted by The Graduate School of Education of Tohoku University in Sendai.

JAPAN'S MODEL FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Japan is an epicenter for natural disasters. Located on multiple active faults, having multiple active volcanoes, experiencing typhoons every summer, and being prone to flooding, it is a country that couldn't survive without disaster mitigation and response planning and infrastructure in place. Due to its careful planning, it is considered a model for disaster preparedness (Suganuma, 2006).

At the top of Japan's disaster management infrastructure is the Central Disaster Management Council (CDMC), established by the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act of 1961 to "ensur[e] comprehensiveness of disaster management and to discuss matters of importance with regard to disaster management" (Government of Japan, 2005; as cited in Pacific Disaster Center, 2006). The CDMC is the major policy engine for disaster management in Japan and is comprised of the Prime Minister, the entire Cabinet, local leaders, and experts in the field (Government of Japan, 2005). It is responsible for designing and implementing national risk management strategies regarding issues of safety, mitigation, and risk reduction (Government of Japan, 2005).

Through the CDMC, the government has engaged in a variety of knowledge building, information dissemination, and capacity building investments (Pacific Disaster Center, 2006). Risk assessments have been performed throughout the country involving public, private, and academic partners. This has resulted in an early warning and monitoring system covering the country. Information products geared for educating a variety of fields and education settings are also in place. This is rounded out by local and national public and private partnerships that mitigate risk through insurance programs, grants, and special loans.

Thus, for Japan, risk management has been integral to its planning and development processes; yet, there is the issue of *what* to plan for. Resources are always limited and must be utilized to balance a complexity of needs. The probability of risk and the cost of mitigating it must be balanced against other needs for a society. In the end, the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown overwhelmed the preparations that Japan had spent decades putting in place. Many structures, including the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear complex, were prepared for only a Magnitude 8 earthquake; it was inconceivable that a Magnitude 9 earthquake would occur. Levees and flood barriers were not designed withstand a tsunami that reached 40 meters tall and traveled nearly ten kilometers inland. While Japan had the infrastructure to deal with multiple disasters, it was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the Triple Disaster. Thus, the government of Japan reached out to the embassies of Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and the United States for assistance.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS: BACKGROUND AND INVOLVEMENT IN JAPAN

As a result of the request for assistance made to the United States embassy, International Medical Corps, a global humanitarian non-profit organization dedicated to providing health care and training in areas affected by emergency situations, sent a disaster team to Japan within 48 hours to meet with government officials and begin assessing hospitals, government offices and identifying potential partners (Terahata, 2011).

While some health care non-profit organizations build their mission around an approach of relief of immediate needs, International Medical Corps focuses on building local capacity in a "Relief to Self-Reliance" framework (International Medical Corps, 2011a). That is, instead of merely providing aid in emergency situations, International Medical Corps focuses upon building or rebuilding the health care structures of devastated areas. Over the last 25 years, International Medical Corps has responded to many of the greatest humanitarian disasters, including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the famine in Somalia, the genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq, the Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti and most recently conflict in Libya and the drought in East Africa. Since its founding in 1984, International Medical Corps has delivered more than $1.1 billion in program services and training to tens of millions of people in more than 65 countries on four continents (International Medical Corps, 2011a).

International Medical Corps participates in a wide range of global collaborations. In 2011, it was a co-chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Global Health Cluster and is a part of the Policy and Strategy Team of the World Health Organization. It participated in the Global Humanitarian Platform, which brings together NGOs, the United Nations, and Red Cross and Red Crescent. It is also active in a wide-range of NGO coalitions and networks, including InterAction, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, and the Humanitarian Caucus of the Global Health Council.

In light of its goal of building health care capacity with the active involvement of its partners, International Medical Corps first collaborated with the government of Japan on how to interface with local partners. International Medical Corps was paired with Tokyo English Lifeline, a phone line counseling service that provides services to foreigner communities. With its partner, International Medical Corps then worked to build further relationships with other agencies, both in Tokyo and within the affected area, while also performing a needs assessment to identify potential areas for collaboration that matched both International Medical Corps' expertise and the needs of the local communities.

In the first few days, it became clear that there were a variety of hurdles to be overcome, including difficulty in reaching the affected area due to fuel shortages and damage to transportation infrastructure, difficulties in obtaining accurate information, and lack of communication equipment between evacuation centers and Prefectural offices (Terahata, 2011). Thus, in the first days, it was difficult to reach the affected area. As the days wore on, International Medical Corps prioritized work with local agencies and non-profits engaging in relief efforts (Terahata, 2011). The International Medical Corps team met with Miyagi Prefecture officials, administrators at local hospitals, evacuation centers, city council members, search and rescue teams, the prefectural health response coordinator, and attended Japan Platform and JANIC meetings (Terahata, 2011).

This first phase of intervention focused on relief efforts. International Medical Corps worked to improve data and communication infrastructure by providing prefectural offices, regional coordination centers, and evacuation centers with computers and data cards (Terahata, 2011). Working with local partners, the disaster team also provided and dispersed medical supplies and hot meals to over 20,000 people living in five evacuation centers (Terahata, 2011). Japanese NGOs were also supplied with rental cars and computers to build their capacity to provide health services in the affected area (Terahata, 2011).

As the needs assessment reached completion, International Medical Corps then began to move its focus to capacity building. Adhering to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Guidelines for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (IASC, 2007), International Medical Corps engaged with its partners to build capacity for mental health support. These included, at the request of the Japanese government, partnering with the Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL) to start the cascade of Training the Trainers for Psychological First Aid (PFA), and a sensitization to psychosocial support needs workshop hosted by Tohoku University's Graduate School of Education in Sendai, Japan.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is the most accepted approach widely used to facilitate psychological healing of the survivors of any disaster or critical event. In international guidelines, the provision of PFA is recommended for survivors as well as for the disaster intervention workers. "Psychological First Aid is an evidence-informed modular approach for assisting children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism. Psychological First Aid is designed to reduce the

initial distress caused by traumatic events, and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning" (National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD, September, 2005). There is a range of standards for which persons should practice psychological first aid, but the essential principle is that the person should be trained in Psychological First Aid and be supervised by a mental health professional. Psychological First Aid is a culturally competent approach and is applicable across populations of different age groups. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) guidelines recommend making available psychological support for survivors of extreme stressors (Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 2007). The guidelines also outline the basic features of PFA. Psychological First Aid identifies key techniques for helping survivors of mass trauma including: 1) protecting them from further harm; 2) providing opportunities for survivors to talk; 3) listening carefully, patiently, and conveying genuine compassion; 4) identifying and providing basic needs; 5) encouraging positive coping and participation in daily routine activities; and 6) facilitating local support mechanisms. The personnel trained in providing PFA are also encouraged to consider mental health referral in the case of higher distress or for the vulnerable sections of the surviving community.

Psychosocial support for disaster survivors is a range of work that has gained a lot of momentum as a disaster intervention in the past two decades and subsequently more importance is given to facilitate psychosocial recovery of the survivors. Psychosocial support is "any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder" (IASC, 2007). In the 2011 Sphere Handbook, psychosocial support is considered as one of the important cross cutting themes, a step forward from the previous version in which psychosocial support was considered under health sector interventions. "Some of the greatest sources of vulnerability and suffering in disasters arise from the complex emotional, social, physical and spiritual effects of disasters" (Sphere Project, 2011) that need to be supported with a structured psychosocial support program.

The Guidelines for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2007) considered four aspects as core to psychosocial support interventions, namely 1) community mobilization and support, 2) health services, 3) education, and 4) dissemination of information. Community mobilization focuses on developing community participatory processes of recovery, developing self-help among the survivors, resiliency-building activities, and culturally appropriate methods of healing practices. In contrast, approaches within the health sector emphasize integrating mental health support into the general health care system by multiple layers of training of health professionals, facilitating specialized care for the mentally ill, collaborating with local mental health resources, and reducing the harmful use of alcohol and substance use.

Regarding educational intervention, safe and supportive education should be promoted. Providing the right information at the right time is an important precondition as lack of actual information causes stress and worry for survivors. Further, giving practical and appropriate information can ensure actual use of resources as well as providing knowledge to the survivors about their future. The community based psychosocial support training manual describing psychosocial support refers to the

dynamic relationship between the psychological and social dimension of a person, where the one influences the other (International Federation Reference Centre, 2009). The psychological dimension includes the internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions. The social dimension includes relationships, family and community networks, social values and cultural practices. Psychosocial support refers to the actions that address both the psychological and social needs of individuals (Hansen, 2008). The provision of psychosocial support ensures reduction of distress, associated disability and facilitate psychosocial wellbeing. Psychosocial wellbeing is considered as a combination of three domains of human life: 1) human capital (which deals with physical and mental health and an individual's capacity to realize his own strength); 2) social ecology (social connections, networks, and relationships that promote cohesion and equilibrium in society); and 3) culture and values (societal norms and behavior connected with social expectations) (Psychosocial Working Group, 2003). Psychosocial wellbeing is largely connected with environmental, economic and physical resources that support existence and wellbeing (Psychosocial Working Group, 2003).

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES IN INDIA AND JAPAN

Psychosocial support, while being accepted as the most crucial aspect of psychological recovery for the disaster survivors across the world, equally stresses cultural adaptability in the approach. The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 was a unique disaster impacting about seven countries that lead to a major change and wider acceptance of psychosocial support activity at this region. For a long period of time, psychosocial support was meshed with the identification and treatment of patients with severe mental disorders, which was replaced with the community-oriented approach that focused on wellness rather than illness and proved that, for every survivor of disaster who are exhibiting higher stress reactions, mental health support is needed. This was a major paradigm shift from the medical model to the psychosocial model (Satapathy & Bhadra, 2009). India was one among the worst hit countries in South Asian Tsunami of 2004 and focused a great deal on the facilitation of large-scale mental health care in communities and schools by mobilizing large numbers of volunteers and workers from different government departments as well as by continuous capacity building and follow-up (World Health Organization, 2006). India, being a developing nation, was clearly in need of multiple supports for rebuilding and, as is generally the case, a huge international response arrived that mainly prioritized the physical needs. Mental health and psychosocial support was still not a focus outside of a few international organizations. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Bangalore (NIMHANS), being the premier institute and nodal center for psychosocial support, took a major initiative of facilitating technical support for psychosocial work with national, international and government organizations (Sekar, 2006). As a basic strategy of work for psychosocial support, local NGOs and government departments were engaged through the involvement of a large number of community level workers (e.g. teachers, child care personnel, health workers, community leaders, representatives of local self-government, student volunteers, volunteers from different forum, self help group members, members of religious institutions). It was this active interest and engagement of the survivors in the program that lead to an agenda for long-term support. During this phase it was also

realized by the Indian Government that lack of accepted Indian Guidelines hampered the flow of services and desired outcome that called for immediate government action for national level guidelines on mental health services and psychosocial support for disaster response (Government of India, December, 2009). Indian coastal communities and administrative systems were grossly unaware of the tsunami and an absolute lack of a warning system caused a major damage and vulnerability even after the disaster. The long-term psychosocial support program supported by various funding sources showed a major change in the condition and created awareness about wellbeing, practicing safety measures, and developing community strength to deal with adversity.

Japan, one of the countries most prepared for disaster, has a long history of withstanding multiple disasters and has developed a strong system of governance to deal with the effects of disaster. Japan is well equipped with a tsunami-warning infrastructure along with earthquake and flood safety measures, and its core knowledge and skill have progressed far ahead of many Asian countries in its technology and its implementation. The government of Japan, as well as local professionals, has dealt with a number of disasters events very effectively. It is considered a model for dealing with adversity by developing resiliency within its communities. Therefore, community engagement in disaster safety measures and disaster preparedness is a practiced approach in Japan.

However, the triple disaster that stuck northern Japan was much more than what its communities were prepared for. In these overwhelming events, psychosocial support for the community becomes a critical need as the disasters shook the confidence of the communities. Usually, the physical aspect of disaster preparedness ensures a major psychological strength that encourages the survivors to deal with the adversities. The Triple Disaster exposed survivors to conditions they were unable to cope with, namely the traumatic experience and the need for external support (Levin, 2011). The experience of International Medical Corps in responding to tsunami survivors worldwide has shown that the community-based mental health care and support for the disaster survivors is not a widely practiced approach; hence the clinical infrastructure wouldn't be sufficient to deal with the emotional needs of the survivors. Further, for all people, emotional needs can be immense in cases of traumatic experiences, grief, or loss, irrespective of the advancement of the society in socioeconomic or technological spheres. Therefore, the applicability and essence of community-based psychosocial support to reach out to all the survivors to facilitate mental health care should have some similarity to the 2004 Indian tsunami experience.

A comparison between India and Japan regarding post-tsunami psychosocial support would suggest that the Indian model of psychosocial support that worked at individual, family, and community level through various interventions would also be effective in Japan, as many cultural factors are similar, such as strong community and family relationships, living with extended family networks, family decision-making processes and cohesive living. At the individual level, the sense of responsibility to family members is very high and gender roles are more defined; thus, it is likely there are similar pattern of stress among the survivors in both countries. Hence, a model of psychosocial support that encourages rebuilding the eroded support system, reducing stress reactions,

encouraging positive coping, restoring normalcy, and developing sustainable community-based mental health care is crucial.

However, there are also cultural differences that must be considered. First, India is an amalgam of ethnicities and religious orientations with two official languages and multiple regional languages. Japan, on the other hand, is homogeneous with 98.5% of the population being ethnic Japanese. There is of course regional distinction and pride in Japan, but this has resulted in little overt competition between groups. While this amount of social cohesion leads to accusations of over-conformity by critics, it appears to have been a factor in community resilience in the case of the Triple Disaster. Unlike many disasters, there has been no rioting, and only minor instances of looting. While there is no clear evidence of how these cultural differences would affect the implementation of a Psychological First Aid or Psychosocial Support program, it is important that IASC guidelines for cultural respect and inclusion of local organizations and groups be kept in the forefront.

Another key distinction between the cases of India and Japan is the level of health care infrastructure between the two countries. Japan in relation to India has a much more developed health care system. In the 2000 ranking by the World Health Organization (2000), Japan ranked in the top ten while India was ranked much lower on the scale. Thus, while the dissemination innovations spearheaded by NIMHANS were fitting for the Indian context, it is likely that adjustments would need to be made based on the differing context of Japan's public health system.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

International Medical Corps' needs assessment identified need in the area of building capacity for managing psychological stresses resulting from the Triple Disaster. As one of the key factors in successful implementation of mental health and psychosocial support programs is that the programs be shaped by the needs of the community, it was incumbent upon International Medical Corps to work with its local partners during this phase. Key facets of this stage involved starting the "cascade" of the Training of the Trainers model for Psychological First Aid and organizing a sensitization workshop for psychosocial support for teachers, community and school mental health practitioners, and graduate students offering volunteer support to survivors and relief workers.

Cascading Training of Trainers

Psychological First Aid is an evidence-based practice that is designed for immediate implementation after a disaster. It is designed in such a way that training is efficient and practical, allowing it to be spread quickly and widely. It uses a Training of Trainers (TOT) model, ideally creating a cascade that results in implementation on a meaningful scale. Once the training is completed, participants have an understanding of how to deliver PFA, how to engage with survivors, how to address safety and comfort, stabilization, gathering information from survivors, providing practical assistance,

utilizing social supports, coping, and self-care to prevent secondary trauma for the care providers (Brymer, et al, 2006).

An International Medical Corps advisor in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) was sent to Japan to train the Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL) counselors in PFA and to guide the first phase of the intervention. Once the counselors at TELL had completed the training, they were then able to offer appropriate support to their client base and TELL was able to begin training others in the affected communities. While the preliminary training occurred in Tokyo, the next trainings were more directly focused on care providers in the disaster area. As TELL gained confidence with the material and the training, responsibility shifted to their organization to carry on the Training of Trainers model.

TELL integrated IASC guidelines into their training curriculum through the PFA trainings. When TELL took over the training, they quickly began training a wide range of volunteers, phone counselors, company employees, teachers, and parents. International Medical Corps supported these capacity efforts by funding nine workshops for 150 employees on coping strategies and eight workshops for parents and teachers focused on creating supportive environments for children after disaster (Terahata, 2011).

Sensitization to Psychosocial Support Conference

While Psychological First Aid is appropriate for immediate responses to psychological and emotional needs after a disaster, longer-term psychosocial needs become evident after the initial stages of disaster. Thus, at the request of the Graduate School of Education of Tohoku University, International Medical Corps and Tokyo English Lifeline worked in collaboration to hold a two-day conference geared for sensitizing school teachers, community-level mental health workers, social workers, clinical psychology graduate students, academics, and other community members on what might be expected in terms of helping children in the middle term of the next few months and over the long term of the next few years. The team that organized and presented the conference consisted of mental health practitioners and faculty from India, the United States, and Japan who all have expertise and experience in interventions for managing the psychosocial needs of adults and children who have faced traumatic experiences. While much of the material covered was perhaps not new to this specific audience, in the words of one of the conference organizers, the workshop, “gave us hope.” That is, it helped reassure them in their own abilities and knowledge base in dealing with overwhelming amount of work to be done, and showed them that they are not alone in dealing with the trials and tribulations of natural disasters.

The first day of the workshop provided a basic overview of range of considerations that arise after a disaster, focusing specifically on the psychosocial needs of survivors. Sessions focused on outlining lessons learned from previous disasters including what to expect in terms of the epidemiology of trauma, the stages of grief, life skills for disaster, an introduction to Psychological First Aid and psychosocial support, and delineation between clinical-level mental health care versus psychosocial support techniques (Bhadra & Kasi, 2011; Bharath, 2011; Dyer, 2011).

The second day of the workshop reinforced and expanded many of the ideas presented on the first day. The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (which defines standards for humanitarian response and rights of survivors) and IASC guidelines for mental health and psychosocial support were presented, highlighting that the guidelines were not treatment manuals, but a baseline from which to start (IASC, 2007; Sphere Project, 2011). Further sessions focused on children's stages and expression of grief, creating classroom environments that helping children heal from trauma as opposed to punishing them for acting out, and differentiating between clinically significant posttraumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and stress as a "normal reaction to abnormal circumstances" (Bhadra, 2011; Bharath, 2011; Des Marais, 2011; Dyer, 2011, Kasi, 2011). The final afternoon had four tracks. One track provided an experiential presentation for working with children by using art and play to help them express and process their emotion (Bhadra, 2011). Another track focused on life skills for managing stress from disaster (Bharath, 2011). A third track provided a more in-depth exposure to PFA (Takahashi, 2011a, 2011b).

The final track, which focused on policy and planning, was based upon the experiences of the NIMHANS in managing psychosocial care in the early (days to weeks), middle (months), and long terms (years) of the response (Dyer, 2011; Kasi, 2011; Kasi, Bhadra, & Dyer, 2007; Kasi, Dyer, & Bhadra, 2011). It identified four stages of psychosocial care, moving from psychological first aid for the acute stages of the disaster, to psychosocial support and psychosocial care for managing longer terms symptoms of trauma, and finally the stage of psychosocial rehabilitation for those experiences the more extreme cases of PTSD. This track provided policy makers with a way to look forward and begin to prepare for the next stages of intervention.

Unlike the Psychological First Aid Training, the conference was not designed as a Train the Trainers model. Its purpose was to provide a frame and context for anticipating what issues are likely to arise in the middle and long terms and to examine possible options for addressing those mental health and psychosocial needs. Especially important in terms of looking forward was the future policy considerations that were presented in track four. While the presenters' previous experience in disaster management in India and China were designed to be helpful for the participants, there are a wide range of unknowns in any major catastrophe as well as gaps in knowledge regarding individual and community resilience in the face of disaster, managing stress and trauma, and cultural differences in dealing with psychosocial stress.

Figure 2. **Sensitization to Psychosocial Support Sessions** (This figure illustrates the sessions and tracks of the workshop.)

	Day 1		**Day 2**			
	Time	**Plenary sessions**	**Plenary sessions**			
Morning	11.00-11.10	Welcome address	11.00-11.30	To Remember or to Forget		
	11.10- 1.45	Introduction to IMC and Japan work NIMHANS at a Glance Introduction of TELL	11.30-12.15	Sphere and IASC guidelines on MHPSS in emergency settings		
	11.45-2.15	A Decade of Disasters: Lesson from Indian and US Experiences	12.15-12.40	Children, Adolescents, and Traumatic Events: Managing Behaviors in the Classroom		
	12.15- 1.00	Normalization of Reactions	12.40- 01.00	PTSD or Not?		
	Time	**Plenary sessions**	**Workshops (02.00-05.00)**			
Afternoon	02.00-2.45	Stages of Grief and Loss	**Track 1**	**Track 2**	**Track 3**	**Track 4**
	02.45-3.30	Psychosocial support in Disaster Management (Principles)	PFA for Disaster Care	Life Skills Education	Working with Children	Policies and programs
	03.40-4.30	Psychosocial support in Disaster Management				
	04.30-5.15	Introduction to PFA				
	05.15- 6.00	Introduction to Life Skills Education	05.10-05.40	Presentation by each group		
			05.40-05.50	Evaluation		
			05.50-06.00	Concluding remarks and thanks		

SOCIAL WORK, DISASTER INTERVENTION, AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

The definition of the social work profession given in the final document adopted at the general assemblies of IASSW and IFSW in Adelaide, Australia in 2004 states the imperative of social workers to aid the survivors of disaster:

> The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles

> of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (Sewpaul and Jones, 2005, p. 218).

In a disaster where death, destruction, and damage are common, human life is affected severely in many dimensions. The material needs of food, clothing, housing, livelihood and medical care are common, but there are a number of non-material needs, which must also be recognized to ensure the well-being of the survivors. Disaster imposes problems not only for the survivors but also for government organizations, professionals, and others. Therefore, disaster intervention work is a major problem solving effort to re-establish social support and human relationships to empower people to achieve a sense of well-being, necessitating trans-disciplinary collaboration. The core skills of social work are needed on these inter-professional teams, along with those of psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, psychologists, and other disaster workers to support the psychosocial well-being of the disaster survivors in different phases of the disaster, i.e. rescue, relief, rehabilitation and rebuilding (Bhadra, 2010). Social workers are particularly well-prepared for the rehabilitation phase, which is usually from three months until 1 to 2 years post-disaster. During this phase, there is a strong need for contextualized culturally appropriate materials, capacity building for psychosocial support/ psychological first aid (requiring clinically trained social workers and other master trainers), specialized program for the vulnerable (women, children, disabled, families with diseased member, etc), support for translation of the knowledge of capacity building to actual skills, stress management for the disaster intervention workers, and action research and case studies to develop more focused programs. In the case of the "Healing a Community" conference, the objective was towards enhancing the confidence of the participants to respond to the rehabilitation needs more effectively and efficiently.

JAPAN AFTER THE TRIPLE DISASTER

As the case of Japan's Triple Disaster shows, even the most highly developed and well-prepared nations can be overwhelmed by cataclysmic events. In this case, an earthquake began a cascade of events that culminated in one of the worst nuclear disasters in history and the displacement of over 500,000 people. One year after the Triple Disaster, Japan is on the road to recovery – everyone has been moved out of shelters, towns are being rebuilt, resettlement projects are being formulated, and even more advanced disaster preparations are being put in place. However, it is a long road, and without key international collaboration in the early stages, it is hard to imagine that Japan would be even this far along.

Whether termed "wicked problems", "cascades of failure", or "complex emergencies", when the resilience of social and ecological systems is overwhelmed by multiple stressors, interventions must be applied on multiple levels. While this paper highlights the development of one such set of collaborations that was geared specifically for reinforcing and increasing psychosocial support in the devastated Tohoku region, it must be stressed that it occurred within a context of many other interventions also being put in place. Volunteers, health and mental health practitioners, logistic specialists, government officials, and others from multiple nations, domestic and international non-

profit organizations, businesses, and civil society groups have all worked together for a common goal of the restoration of the Tohoku region.

Looking at the broader context of increased globalization, continued population growth, depletion of non-renewable resources, losses in biodiversity, and predicted increases in natural disaster due to climate change, international and inter-professional collaboration are key to managing systems so that all people can flourish. No one country or profession possesses the resources, expertise, or wisdom to address these systemic issues on their own; the path to solutions lies in cooperative exchanges like those presented here. At the same time, it is important that these exchanges serve to reinforce local residents and support their decision-making capabilities. As is the case in Japan's Triple Disaster, those affected by the events should be the final arbiters of the evolution of these collaborations.

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Development Innovations through Entrepreneurial Microfinance and the Attempt to Achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in Bangladesh

Saleh Ahmed

Abstract: *As one of the countries in the Global South, Bangladesh has experienced numerous development challenges since its liberation in 1971. Bangladesh has showcased how to fight against poverty and to initiate meaningful change and development in human lives. Nobel Prize (2006) winner Grameen Bank is one of the popular development innovations in the country. Since the beginning of this Bank in the early 1970s, microfinance and entrepreneurship development with small amounts of money have proliferated to nearly every corner of the globe with the paramount goal of alleviating global poverty and ensuring human development. Like all other new social science techniques, the societal revolution brought about by microfinance expansion has left substantial room for refinement and further support by empirical evidence. This article critically evaluates a non-governmental initiative to empower extremely poor women through entrepreneurial microfinance, and examines the socioeconomic impacts in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs). This article covers both primary and secondary information. The aim is to demonstrate how countries of the Global South can use carefully designed microfinance projects to address major development challenges and meaningfully contribute to creating a more equal, humane society.*

Keywords: *Bangladesh, extremely poor women, microfinance, SMEs, UNMDGs*

BACKGROUND

In the recent generations we have experienced enormous advances and development among the human societies, but still a large portion of world population is living in and struggling with poverty. With transitional economies and weak political institutions, many countries in Global South are suffering from poverty, inequality and exclusion. In this context, microfinance has appeared as one of the effective development instruments to address these societal challenges. At the beginning of 1970s, microfinance meant giving a small amount of credit money to the poor people, but now the impact it produces goes beyond just business loans at hand. Poor people use the financial resources for various purposes ranging from their daily living to expenses like entrepreneurship development or the associated costs for education or health. Presently, in most of the cases, micro-financial services include services like loans, savings facilities, insurance, transfer payments, and even micro-pensions or micro-insurance. Evidence from the millions of microfinance beneficiaries around the world shows that access to financial services helps poor people to increase their household incomes, build their assets, develop social networks and reduce their vulnerability to different forms of manmade or natural crises. Microfinance has also had positive impacts on better nutrition intake and

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improved health outcomes, such as higher immunization rates. Several experiences demonstrate that access to microfinance helps people to plan for their future and also acts as an incentive to send their children to schools. Microfinance has positive impacts on confidence building and helps women to confront gender inequalities (CGAP, 2002).

Confronting many of the human development challenges in the Global South, 189 world leaders signed the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, popularly known as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG). UNMDG aim was a world free of hunger, poverty and disease, and 'Human Dignity for all' (Pimple, 2009). The Millennium Goals address multiple dimensions of poverty, including income poverty, hunger, and disease; lack of education, infrastructure and shelter; and gender exclusion and environmental degradation. These goals are particularly important in the Global South, where the countries and societies are struggling with different forms of human suffering. UNMDGs in a way initiate change in human lives so that they can prosper and live with dignity. Microfinance can play a critical role in framing the solution in this context. It can enhance access to capital and at the same time can help to develop entrepreneurial capacity, and this enhanced capacity can contribute to achieve the millennium development goals. The initial timeline for these goals are 2015, when the world leaders would like to review how their development plans and goals have positively impacted the world population. The government of Bangladesh has signed onto these goals. In recent years, the Bangladeshi Government's Annual Development Plans (ADPs) are aligned with the stated development targets of UNMDGs.

In countries like Bangladesh, where a majority of the population are poor, it is very difficult for the traditional financial institutions to ensure loans for most loan applicants. For the poor it is most desirable if they can get collateral-free working capital loans to initiate their small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). In low-income developing countries, entrepreneurship and SMEs have been recognized as important factors that contribute to the local employment creations and economic development. SMEs and entrepreneurial microfinance are closely intertwined. Without entrepreneurial microfinance it is difficult for the poor to initiate SMEs, and when they have both, the entrepreneurial microfinance and SMEs, they can work to increase their income and employability, accumulate assets, and contribute to their socioeconomic inclusion. All these factors together not only contribute to the lives of the beneficiaries, but also create multiplier impacts on the community. It creates local business and generates local consumer demand. In a typical rural community, SMEs also contribute to developing social relations or networks, civic engagement, community solidarity, and social capital (Ssewamala, Lombe, & Curley, 2006). Promotion of SMEs also work function as the 'safety net' for unemployed people, particularly in the societies where unemployment insurance is not available (Tokman, 1996).

In the low-income developing countries during droughts, grain stock may be depleted by ongoing consumption to the extent that little is left over for the next planting cycle, effectively cutting off the possibility of future consumption (McKenzie & Woodruff, 2006). This creates food security problems and can contribute to generate a regional poverty trap, and in turn this poverty trap creates a continual dependence on external injections of resources such as food aid without the potential for a community to reach

endogenously stable consumption/production equilibrium (Adams & Raymond, 2008; McKenzie & Woodruff, 2006). Therefore, it could be a way to break the poverty trap by encouraging SMEs through the entrepreneurial microfinance among the poor for ensuring their productivity surplus (Varghese, 2005). This is the core argument why a country like Bangladesh needs to pursue entrepreneurial microfinance as well as SMEs.

In Bangladesh the entrepreneurial microfinance through different microfinance programs has come to occupy a central place in poverty-oriented strategies. It has a number of features in common. It mostly aims to serve poor rural women; lend small amounts of money to individuals as members of groups, and rely on group liability for ensuring loan repayment. This can also subsidize the administrative costs rather than interest rates, and loans are repaid generally in weekly installments. Apart from these, poor credit recipients also receive different types of capacity and skill development trainings (Kabeer, 2001).

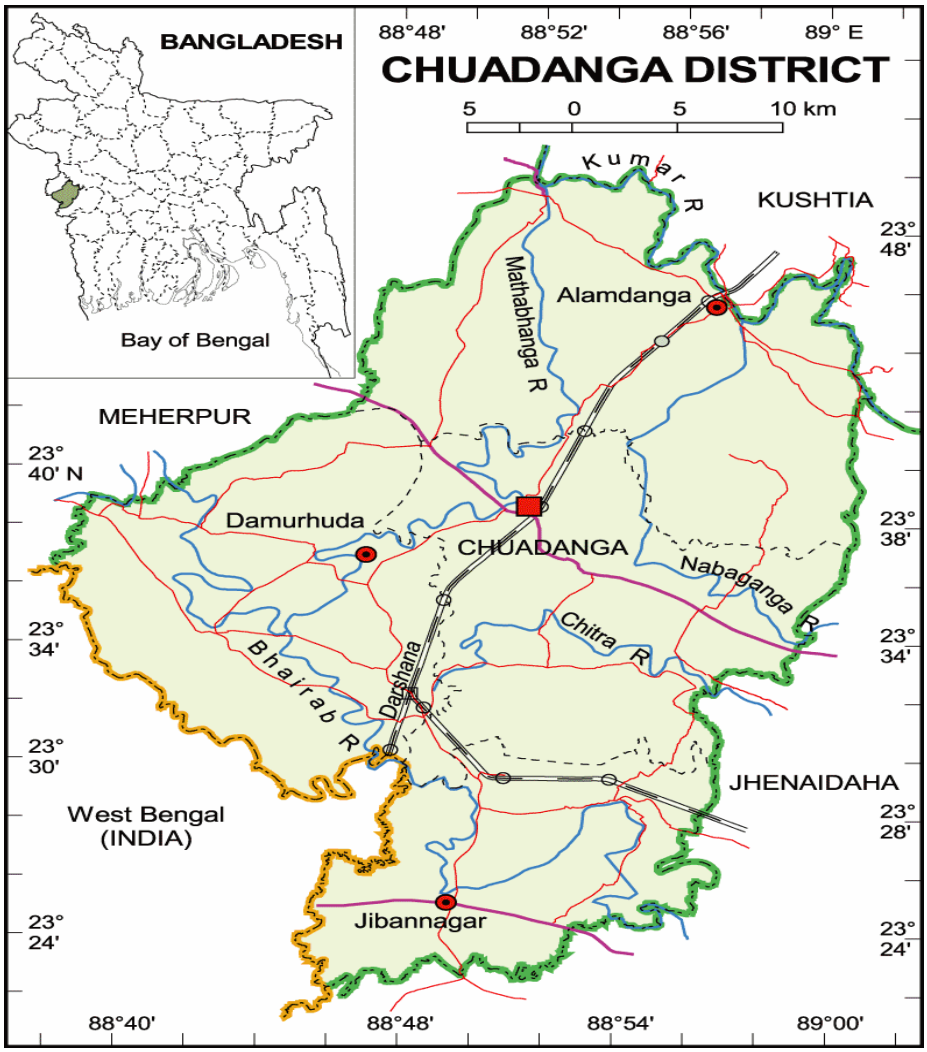
During the last two decades, hundreds of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) have emerged in Bangladesh with the motivations to support poor rural women by providing collateral free small loans. These NGOs also provide and organize various social services like social mobilization, health care, literacy and education, sanitation, water supply, agriculture, etc. Grameen Bank and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) are two of the most successful and the largest NGOs in Bangladesh that have created opportunities for the poor women to become small and medium entrepreneurs. In most of the cases SMEs made positive impacts on the women's socioeconomic lives. However, the mechanism is also not out of criticism. It is not very uncommon that microfinance generates dependency on credit for poor women, and so they are trapped on the credit cycle, creating a new form of dependency and poverty.

This paper highlights a case study from Southwest Bangladesh, where poverty is pervasive, and women are particularly in disadvantaged situations. The critical research question is to investigate how entrepreneurial microfinance is contributing to achieve the targets of UNMDGs locally, and what are the mechanisms of this microfinance program.

STUDY AREA

The regional focus of this paper is Chuadanga district, which is in the Southwest part of Bangladesh (see Figure 1). District is the smaller local administrative unit of central government. Bangladesh is divided in 64 districts. Chuadanga has an area of 1157.42 sq km (Banglapedia, 2012).

Figure 1: Chuadanga District



Source: Banglapedia (2012)

One of the major spatial features of this district is that it has an international political border with India, which actually shapes the patterns and features of local economy and economic pattern, particularly for poor women, who are heavily dependent on cross-border smuggling (Nawaz, 2007). There are not much local employment opportunities for the poor women. Education is low among them and very few government services are available to them, so it is not surprising that they are involved with small-scale cross-border smuggling. Usually they smuggle women cloths or salts. They usually have a hard time smuggling when the border security is strict, and without smuggling many have no way of earning income. They get entrapped with hunger and utmost poverty. These poor women usually have a very precarious socioeconomic life, which makes them very

vulnerable to any forms of uncertainties. To some extent this region also suffers from a spatial poverty trap due to its remoteness, isolation and geographic positions. The major portions of the population are Muslims and partly Hindus. But poverty is relatively severe among the Hindu minorities. Most of the village people are dependent on farms, however, 37% of them are landless or the marginal farmers. They have very limited access to modern agriculture technologies.

These districts or regions have multiple development barriers, such as local, regional, social, economic or even structural. Government officials believe that they might not be able to achieve regional development targets due to the region's backwardness. In this context, it is interesting to see how the region is behaving with the presence of entrepreneurial microfinance. These two contrasting scenarios therefore contribute to make this region a worthwhile study area for this type of research.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Like many other low-income countries in the global South, Bangladesh also faces challenges to provide sufficient financial and institutional supports to its poor citizens. Therefore NGO initiatives emerged as a response to this development gap. NGO initiatives became visible at the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, when the country was severely devastated during its' liberation war. Reconstruction and humanitarian efforts were the initial agenda for the NGOs. However, at that time there were almost no national NGOs. Most of the visible NGOs were international humanitarian NGOs. Grameen Bank or BRAC formed by the early 1970s with the same agenda as international humanitarian agencies. Slowly national NGOs became involved with different forms of development works. But the contemporary criticisms highlights that NGOs are mostly interested to work with the moderate poor, who have least collateral or who have some forms of collateral to pay back the loan. The question arises then who and how will work for and with the extremely poor people, who have no forms of collateral. In places like in Chuadanga a major share of poor people are extremely poor, and usually they don't get any access to traditional NGOs' services. Here the definitions of moderate and extreme poor follow the international standards: moderate are those who earn more than 2 USD in a day and extreme are those who earn less than 2 USD a day respectively. However, local people distinguish categories of poor people by their food security status: those who can eat twice a day are moderately poor and those who cannot afford even that are extremely poor (Dietzel, 2006).

Jagorani Chakra Foundation (JCF) is one of the very few national NGOs in Southwest Bangladesh, which works with the poorest segment of society, extremely poor women. Project funding comes from a non-profit German organization "NETZ e.V.-Partnershaft fuer Entwicklung u. Gerechtigkeit" (in Eng.: NETZ Partnership for Development and Justice). This German organization has been working in Bangladesh with several local NGOs since 1989. Their working philosophy is not to prescribe solutions to the people to get away from the poverty, but instead to support and encourage the initiatives of the underprivileged and their true will for meaningful and lasting change.

The name of the project is 'Extreme Poor Women's Development Project' (EPWDP), and it involves different types of capacity building trainings with different objectives and contents. The ultimate goal is to increase the entrepreneurial capacity of extremely poor women and to empower them socially, economically and politically. As a whole the projects goals are very much similar to the targets of UNMDG.

The project itself was divided into two phases: First phase (From 2002 to 2006) – aimed to help the 3,300 poor women, who are particularly extremely poor. However, in most of these cases, female-headed households without any other income earner, poor, disabled and the poor from ethnic minorities were included in the target groups. Apart from developing entrepreneurial capacities, the goal was also to improve their living condition by developing strong and self-sustaining Community Based Organizations (CBO). In the local understanding, CBO are the building structures, which are expected to be the center for all women's social & entrepreneurial knowledge-sharing platforms. Second phase was the consolidation phase (3 years from 2006 to 2009) – inclusion of at least 1,650 additional extremely poor women in total of 4,950 women in the established 33 CBO, and sustained with the process of institutional as well as individual level capacity building, so that even after the phase out, they women can sustain with their CBO and can share their knowledge on different aspects of their lives and challenges.

This project involved different components such as a) normal credits, b) flexible credits, c) sanitation credits, d) different types of capacity building programs, and e) risks fund. Brief discussions on these types of products are given below:

a. Normal credits are those credit amounts that were distributed among the women for initiating different forms of entrepreneurial activities. JCF used to charge 10% interest rate on the overall distributed capital money. According to JCF's, 4% interest rate is used for maintaining the administrative cost, such as office maintenance, and staff salary, and 5% interest rate is used for service charge and adjustment with national inflation and rest 1% was reserved by JCF as part of r 'Risk Fund'. Risk Fund is very much similar to micro-insurance concept, which is now becoming popular in different parts of the Global South.

b. Flexible Credits were new innovative credit products designed by JCF and NETZ. These products aimed for those extremely poor and vulnerable women, who didn't agree to participate with any NGO microfinance programs due to the fear of weekly repayment. Within the framework of flexible credit, women didn't get any money in their hand, rather one JCF field staff used to go with the women to the market to buy any livestock; in most of the cases, their preference was for a cow. However, they could also choose goats, if they wished. After one year of maintaining that cow (or goat), the women could sell them and earn with some profits. Then the women would pay back the capital money along with 10% interest. In most of the cases, the women can sell at least at double price. JCF provided them with relevant types of support trainings. But if in any case, there was any damage, such as the death of that animal, JCF refunded by buying another animal. The women didn't pay anything for this. JCF named this concept as 'Asset Transfer Model'.

c. 'Sanitation Credit' was interest free credit with the aim to make access to the poor to hygienic sanitary facilities. In rural localities, most of the poor households usually have unhygienic sanitary situations. In most of the cases they can't afford the hygienic toilet, and they were not aware about the health hazards of unhygienic toilets. JCF encouraged the poor beneficiary women to avail themselves of this opportunity. The beneficiary women did not need to pay any cost for installation. Participating women who took 100 Taka (70 Taka = 1 US$) as sanitation credit needed to pay the 2 Taka per week. So if anyone took 500 Taka as sanitation credit, then the beneficiary woman needed to pay (2*5 Taka) 10 Taka per week. This was actually additional money that the beneficiary women needed to pay back with her regular credit returns. Sanitation credit was interest free.

d. Capacity building programs and skill development trainings were provided by JCF to ensure increased capacity of employment and overall empowerment. The spatial selection of any specific training depended on the choices of the beneficiaries based on the needs assessment of that specific location.

e. Risk Funds are provided by JCF for use in any emergency situation, such as floods or losses in crops due to heavy monsoon rains. This was a type of micro-insurance for poor women. However, in reality, availability of this fund was not very easy. The financial sources of 'risk funds' come from the women's contribution through weekly interest and JCF contributions in emergency cases.

At the first phase of the project the approximate number of beneficiaries was 3300 extremely poor women. 33 CBO were initially developed and the spatial locations of these CBO were decided based on the patterns of clients' spatial distribution. In usual cases, 12-15 women initially formed a group, as this was a group-based initiative, which is quite similar to traditional micro-finance institutions (MFI). But on the contrary to other MFI, this project is a CBO focused initiative and usually 5-9 groups form a CBO. Major concentration of project beneficiaries were near the border region (1-4 kilometers), which actually demonstrates JCF's intention to work with and work for the extremely poor and vulnerable women and community. In the community, however, it is not possible for all women to take part with project activities or supports, as the number of extremely poor women is much higher than the institutional and financial capacities of JCF or NETZ. They actually followed a logical selection procedure for identifying the really socially and economically deprived and vulnerable women. The women who met the criteria for participation in this project were mostly those who had no cultivatable land or saleable assets and often are the sole provider of their families with a very small or irregular income. Food insecurity was a common phenomenon among the project beneficiaries.

Apart from this project, there were also some other NGOs, more particularly, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), ASA (Association for Social Advancement), Caritas, Grameen Bank, Janakallayan, Palli Unnayan Sangsstha (Rural Development Organization, in English), Pratyasha, Srijani, WAVE (Welfare Association for Village Environment), Usha and Intercooperation were active with the local people,

with the broader agenda of poverty reduction, increased employability and local economic development. However, most of them had no project particularly for extremely poor women in the specific area; rather they were focused on the moderately poor women.

The beneficiary women of JCF's project EPWDP were closely involved with the annual planning, implementation and monitoring of the entire project. Representatives from local government and local people were also aware about JCF's involvements through different organized activities. By regulations, JCF sent each month their program update and outputs to the local government representative and NETZ Country Office in Dhaka (Bangladesh) as well as NETZ Headquarter (HQ) in Germany. So Government and NETZ HQ are also informed with the progress of field activities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

This research aimed to focus on two parallel issues: (1) how entrepreneurial microfinance works in a difficult situation when the community is excessively poor and the region suffers from the spatial poverty trap, and (2) how entrepreneurial microfinance contributed to achieve the targets of UNMDG in this situation.

To address these research questions, two types of data were collected: (1) primary data, and (2) secondary data. Then each type of data was divided into two categories, such as (a) qualitative data and (b) quantitative data. The details of the data patterns are as follows:

(1) Primary Data:

a. Qualitative Data: The qualitative data were collected from the field discussion and interviews without any structured questionnaire. The inputs were enormous. The qualitative information gave an idea about several socio-cultural aspects of regional features, such as what are the reasons of regional poverty and why it matters for the women and what they would do if they get more financing.

   Several Group discussions along with discussions with single women were organized during the field research to identify the major feature of local poverty, with special emphasis on gender aspects. To identify the effectiveness of the JCF microcredit and support program in the local context, several PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisals) were also conducted among beneficiary women. In different times and in different places, informal discussions were also conducted with local people (men and women, who are not the beneficiaries of JCF Program) about their thoughts regarding local employability and economy. This information was useful in different steps of the field research and report writing. Without this acquired background information, it would be almost impossible to identify the background reasons of poverty and how JCF projects can contribute to achieve the targets of UNMDG.

b. Quantitative Data: The quantitative data were acquired from close-ended questionnaires. There were attempts to get information on various socio-

economic aspects through close-ended questionnaire. Final intention was to analyze this information to have a clear observation of the local scenarios.

(2) Secondary Data:

a. Qualitative Data: During the field research, several structured and unstructured interviews were done with concerned local experts on microfinance and rural development. These discussions helped to identify the relevant literatures and also contributed to develop research arguments and methodologies.

b. Quantitative Data: Secondary quantitative data and information were also used in this research work. For example, Jagorani Chakra along with NETZ Country Office conducted baseline surveys to identify the beneficiaries and to survey the "entire poverty scenario".

However, to conduct the questionnaire survey (collection of primary data: quantitative), the interviews were done with the beneficiary women. 5% women were taken as sample for the interview. The women were selected by following some systematic procedures, such as their level of income, their engagement with the JCF project, their location and their religious identity. In most of the cases the attempt was to avoid any forms of selection biases of the sample women. However, in some situations, few women were selected randomly, as they were identified as exceptional or interesting cases for this research.

FINDINGS

It is always a challenge for the countries like Bangladesh to achieve major national and international development targets. Entrepreneurial microfinance programs are not rare in Bangladesh. But very few researches have yet addressed how entrepreneurial microfinance has contributed to achieve the targets of UNMDG. The UNMDG comprises 8 major goals: (1) End Poverty and Hunger, (2) Universal Education, (3) Gender Equality, (4) Child Health, (5) Maternal Health, (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, (7) Environmental Sustainability, and (8) Global Partnership. Detailed discussions of how entrepreneurial microfinance can contribute to achieve these goals are given below:

MDG 1: Eradicate Poverty and Hunger

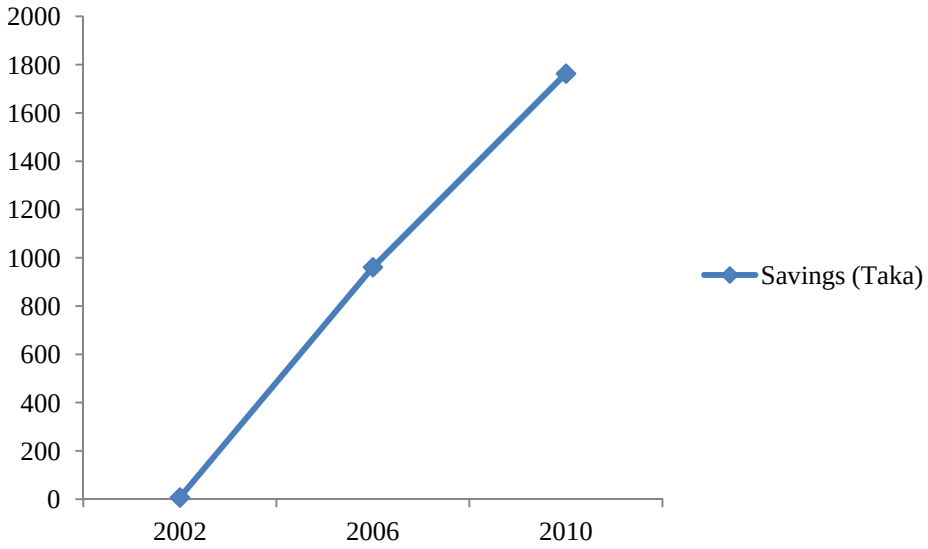
Target: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is lesser than $ 1 a day.

Bangladesh must reduce the proportion of population with income less than one US dollar (PPP) a day from 58.8% in 1990 to 29.4% by 2015 if Bangladesh wants to achieve the MDG 1(UNDP, 2010a). However, Bangladesh, especially the Southwest part, will not achieve the targets by the desired timeline unless there are some additional interventions (UNDP, 2010b). In this context, projects like EPWDP contributed directly to reduce extreme poverty by improving the income of poor women. Previously in the EPWDP area, most extremely poor women were involved only in household work or in some illegal work such as smuggling. But after, with the JCF project involvement, they have

engaged in different forms of wage employments along with different SME, like cattle rearing, small village shops and handicrafts. These entrepreneurial activities indicated women's increased income and confidence and engagement with mainstream economic activities. The women reported that 96% of their investments were successful and profit-worthy.

However, the average income has also increased over the time. Average income increased by 22% in 2009 compared to 2006 value. Considering the per capita income per month, 8.7% beneficiaries have passed over the international poverty line of income per capita per month 1,125 Taka (1 US$=70 Taka). Additionally the savings have also increased.

Figure 2: Savings among the Beneficiary Women



These types of income-related outcomes have also been confirmed by Panjaitan-Drioadisuryo and Cloud (1999), who identified Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) clients' incomes increased by 112%. This income increase helped the poor women to move above the poverty line. In People's Republic of China (PRC), microfinance programs have helped lift 150 million people out of poverty since 1990 (United Nations, 2005). It has been proved that the beneficiaries of microfinance, who mostly invested their credits as well as their savings to different types of SME, and had the opportunity to shift from precarious, low-paid daily jobs to more secured employment (Simanowitz, 2003; Zaman, 2000).

EPWDP opens the avenue for the poor rural women to engage themselves in different types of farm and non-farm activities. These types of engagements enhance the chances of employability and on the other hand ensure local food security.

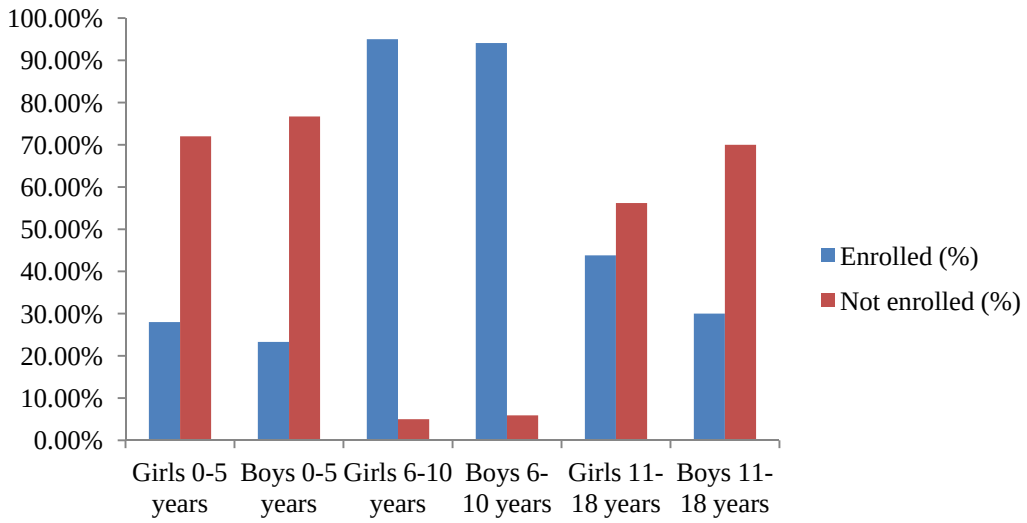
Regionally Chuadanga district suffers food insecurity problems. When this EPWDP was started, 99% of beneficiaries took meals 2 times per day and 1% took 1 meal per day.

After 1 year, 47% beneficiary women took meals 3 times per day and only 53% could take meals 2 times a day. By mid-2007, 50% of microfinance members could eat more sufficient meals per day than before. However by 2009, all the members were able to secure three meals a day. This was a remarkable improvement regarding local food security. In another similar study Chowdhury and Bhuiya (2000) explained that usually microfinance borrowers suffer less from severe malnutrition (relative to the control group), and the extent of severe malnutrition declined as the length of membership increased.

MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Development regarding MDG 2, universal education, is based on a comparison of poor women before enrolling in the project and after enrolling in the project. It is clear that beneficiary women are more aware and keen to send their children to the school than before entering the program. As well, women who were fully illiterate, could neither read nor write, or even could not sign their own name, showed remarkable progress. Due to their microfinance activities and related management works, they learned how to calculate small amounts of money, along with signing their names. The children of EPWDP beneficiary women were likelier to attend and stay in school longer. Student drop-out rates were also much lower than the other poor rural families.

Figure 3: Present Educational Status of the Family Members



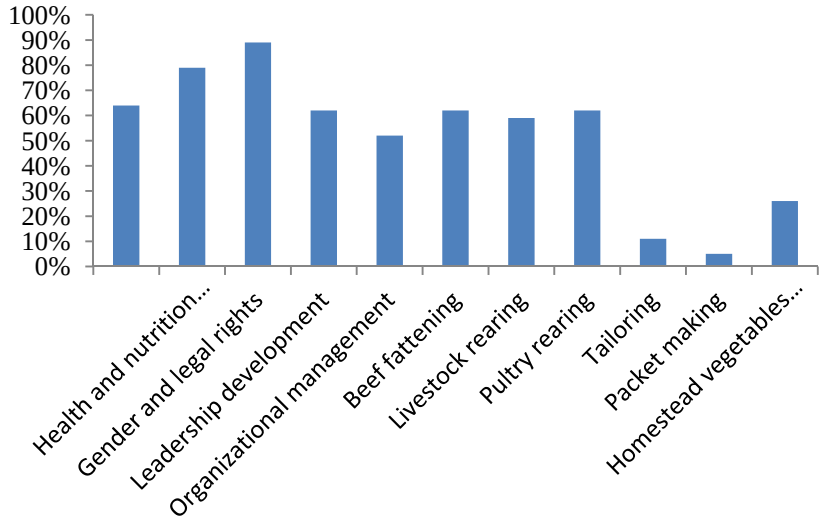
Greater access to financial services and increased incomes allow poor people to invest on their children's future.

MDG 3: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The abilities to borrow, save, and earn enhances poor women's confidence by enabling them to better confront systemic gender inequities. CGAP (2002) highlights different forms of empowerment across regions: a) in Indonesia, female beneficiaries of BRI were more likely than non-clients in the position to make joint decisions with their husbands concerning allocation of household money, children's education, use of contraceptives and family size etc.; b) in Nepal, 68% of Women's Empowerment Program members mentioned that they take their decisions on buying or selling property, sending daughters to school or family planning; c) in India, SEWA clients have lobbied for higher wages, the rights of women in the informal sector, and resolving neighborhood issues; and d) in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Nepal, the Philippines and Russia, clients of microfinance programs have run even for local government office and won.

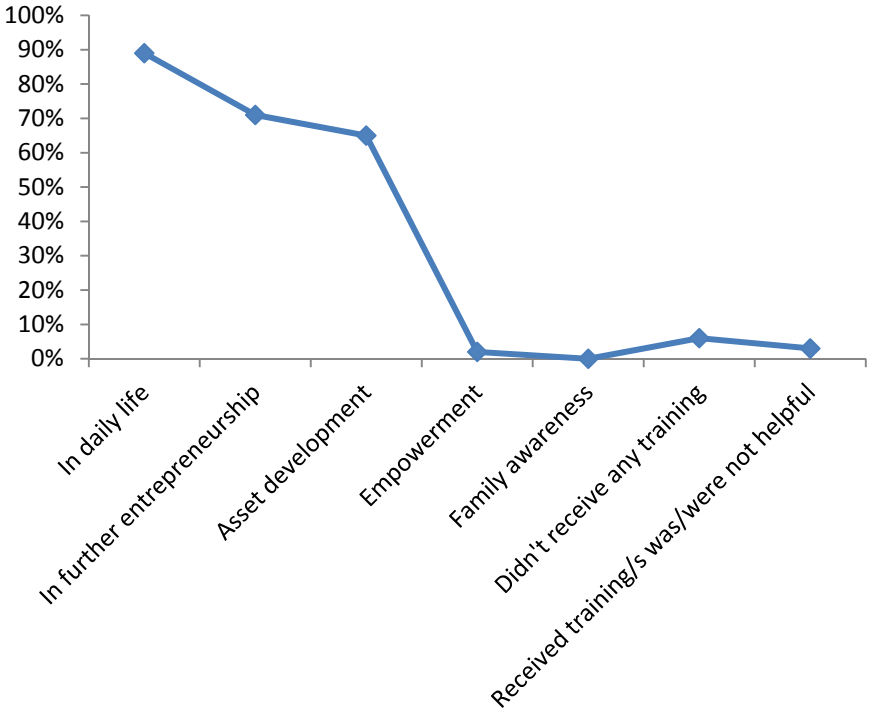
Similarly, at this EPWDP, the beneficiary women get skills or capacity building trainings that help them not only to develop their entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial capacities, but also prepare them for the lasting development. These trainings are quite versatile in nature and address different components of empowerment and gender equality.

Figure 4: Offered Capacity Building Trainings



These types of skill development trainings and opportunities have direct positive impacts on the women's empowerment. In addition to this, these trainings also help to develop women's shock resiliency in response to unprecedented crises or vulnerabilities.

Figure 5: Usefulness of Received Capacity Development Trainings



Skill development trainings and opportunities contributed in the JCF project area to develop social capital, awareness, peer-group mentoring and enhanced employment capacity.

MDGs 4, 5 & 6: Reduce Child Mortality; Improve Maternal Health; and Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases

Child mortality and maternal health are among some of the major development challenges in Bangladesh, and the government has taken these issues very seriously. In recent years, there has been some demonstrable progress, even though outcomes vary across regions, communities, ethnic or minority groups. The maternal mortality ratio should be reduced by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015, if Bangladesh is to achieve the MDGs 4, 5 & 6. Vaccination is one of the major initiatives to reduce mother and child mortalities. In the EPWDP out of 312 eligible cases pregnancy, 83% mothers were vaccinated while 17% mothers were not vaccinated. Many of the components of MDG 4, 5 and 6 are closely interlinked with improved food security, increased income, access to health services and awareness. JCF EPWDP participants have appeared to have better nutrition, living conditions, and preventive healthcare than comparable non-participant women.

MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Sanitation credit was an innovative concept of JCF, and this was also an important component of the entire project. Sanitation credit directly contributes to achieve the UNMDG 7.

In rural Bangladesh, the predominant sources of drinking water are tube-wells, and these are often identified as the safe drinking water sources. In the project areas and among the beneficiaries, access to safe drinking water was 100%. The improved sanitation among the beneficiary households is evident from the fact that more than 4/5th of the households (82%) were using hygienic latrines against 9% in 2002 and 80% in 2006, 17% are using unhygienic latrines against 24% in 2002 and 16% in 2006. In addition, still 1% families are defecating in open places behind bushes or banks of the rivers compared to 67% in 2002 and 0.5% in 2006.

MDGs 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Providing financial services to the poor and development cooperation are some of the major components of MDG 8. In the local context, EPWDP was the key to development of microenterprise operated by extremely poor women. JCF services allow the poor to produce products for the market. Very often, these products are sold in extra-local markets and therefore, in a way, entrepreneurial microfinance enhances global and regional partnership for development.

CRITICISMS

Most of the NGO that work with microfinance are not immune to criticism. However, microfinance participants have experienced several generations of improvement. NGO programs have moved from microcredit, where the poor were given only interest-bearing credit to microfinance. Participants now receive trainings to use credit. This concept got further improvement and it turned into micro-financial services, where poor people were offered not only credits or skill development trainings, but also services like micro-insurance or awareness trainings for their rights to services. Right now in many parts of the Global South, this development product is known as rural financial services, where poor people get credit, training, supports (i.e. legal or health) and also are offered supports within the bigger framework of inclusive development strategy at the local and regional level.

Critics of microfinance might assume that EPWDP created some forms of dependency among extremely poor women by continuous dependency on JCF credits or services. In addition to this, there were also some other areas of concern, such as: (a) weekly repayment schedule started usually a week after a credit was taken; (b) sometimes savings among the beneficiary extreme poor women were not sufficient for their SME development; (c) developing the capacity was never a linear process for every woman, e.g. the capacity to receive knowledge or to develop skills differs from person to person; (d) lack of motivations to participate in the offered training programs; (e) under-utilization and mishandling of credit amounts by beneficiaries or project staffs.

In addition, EPWDP also suffered from several types of risks, such as probabilities of harmful consequences or unexpected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environmental damaged) resulting from the interactions between natural or human induced hazards and vulnerable conditions. It was not certain whether the women could develop themselves within that time frame with proper management and leadership capacities. Nevertheless women always faced societal risks due to the strict attitude of religion and local conservative rural culture regarding the interactions with others except their family members.

SUMMARY

JCF entrepreneurial microfinance demonstrates how development innovations can contribute to achieve the overarching UNMDG. UNMDG as a development framework are now an integral part of National Annual Development Plans in Bangladesh. Without an innovative development approach, it will be difficult to achieve sustainable levels of human development among extremely poor women. The JCF project is subject to numerous criticisms and is not in perfect shape. This project as well as approach might go further with a number of refinements or improvements so that people can experience the benefits more holistically.

This research addresses how to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of extremely poor women in a particular region that already suffers from a spatial poverty trap. JCF projects address the real and perceived social injustices and in some way the violations of basic human rights. In the case of Bangladesh, the state has failed due to its limited financial and institutional capacity to ensure those basic human rights to its citizens. Therefore, this project can be identified as a rights-based approach to development in the rural community. Welfare and services are at the core of this concept. The work conducted by JCF, which included theories from different social science disciplines, demonstrates how to implement those theories into practice.

Different components of poverty influence each other in a typical rural community in Bangladesh. This intra influence creates a spiral of insecurity, which produces multiple deprivations. Deprivations usually begin with the loss of employment, which in turn leads to a significant degradation in living standards. This ultimately increases the risks of poverty and impoverishment. Living in poverty creates additional difficulties in the search for employment and contributes to a long-term unemployment trap for many individuals. Concurrence of unemployment and poverty are some of the major obstacles for victimized persons regarding their participation in social activities. Due to the lack of money and social stigmas, social ties are weakened and that increases the risks of being socially isolated. Extremely poor woman in the rural Bangladesh are a precise example of this phenomenon.

No single intervention can defeat poverty. Therefore a continuous process of development innovation is necessary. Poor people need employment, trainings, skills, schooling, and health care or some additional livelihoods supports. Some extremely poor women might require immediate income transfers or relief to survive. This is not an exceptional phenomenon only in the Global South. More developed societies also have

similar challenges. Access to financial services and thereby entrepreneurship development, form the fundamental basis on which many of the other essential interventions depend. Moreover, in practical situations, improvements in health care, nutritional advice and education can be sustained only when households have increased earnings and have greater access and control over financial resources. Financial services, such as entrepreneurial microfinance thus reduce poverty and meaningfully contribute to reach the targets of UNMDG, which are some of the major policy targets to ensure human development. However, even though there are some mixed experiences regarding the role of microfinance on entrepreneurship development and their combined impacts on achieving the UNMDG, there is clear evidence from the findings that JCF projects and social commitments have enormous impact on the socioeconomic empowerment of extremely poor women. Conceptually the project might have relevance in other parts of the world with similar socioeconomic context and challenges.

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Fair Trade as a Community Development Initiative: Local and Global Implications

Charity Samantha Fitzgerald

Abstract: *This paper examines fair trade as a community development initiative that challenges unjust global trading conditions. On a local level, fair trade aims to create a sustainable livelihood for farmers, to strengthen agricultural cooperatives, and to fund community-based projects. Fair trade also purports to engender global solidarity through linking Southern producers and Northern consumers in a concerted effort to direct the market towards social aims. The paper examines the strengths and weaknesses of fair trade as a social welfare intervention. Recommendations are provided to strengthen the fair-trade movement in light of social work values.*

Keywords: *Fair trade, community development, cooperatives, social development*

In 2009, 110 million pounds of coffee were certified with a mark in locations across the United States (TransFair USA, 2010). This mark on coffee represents more than a clever marketing tactic; it represents the efforts of Southern coffee-farming communities as well as the efforts of Northern businesses and consumers to challenge unjust global trading relations through fair trade. This paper defines fair trade and examines the imperfect global trading relations that provided impetus for the movement. The paper then turns to the evidence that fair trade provides a number of benefits to producers, cooperatives, and coffee-farming communities. Next, the paper draws attention to the growing body of critical literature that suggests that fair trade does not deliver what it promises. Finally, the paper considers how social work can contribute to the fair-trade movement to ensure that it delivers what it promises.

FAIR TRADE DEFINED

The term fair trade signifies more than establishing a higher price for certain goods than free-trade mechanisms would prescribe; it is more than "we pay more/they get more" (Ronchi, 2002, p. 1). Fair trade has been touted as a tool of sustainable development, a global community capacity-building project, a social capital cultivator, and a civil society strategy to alleviate rural poverty in the Global South, and a transnational advocacy movement. Fair trade encourages communities in the South to become protagonists in their own development by engaging in just trading arrangements with Northern businesses. Thus, fair trade operates as a community development initiative on two levels. On the one hand, fair trade defines community as a territorially specific entity. Fair trade requires that producing communities employ sustainable development practices and are compensated for doing so. Additionally, fair trade defines community broadly as global citizenship. As a global unit, the fair-trade discourse attempts to bridge the spatial and social distances between the North and the South, geopolitical terms used to loosely signify the distinction between developed nations (many of which are in the Northern Hemisphere) and developing nations (many of which

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are in the Southern Hemisphere), respectively. This paper makes references to both the local and the global constructs of community.

The most commonly cited definition of fair trade comes from the European Fair Trade Association (2006), which notes the following:

> Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade organizations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade (p. 1).

Fair trade makes demands of traders, a collective term that Nicholls and Opal (2005) use to refer to importers, exporters, and manufacturers, and of producers. Of traders, the fair-trade movement requires they adequately compensate producers for their crops and their goods (Sick, 2008a). The established price ostensibly reflects the summation of three costs: (1) the cost of production (which includes social and environmental externalities), (2) the cost of living, and (3) the cost of complying with fair-trade standards (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). If the free-trade price rises above the fair-trade floor price, which is $1.40/lb for coffee Arabica (washed), traders are to pay the free-trade price in addition to the social premium (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011b). The social premium for coffee amounts to $0.20/lb (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011b). Second, fair-trade practices involve a long-term commitment of traders to producers (Sick, 2008a). These long-term relationships lower transaction costs for producers since they do not have to continually search for someone to whom to sell their coffee. Additionally, because of these long-term relationships, traders are to provide producers up to 60% of the invoice prior to product delivery if requested (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Third, traders are to provide technical support to producers to enable them to increase their production capacities and to encourage environmentally sustainable practices. Finally, traders are committed to consumer education in the Global North, thereby raising social awareness and increasing the market for fair-trade goods (Sick, 2008b).

Of producers, fair trade demands that they be organized into democratic cooperatives that utilize environmentally sustainable practices. It is believed that cooperative organization increases collective bargaining power vis-à-vis large buyers (Sick, 2008a), thereby engendering empowerment (Milford, 2004). It is also reported that having a voice in the decision-making processes of the cooperative encourages social inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women. The aforementioned social premium paid by traders is to be earmarked and allocated democratically by cooperatives for community projects, such as health and education initiatives. Environmentally sustainable practices constitute another requisite for fair-trade producers (Sick, 2008a). Environmentally sustainable practices do not necessarily signify organic coffee farming, although sometimes products are both fair-trade and organically certified. Environmentally sustainable practices match innovative technology with rural realities. Farmers in Costa Rica, for example, have experimented with two alternative sources of power: solar and

methane from cow manure (Sick, 2008b). The majority of producers belonging to fair-trade cooperatives must be small-scale farmers. The Fairtrade Labelling Organization (2009) defines small-scale farmers as those who are not "structurally dependent" on hired labor (p. 4). Child labor that interferes with school attendance or educational attainment is not permissible (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2009). Finally, producers are to aim for gender equity in all activities and organizations (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2009).

This paper focuses specifically on fair-trade coffee. Coffee has been the driving force behind the fair-trade movement. In fact, of all commodities—whether freely or fairly traded—coffee is the second most valuable commodity exported by developing countries (Talbot, as quoted in Pendergrast, 2009). Within the fair-trade movement, coffee sales are greatest in value of any commodity (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Coffee meshes well with fair-trade principles because of the requirement that production operations be small scale. Coffee is a crop that is conducive to small-scale farming, and this quality is reflected by the fact that small-scale producers grow 70% of the world's coffee (Bacon, 2005). Another reason to explain the intimate connection between fair trade and coffee is that at the time of the fair-trade explosion in the 1990s and the 2000s, coffee farmers were receiving historically low prices, the lowest prices since 1882, to be precise, for their crop (Fridell, 2004). Coffee producers experienced net losses several years in a row, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) took note of the dire poverty in coffee-growing regions. It was estimated that the coffee crisis affected up to 125 million people (Murray, Raynolds, & Taylor, 2003). Thus, coffee became the ideal fair-trade commodity.

Today certified fair-trade goods (including, but not limited to, fair-trade coffee) constitute a hot market. In spite of a global recession, sales have continued to increase during each of the past 4 years (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011a). At the end of 2010, there were 905 producer groups in the Global South affiliated with the fair-trade movement (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011a). These groups employed 1.2 million workers, meaning that the total number of direct beneficiaries is about 6 million people accounting for workers' family members (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011a). The social premium paid to producer groups in 2010 totaled €51.5 million (about $70 million) (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011a).

Thusly described, fair trade appears to offer a promising way for producers and consumers to challenge conventional market mechanisms. For coffee producers in the Global South, fair trade offers a way to manage risk. For businesses and consumers in the Global North, fair trade offers a way to express solidarity with producers. The next section turns to the global conditions, namely unfair trading relations and the endemic failures of the free market that gave rise to the fair-trade movement.

FAIR TRADE: A CHALLENGE TO UNJUST GLOBAL TRADING RELATIONS

In the 1960s, there was an emerging theoretical argument that trade agreements were often crafted on terms unfavorable to countries in the Global South, which exacerbated inequality and poverty. Brown (2006) reported that those often perceived to be "left behind" were actually well integrated into global trade agreements. It was believed that the terms of trade, not the lack of trade, created the conditions for certain countries to be left behind and to share inequitably in the distribution of global wealth. The world had been divided into rich and poor, remarked Barratt Brown (1993) in his groundbreaking fair-trade text, and trade had driven the wedge between the two regions. Thus, an intellectual underpinning of fair trade stems from dependency theory, a body of literature that argues that resources are directed from the Global South to the Global North, thereby relegating the former to a persistent condition of so-called underdevelopment.

The deconstruction of free-trade theory and the assertion that it cannot deliver what it promises deepened the theoretical underpinning of fair trade. Michael Barratt Brown noted that rural producers do not benefit from free trade because several market failures are endemic to the free-trade system and that the neoliberal assumption of a level playing field is erroneous. These market failures are the norm rather than the exception. He blamed market failures on large transnational companies that dominate agricultural markets because they have access to finance, and they can easily switch from one supplier to another. In the coffee industry, five transnational companies controlled 69% of the instant and roasted markets, and eight exporting companies controlled 56% of the coffee trade in 1998, whereas an estimated 20 to 25 million families were involved with its production (Bacon, 2005). Trading power is concentrated; producing power is dispersed. Given the concentration of trading power in the hands of a few, traders stand at a negotiating advantage over producers (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Transnational companies also control most of the value-adding processes, specifically roasting, which means that coffee farmers only receive about 2% of the value of a cup sold in a coffee shop (Petchers & Harris, 2008). Thus, the political economy of coffee production and consumption seems to offer terms that are more favorable to traders in the North than to the producers in the South.

In addition to the market distortions introduced by the concentrated power of traders, Hutchens (2009) notes additional market failures that small-scale producers face, such as a lack of market access (or access through coyotes who cut into the profits of producers), imperfect information about markets (which is often distorted by coyotes who are looking to maximize profit), lack of access to financial markets and credit, and an inability to switch to other sources of income generation. Fair trade attempts to draw trade theory and trade practice together by correcting for these market failures (Nicholls & Opal, 2005).

The fair-trade movement, as discussed in the first section, attempts to help local communities confront global market conditions as discussed in this section. However, how does fair trade operate at the grassroots level? Are fair-trade practices and fair-trade discourses congruent? The next two section addresses this question.

FAIR TRADE: STRENGTHS AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Fair trade focuses on capacity building at the local level and on helping cooperatives integrate into the global economy on just terms. Because of its development focus, fair trade is claimed to be a long-term strategy to alleviate poverty rather than a mere stopgap aid measure. A critical review of the literature reveals three broad categories of fair-trade beneficiaries: producers, cooperatives, and communities.

Fair-trade producers receive steady income in contrast to reliance on the volatile conventional market (Kohler, 2006; Macdonald, 2007; Murray, Raynolds, & Taylor, 2006). Even though they often cannot sell the entirety of their crop to fair-trade markets (Kohler, 2006), receiving at least a partial guaranteed salary created a sense of economic security (Taylor, 2002; Kohler, 2006; LeMare, 2008; Bacon, 2005; Utting-Chamorro, 2005; Nicholls & Opal, 2005), which can obviate the need for migration (Taylor, 2002; LeMare, 2008), although one study (Jaffee, 2007) found that migration among fair-trade producers was equivalent to that of conventional-market producers due to the "healthy migrant" selection bias.

Estimates of how much more fair-market producers receive than conventional-market producers range from 10% (Macdonald, 2007) to 40% (Raynolds, 2002) to 100% (Utting-Chamorro, 2005). With the increased income, producers can keep their children in school (Lyon, 2007; Macdonald, 2007; Murray et al., 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Ruben, Fort, & Zuniga-Arias, 2009; Taylor, 2002; Utting-Chamorro, 2005), repay debts (Lyon, 2007), maintain and improve homes and farms (Lyon, 2007; Macdonald, 2007; Raynolds, Murray, & Taylor 2004; Ruben, Fort, & Zuniga-Arias, 2009; Utting-Chamorro, 2005), improve the quality of coffee grown (Murray et al., 2006; Taylor, 2002), access credit (Murray et al., 2003), access training (Murray et al., 2003) and consume adequate diets (LeMare, 2008; Utting-Chamorro, 2005). These differences are reflective that fair-trade producers are able to invest in assets that will provide security over the long term (Ruben, Fort, & Zuniga-Arias, 2009). They can also use the increased income to hire other laborers, which benefits others in the community (Ruben et al., 2009; Taylor, 2002). On a final note, producers have also reported higher self-esteem (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Raynolds et al., 2004; Taylor, 2002).

A requirement of fair trade is that communities in the Global South be organized into democratically managed cooperatives in order to participate. The idea is that a group of producers is more powerful than a single producer and that there are advantages in pooling resources. Together, it is believed that community members are more effective at solving common problems than individuals' unlinked efforts (DeCarlo, 2007). Additionally, it is believed that combined efforts not only are more effective at solving problems but also at opening opportunities (DeCarlo, 2007). The invocation of the cooperative conjures such buzz terms as participation, empowerment, capacity building, social capital, and solidarity.

Fair trade promotes community cohesion and coordination through cooperative strengthening. It is noted that fair trade does not set up cooperatives but rather works with

already existing cooperatives and strengthens those cooperatives. Researchers note that fair trade has perhaps had the greatest impact at the cooperative level as it strengthens their organizational capacities to supplement functions and services inadequately provided by the state (Jaffee, 2007; Macdonald, 2007; Ruben, Fort, & Zuniga-Arias, 2009; Simpson & Rapone, 2000; Taylor, 2002; Taylor, Murray, & Raynolds, 2005; Utting-Chamorro, 2005). Participation in fair trade ensures a degree of economic stability for cooperatives based on the promises of a floor price and a long-term commitment. By increasing the capacities of cooperatives, they can fulfill and multiply their roles in the community, such as providing credit to members at low interest rates (Renard & Perez-Grovas, 2007). Also, cooperatives have deepened their involvement with the coffee trade to extend vertically up the commodity chain, thereby capturing more of the profits associated with value-added processes. Strong cooperatives have been able to construct processing facilities. They have also been able to expand into other niche markets, such as organic (LeMare, 2008; Taylor, 2002). Participation in a cooperative associated with fair trade also enables producers to pool resources through sharing transportation costs, thereby benefiting from economies of scale (Utting-Chamorro, 2005). Integration into fair trade provides cooperatives with access to information about recent market trends and technological innovations, thus attempting to ameliorate a persistent market failure noted earlier.

Beyond the economic strengthening afforded by fair-trade certification, there are also social and networking implications for fair-trade cooperatives. Looking downward, being fair-trade certified enhances perceptions of the cooperative's legitimacy to members (Raynolds et al., 2004; Ruben, Fort, & Zuniga-Arias, 2009). Looking within, cooperative involvement thickens the social capital of the members (Mendez, 2002; Rice, 2001; Simpson & Rapone, 2000). Looking upward, fair-trade-participating cooperatives can connect with other fair-trade-participating cooperatives, thereby creating secondary-level cooperatives that augment advocacy strength (Rice, 2001; Ronchi, 2002; Taylor et al., 2005). Additionally, obtaining fair-trade certification status serves as a signaling function and enables cooperatives to more easily partner with nongovernmental agencies, which can provide additional resources and information (Raynolds et al., 2004; Ruben et al., 2009; Taylor, 2002).

Cooperatives play an important role in administering the social premium towards collective purposes. In coffee, the social premium price associated with a pound of coffee is $0.20 (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011b). The social premium is earmarked for social, environmental, and/or economic development programs to be decided democratically by the cooperative. When the social premium was initiated, often it was returned to producers in the form of income. Recently, however, the Fairtrade Labelling Organization has been strongly urging that cooperatives use the premium explicitly for community development projects. This social premium is more attractive to fund community development projects than loans from institutions like the World Bank because it comes with no strings attached. Though several authors noted above that organizational capacity building is the greatest strength of fair trade, others (e.g., Smith, 2009; Nicholls & Opal, 2005) contend that community development projects executed through the social premium are its most impactful intervention.

Some of the community development projects refer back to the cooperatives, strengthening their organizational capacity, while others attempt to fill the void left behind in the wake of public and social service retrenchment. Community projects brought about as a result of this social premium include transportation (Simpson & Rapone, 2000; Taylor, 2002), conversion to organic practices (Raynolds et al., 2004), health services (Raynolds et al., 2004; Simpson & Rapone, 2000; Utting-Chamorro, 2005), sanitation projects (Raynolds et al., 2004), education and training (Ronchi, 2002; Simpson & Rapone, 2000; Smith, 2009; Taylor, 2002; Utting-Chamorro, 2005;), investment in women's groups (Taylor, 2002), environmental improvements (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Ronchi, 2002; Taylor, 2002; Utting-Chamorro, 2005), construction of warehouses and other cooperative facilities (Smith, 2009), and ecotourism (Utting-Chamorro, 2005).

Fair-trade literature often uses the terms community and cooperative interchangeably. Some community members are not cooperative members. The literature that acknowledges that the terms cooperative and community are not necessarily synonymous still purports that both cooperative strengthening and the social premium provide benefits not just for fair-trade producer participants but also have positive externalities from which non-cooperative members benefit. That is, not all community members might be members of fair-trade cooperatives, yet all receive the benefit of these community projects via the multiplier effect (Daviron & Ponte, 2005; Lyon, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Ruben et al., 2009). Non-cooperative members, for example, can use the market information provided by fair-trade cooperatives as a bargaining advantage with the coyotes. The provision of information regarding environmentally friendly practices, such as organic farming, is also transferable to non-cooperative members through the demonstration effect.

In sum, fair trade is about strengthening local organizations, thickening social capital, and addressing a locality's needs comprehensively. It helps local communities manage unjust global trading terms and to be actively involved in creating a more just global trading order.

FAIR TRADE: WEAKNESSES AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

When implemented, DeNeve, Luetchford, and Pratt (2008) suggest that the moral framework of fair trade can be distorted, thus leading to unanticipated outcomes. In general, this critique asserts that community is often portrayed as being unproblematized and unitary, which leads to outcomes that do not mirror what fair-trade discourses purport. Specifically, fair trade does not engage with or affect all community constituents in the same way. It is important to acknowledge the heterogeneity within communities. Additionally, fair trade as a development project has varying degrees of success, depending on whether development is defined in terms of process or outcome.

Fair trade interjects the possibility of the reinforcement, exacerbation, and/or the production of community splintering, and the fair-trade discourse whitewashes over the potential production of stratification. There are two concrete examples that illustrate

community stratification, one relating to gender and the other to class. The first illustration of strained relations within a community relates to gender equity. Nowhere does fair-trade rhetoric describe exactly what is meant by the term gender equity. This paper contends that gender equity as a fair-trade goal has intentionally been left nebulous to retain symbolic value. It is difficult to discern whether gender equity in fact is achieved through fair trade since there is no standard to which to compare it. Nevertheless, this paper suggests that gender equity, however defined, is not being brought about by fair trade.

Prima facie, fair trade as a development initiative perpetuates an agriculturally reliant local economy, one that men tend to dominate (Murray et al., 2006). Sick's (2008b) ethnographic research in Perez Zeledon, Costa Rica, explores women's tenuous connection to coffee production. Her research suggests that strengthening the role of coffee in the local economy is likely to increasingly distance women from household income-generating activities, thereby reinforcing their traditional household roles. Land, notes Sick, is unevenly distributed between men and women. Due to cultural norms, men are the primary purchasers of land. Purchasing, however, is not the main practice through which land is acquired in Costa Rica. Land has grown increasingly scarce in Costa Rica, and thus it is mainly obtained through inheritance. Even though legislation mandates that land be passed down equitably among sons and daughters, in practice sons are the main inheritors of land. Given few employment opportunities apart from agriculture in rural Costa Rica, whoever owns land controls the purse strings of household finances. Thus, promoting the perpetuation of coffee production prima facie privileges a labor activity in which women are not key actors.

Lyon (2010) concurs that traditionally male agricultural activities are privileged through fair trade over other non-farm income-generating activities where women might play important roles. In an article published in 2008, she describes the inner-workings of a cooperative in Guatemala. In this cooperative, a majority of the members were men. To be specific, only 7 of the 116 members were women (p. 262). As an implicit social norm, these seven women almost never spoke during cooperative meetings (a claim that Lyon buttressed by noting the shushes a woman received when she spoke). In fact, Lyon notes that women's main participation in cooperative meetings was to serve lunch. No women have ever served on the board of the cooperative that Lyon researched. She suggests that their participation in a leadership capacity is impeded both by social norms and by the demands of household duties. In contrast, 77% of the 53 surveyed cooperative members (a sample that included 5 of the 7 women members) have served on the board. As such, the strengthening of cooperatives reinforces men's roles vis-à-vis those of women, thus undermining the purported fair-trade goal of gender equity (Fort & Ruben, 2008a).

Lyon (2008) also makes note of the one-family, one-vote policy of many cooperatives throughout Latin America, such as the one she studied. Because of patriarchal customs, the men often get to cast the one vote to represent the family. Even though cooperatives might be complying with the fair-trade requirement of democratic processes (another purported fair-trade goal), this particular democratic practice might undermine gender equity. Lyon's account of women's marginalization within the cooperative is buttressed by other similar accounts (Fridell, 2007; Ronchi, 2002; Utting-

Chamorro, 2005). Thus, fair-trade practices relating to gender equity at times do not map onto fair-trade discourse.

The second example of community stratification within community relates to the treatment of landless laborers. Fair-trade discourses do not fully address the class differences and the concomitant power imbalances between small-scale producers, and landless laborers. Fair trade as it relates to coffee production keeps the landless laborer invisible. Jaffee (2007) notes that often fair-trade farmers must hire day laborers to comply with the labor-intensive, environmentally mindful practices prescribed by fair-trade certification processes. There are no specifications regarding the compensation of landless laborers employed by small-scale producers. Landless laborers are given short shrift in fair-trade discourses, yet they are active participants in fair trade. For example, Luetchford (2008b) critiques Sick's ethnographic work in Costa Rica. Sick briefly notes that during coffee harvesting season about 25% of family farmers, a sizeable percentage, will contract with landless laborers. Nevertheless, she mentions this only as an aside. She focuses instead on the small-scale producer. Fair-trade studies make few commentaries of how and/or if landless laborers benefit from fair trade aside from the community projects, such as road maintenance, that benefit all community members irrespective of their affiliation or lack thereof with the cooperative. Though landless laborers might benefit from the community projects via the multiplier effect, they do not get a voice with regards to which community projects are realized. Thus, the concerns that are most pressing to them might not be addressed.

There also seems to be a gap between discourse and practice in terms of the social premium. Fair trade claims that decisions regarding what to do with social premiums are to be determined through a democratic, inclusive process. Nevertheless, producers seem strangely unaware of the existence or the use of a social premium. In one cooperative (Fort & Ruben, 2008b), over 10% of producers were unaware of the existence of the social premium. In this same study, only 23% claimed to have derived any benefit from the premium. In an evaluative study of banana production (Zuniga-Arias & Saenz-Segura, 2008), 71% of respondents said they had not been consulted about the use and the allocation of the social premium. Ronchi (2002), too, reported the odd finding that, in spite of the perceived sense of augmented community welfare, cooperative-affiliated producers did not link the positive outcome to fair trade. In fact, they seemed unaware of fair trade. Again, there appears to be a gap between fair trade's inclusive community construct and what unfurls on the ground.

These critiques of the rosy portrayal of cohesive, inclusive communities also have implications for the conceptualization and the operationalization of development within local communities. At times, the certification standards seem to be at odds with each other. The one-family, one-vote policy employed by many cooperatives upholds the standard of democratic processes but without thorough consideration as to how it can undermine gender equity. In the case of environmental standards, the need to adhere to certain labor-intensive criteria is privileged without robust consideration as to how landless laborers should be compensated and treated. The emphasis on implementing community projects also comes at the expense of educating producers about the facets of fair trade. Neither gender equity and democratic processes, nor just compensation and

environmental standards, nor community projects and extensive community participation are inherently contradictory. Rather, because they have not been adequately conceptualized and operationalized, in practice these standards can undermine each other.

Examining fair trade at the meso level, fair trade must exclude certain communities from participation. The requisites are such that only well organized communities, often those that already have flourishing cooperatives, can participate. Because of the cooperative requisite, the most disadvantaged communities are excluded from participation in fair trade. Communities are also intentionally excluded from certification because the fair-trade market cannot absorb all goods that are produced for it. In the coffee segment, for example, often only 20% to 25% of fair trade farmers' coffee is sold on the fair-trade market (Jaffee, 2008). Elsewhere, Goodman (2008) reported that the export capacity of fair-trade producers is seven times that of fair-trade sales. Fair-trade producers must sell the remaining portion on the conventional market. To control fair-trade supply, the fair-trade certification bureaucracy has been reticent to certify more cooperatives. The discursive project of fair trade obscures these slippages of inclusion and exclusion.

The whitewashing of inclusion and exclusion becomes even more salient at the macro level. As global citizenship, fair trade uses language such as *stakeholders* and *partners*. Even framing fair trade as an intervention is eschewed for terms like *collaboration*. Mere rhetorical slight, however, does not make for good practice. Though the propagators of fair-trade discursive practices in the North claim that the project embodies trade not aid, some participating producers in the South perceive the project quite differently. In fact, some Southern small-scale producers, such as those in Ronchi's (2002) study, seem to understand fair trade only in terms of augmented income and not as global solidarity. Moreover, emerging research suggests that producers have perceived a need to protect themselves from fair trade, which has been attributed to the relatively recent introduction of certification schemes that disrupt local social norms through their surveillance mechanisms (Wilkinson & Mascarenhas, 2007).

The certification system designed to scale up fair trade perhaps has undermined the pursuit of key movement values, such as trust and solidarity. The certification system has institutionalized imbalances in power by creating non-democratic, top-down decision-making structures (Hutchens, 2009). In this nascent bureaucratic structure, traders have had more voting power than producers in determining the course of fair trade (Murray et al., 2003). In fact, it was only recently that producers were promoted from observer status to having 4 representatives on the newly expanded 14-person board of the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (Jaffee, 2007). Producers have reported feeling that their presence is merely symbolic rather than substantive (Renard & Perez-Grovas, 2007) and that certification standards are largely determined by the Northern stakeholders (Luetchford, 2008a).

Southern producers have also expressed disenchantment with other facets of fair trade. For example, some have reported wanting more access to information about Northern markets (Wilkinson & Mascarenhas, 2007). Though fair trade claims to ameliorate the endemic market failure of imperfect information, some producers feel that

they are only given certain information that continues to relegate them to the position of aid recipients rather than being trade partners. Producers have also reported feeling ignorant about what happens to their products (Renard & Perez-Grovas, 2007), and they have expressed a desire for more communication with Northern consumers (Murray et al., 2003). Though elaborate marketing schemes discussed above provide information to Northern consumers about Southern producers, information does not flow in the reverse direction. Finally, producers have expressed disgust with certification criteria and fees, which are perceived as being unduly. Mutersbaugh (2002) goes so far as to liken certification criteria to ecological neocolonialism. Some producers perceive a dearth of opportunities to express their disgust. When they do voice their frustrations, they report a lack of responsiveness by the fair-trade labeling regime.

In short, rather than challenging and transforming the market, parts of the fair-trade movement seem to have been absorbed by it to the point that producers report that there is very little that is alternative about the fair-trade market (Zuniga-Arias & Saenz-Segura, 2008). In so doing, some producers have experienced fair trade as yet another practice of marginalization. Write Kruger and du Toit (2007), "The prospect continually exists that Fair Trade, far from being a way of challenging the power imbalances between North and South, can function as a way of commodifying political concern and deflecting challenge, renormalizing consumption and legitimizing a 'kinder, gentler' food regime that is perhaps more paternalistic and less nakedly exploitative" (p. 215). The certification system reflects and reproduces the disconnect between fair-trade discourse and practices. The focus on scaling up the fair-trade movement through the certification scheme perpetuates power imbalances albeit in subtle, gentle terms.

The preceding critique of fair trade is not meant to diminish all confidence in the community development initiative. This author concurs with Lyon's (2006) assessment that although the fair-trade system is imperfect, it should not be discarded given few (if any) alternatives to just trade relations. Rather, fair trade can be strengthened as a local and global community development initiative, perhaps with support from social workers, through robust consideration of the critiques presented above. Thus, the paper concludes with several suggestions that might give due consideration to the constructs of community and development as they pertain to fair trade.

POTENTIAL SOCIAL WORK CONTRIBUTIONS TO FAIR TRADE

The certification system is not inherently bad. It has been credited with expanding the market for fair trade by placing goods in places that consumers frequent. However, the certification system can be tweaked to maximize fair trade's potential to help local communities contend with global trading. The certification system can be made more participatory from the micro to the macro level, and social workers can engender robust participation across levels. First, when certifiers visit fair-trade cooperatives, they can speak with a vast cross-section of producers and community members including women and landless members to ensure that all community members, not merely those pre-selected by cooperative management, are given a voice. The Fairtrade Labelling Organization can also be more proactive in helping producers address the concerns raised by the cross-section of community members. Being attentive to various dimensions of

diversity, social workers in local communities can ensure that no one is excluded from participating. Participatory evaluation and collaborative problem-shooting can also serve to clarify certification standards, which hopefully would give producers a stronger position from which to negotiate the standards set forth by the Fairtrade Labelling Organization on the macro level. Creating more participatory processes might make fair trade more messy, and it might expose unflattering aspects of fair-trade practice. Nevertheless, it serves to focus on making community into an inclusive construct, and it highlights the potential of development as both a process and an outcome. In sum, participatory evaluation, in which many social workers have experience facilitating, can also serve to align fair-trade practices with fair-trade discourses.

Fair trade might also be strengthened by breaking down dichotomies. One such dichotomy is the one that exists between consumers and producers. This dichotomy can be eroded by encouraging countries in the Global South to form their own fair-trade labeling national initiatives so that inhabitants of the South can become consumers. Northern fair-trade labeling initiatives can also consider certifying producer groups within their selfsame region so that Northern workers, too, can become fair-trade producers. Commixing consumer and producer status serves to breakdown the historical relations established by colonialism. The recent certification of South Africa as both a consuming and producing nation is a step towards eroding binaries. As advocates, social workers can consider pressuring FLO to consider continuing to revise these purchasing and consuming limitations.

The provision of comprehensive information can also serve to erode binaries. Northern participants can be provided multi-dimensional information about producers and producing communities. Complex information does not make for friendly marketing sound bytes, but portraying fair-trade Southern participants as unidimensional producers in “ethnic” apparel on marketing ploys serves to reify the Other rather than to create genuine global solidarity. Additionally, Southern producers can be given more information about Northern consumers and Northern markets so that information flows bidirectionally (or, even better, multilaterally if the rigid North-South, consumer-producer binary were to be eroded). Advocating for the provision of information in both the North and the South reflects social work’s commitment to self-determination.

In the fair-trade movement, the present-day is a point of inflection. The movement is at a juncture that exposes the contradictions between fair-trade discourses and fair-trade practices (Fisher, 2009). Rather than representing the demise of the movement, these growing pains are an opportunity for reflection and action. And in spite of the growing pains experienced by the movement, fair trade sales have not only weathered the recession, but have even expanded in the face of it (Fairtrade Labelling Organization, 2011a). Fair-trade organizations are looking to broaden and to deepen the movement. Expansion into new markets and the deepening of existing markets have increasingly required institutionalization (Doane, 2010). What is needed is reflective research and action that informs the institutionalization to ensure that fair-trade discourses and fair-trade practices map onto each other and that the movement reaches its maximum potential. It is hoped that these critiques as facilitated by social workers and other allies will serve to shape the present point of inflection.

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Social Work and the Green Economy

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Abstract: *This is an ethnographic account of a social worker's efforts to create a local "Energy Alliance" to help moderate-income residents reduce energy costs in a small, urban, northern plains community in the United States. Additionally, the initiative would help create jobs, increase energy efficiency, and reduce carbon outputs. While the project met with mixed results, lessons learned are relevant to the emergent intersections of community practice, sustainable community development (economic and social), and social work. The benefits of social work education and experience to this work are highlighted, as are the challenges inherent in planning and implementing green community development.*

Keywords: *Community economic and social development, energy alliance, environmental social work, sustainability, green economy, community practice*

INTRODUCTION

This article is an ethnographic exploration of a social worker's efforts to create a local "Energy Alliance." The purpose of this community project was to help moderate-income residents reduce energy costs, while increasing energy efficiency in a small, urban, northern plains community in the United States. These efforts sought local benefits for the immediate community while helping to make some small contribution toward reducing carbon outputs that affect climate change. It was also an effort to engage the perspectives and skill set of social work with the challenges of the 'green economy.'

The volunteers who participated in this project were successful in creating a new organization within the city government and in procuring Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants. However, the new program did not perform as well as was hoped in relation to providing economic relief for moderate-income families or spurring local economic development. Rubin and Sherraden's (2005) conceptualization of CESDOs (Community Economic and Social Development Organizations) is employed to illustrate key issues facing the Energy Alliance at its inception and over the longer term. Community practice models also provide insights into tasks, challenges, and practitioner roles.

This article is written in the spirit that mistakes and less-than-optimal outcomes also provide valuable lessons. It also highlights the strengths that social workers may bring to local "green" initiatives. This is fairly unknown territory for social workers in the United States, however, it is hoped that sharing this case example will offer relevant insights and encouragement to the growing number of social workers who consider global environmental sustainability to be relevant to social work practice.

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THEORETICAL CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

The author's active participation and leadership in this project were simultaneously grounded in the intersections of social work, environmental sustainability, and community and economic development work. First and foremost, social workers know that people need to be understood within the broad context of their environment. This person-in-environment perspective encompasses all the diverse aspects of social work practice and distinguishes it from other helping professions. However, especially in the United States, the term too often fails to consider the natural and physical environment. This is particularly unfortunate in the face of ongoing environmental and climatic shifts that disproportionately threaten vulnerable populations both around the globe and in the wealthiest nations. This is a matter of global concern that requires local solutions and is directly relevant to social work practice. Zapf (2009) noted that social workers "have been strangely silent" about issues related to the natural, physical environment and the related "serious threats to human well-being and continued existence" (p. 18).

Environmental sustainability is also a social justice issue. The wealthiest populations tend to be the greatest consumers and producers of the products and activities damaging to the global environment, yet the impoverished are most likely to suffer the consequences. For instance, the United States is the world's top emitter of carbon dioxide, but the cost of climate change is disproportionately borne by those least able to either afford the costs or recover from the effects. Extreme weather events between (1990-2009) as noted in the *Global Climate Risk Index 2011* most seriously impacted "developing countries in the low-income or lower-middle income country group" (Harmling, 2010, p. 5). Indeed, as a result of climate change, tens of millions of Bangladeshis could be displaced by rising sea levels over the coming decades, and that nation's agriculture is already suffering from sanitization as rising sea levels contaminate the nation's delta regions (Chopra, 2009). Throughout the developing world, social workers tend to focus on social development and issues of sustainability directly related to environmental issues including population, food supplies, and disasters connected to natural devastation. However, in the United States, social workers are largely silent on environmental issues, even though they can make a significant difference by bringing their unique set of values, ethics, and skills to make a difference locally.

Rubin and Sherraden (2005) and their formulation of Community Economic and Social Develpoment (CESD) have offered a critical redefinition of traditional community economic development models that too-frequently had ignored social and economic justice implications, and posit the need for a "humane capitalism" that is holistic, focused on those who are left out of traditional economic development efforts to build and harnesses community assets in ways that result in both economic improvement and social change (p. 475). Innovation is a hallmark of CESD, which also positions it well as a framework for environmentally sustainable community development. Additionally, the use of community practice models also (Rothman, 2007; Weil & Gamble, 2005) guide this work and this analysis.

EARLY GREEN ORGANIZING EFFORTS BY THE CITY

This community project was undertaken in an area dominated by flat, flood-prone plains in a basin that drains into the arctic waters of the Hudson Bay. The area has little deciduous foliage to capture solar heat, cold winds that sweep across the plains from the Canadian Rockies, and arctic high pressure systems that produce frigid temperatures from October through March—low temperatures dip below 0°F fifty days per year. Residents burn a lot of fossil fuels to keep their homes warm during these notoriously cold winters.

Aware of the increasing financial costs for local citizens and the related global damage, the city's Mayor signed on to a national Sierra Club program with the somewhat ironic title of *Cool Cities* during the Spring of 2007. Since 2005, the *Cool Cities'* initiative has facilitated collaborations "to implement clean energy solutions that save money, create jobs, and help curb global warming" (Sierra Club, 2011). Within a few years, over one thousand cities and counties had joined the commitment to reduce their community's carbon footprint. Additionally, in announcing his decision the Mayor noted concerns in *The United States Conference of Mayors' Energy and Environment Best Practices* guide describing "America's vulnerability to an uncertain energy future," a policy environment that was "not sustainable" and references to national leadership that was either denying global warming or simply not acting on these broadly recognized concerns. The document noted "fortunately . . . Mayors from across America are taking the lead" (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007).

Some of the volunteers who joined what came to be known as the Mayor's "G-3 Environmental Initiative" in 2007 included a professor from the local university's Earth System Science and Policy department, along with the produce manager at the local food co-op who also happened to be one of the State's leading activists on behalf of energy and environmental issues. The effort was also joined by "a key author" of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate change. His work had been part of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize awarded jointly to former Vice President Al Gore and the IPCC for raising global awareness about the human impacts on the environment and climate. In a press release, he expressed the hope "that my grandchildren will not blame my generation for our stupidity of spending nature's capital while leaving the payments to them" (University of North Dakota, 2007). Altogether, the group eventually included some five dozen individuals including university professors, local activists, and various other community members and city officials (Bonzer, 2008).

Given the amount of talent assembled to work in this modestly-sized community, the work started in a spirit of great optimism. G-3 membership consisted of approximately three dozen individuals. A majority of these were university faculty, environmental activists (including a large number of students), and a few city employees. Official meetings began during the fall of 2007at a time when the author was teaching a class. Nonetheless, through e-mail and informal connections, it was clear that group members were passionate about the topic, and willing to volunteer their time to identify feasible tasks that could be accomplished by city government in partnership with other stakeholders.

When I did begin attending meetings, the larger group had been meeting for about three month before I was able to come to my first meeting, yet I was surprised at how little had been accomplished. Beyond an enthusiastic report read by a student intern who had been assigned to the committee, not much else was accomplished at my first meeting.

The next meeting that I attended was for the policy sub-committee, a smaller group of six individuals, which included a veteran city council member and a senior aid to the mayor. The main decision made at that meeting was that each member would individually review a long list of programs and ideas from other cities around the region, and return with recommendations. The list was dominated by 'low-hanging fruit' ideas such as changing to more energy efficient lighting, coordinating the city's stoplights for more efficient traffic flows, and directives to get city employees to reduce their use of paper. For the most part, it was disappointing that these efforts had not already been implemented.

Four months into the effort, the G-3 Initiative and its subcommittees still seemed to be at the "brainstorming" stage; however, as a relative newcomer to the community, the effort afforded me an opportunity to develop relationships and mutual trust with community members and city staff, and an understanding of the city's political landscape and stakeholder interests.

An opportunity came in the form of an e-mail circulated by the president of the local chapter of the Sierra Club, containing a link to the Cambridge Energy Alliance (CEA), a group that was just forming in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The basic principles of the CEA were not particularly revolutionary, but they provided an outline of a program sufficiently simple in its concept to be taken on by a community practitioner with only limited training in environmental issues and limited technical and engineering knowledge. The idea also seemed well-suited to a medium-sized and fairly well-organized community. It promised to simultaneously promote local economic development, bolster families' economic well-being, and reduce local greenhouse gas emissions. Becoming increasingly concerned that the G-3 was imperiled by decision avoidance psychosis (Tropman, 1997), I proposed to the policy subcommittee that we bring a formal proposal to the next meeting, and adopt the creation of an energy alliance as one of our goals.

AUTHORIZATION TO DEVELOP THE ENERGY ALLIANCE

At the next meeting of the G-3, the proposal was made to create a program similar to the Cambridge Energy Alliance. The idea was well received, and the group thought it should be included in the G-3's upcoming formal report to the mayor. Furthermore, the committee authorized me to go ahead and pursue development of a local energy alliance independent of the larger G-3 initiative. It was further suggested that I work in conjunction with other local and regional players especially the city's Housing Authority and Urban Development Office, the main utility company for the region, and a local foundation.

On May 16, 2008, I met with administrators at the local Housing Authority and the Office of Urban Development. They were generally supportive, but it was decided to

postpone further talks until after the June 12, municipal election—from the beginning, the work had an inescapable political component. After the mayor and aforementioned council member were both reelected, a contract was signed on June 27 with the Housing Authority and Office of Urban Development each contributing a modest allocation ($4,000) for an estimated 150-250 hours toward the development of a feasibility study.

INITIAL ENERGY ALLIANCE PLANNING EFFORTS

Rothman's (2007) Planned Capacity Development model dictates the need to link efforts to national-level technical assistance and regional players. Rothman (2007) further notes that "interweaving people, economic forces, and ecological protection in a common policy framework" (p. 26) is a hallmark of this model, and these indeed remained the dominant dynamics of the planning phase. Accordingly, I started by contacting a staff member at the Cambridge Energy Alliance; he offered his mentorship, leads for other contacts, and welcomed future assistance if the city made some sort of commitment to the idea. Efforts also included meetings with the only city council member who had served on the original G-3 committee. He suggested a three-step process for moving forward: 1) a feasibility study to determine if an energy alliance would be a viable idea for the city; then, dependent on the outcome of the first step, 2) the design of an organizational structure and development of budgets and funding needs; and, finally 3) the actual creation and implementation of an *Energy Alliance*.

My next step was to recruit assistance with the writing of the feasibility study. One person that I brought in was a Ph.D. anthropologist with extensive project management expertise who taught at the university's school of business. The other member was a community organizer from Chicago with both grassroots community-level work and professional lobbying experience. The work during this phase was wedded to Rothman's (2007) Planned Capacity Development model with its emphasis on expert-led technical planning to spur development that will both include and benefit more disadvantaged community residents. I felt that this would be the "best fit" for a change effort which required a high level of technical expertise and support from local government officials.

Additionally, within the eight-part community practice model elaborated by Weil and Gamble (2005), early efforts to promote the Energy Alliance could accurately be described as a blend of social planning and community social and economic development. The framework also includes a helpful description of social worker roles; within this iteration of Social Planning, roles consist of and include "researcher," "proposal writer," "communicator," "planner," and "manager" (p. 128). I felt this accurately encapsulated the work up to that point and over the coming months. While the explicit purpose was to determine if an energy alliance was technically, financially, and logistically viable, team members were also aware that the work would need to include public education and promotion efforts akin to a political campaign. The roles of "educator," "promoter," and "negotiator," included under community social and economic development, aptly covered the breadth of roles for team members (Weil & Gamble, 2005, p. 128).

Foundational to successful CESD planning is identification of a community need that can be addressed in a way that, in turn, creates a ripple effect of additional improvements (Rubin & Rubin, 2001; Rubin & Sherraden, 2005). Similarly, careful planning is key to successful community practice, but a less-mentioned necessary skill is awareness of the larger social and environmental contexts, and how external events may open (or close) windows for action. At the time of the energy alliance's inception, Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, was dominating a great deal of discussion across the county. The idea of an energy alliance offered a politically 'soft' approach to concerns about global warming in that everyone could do their part to help reduce carbon emissions--'soft' because it included aspects that could appeal to the array of ideologies dominating the political landscape at that time. For those who accepted the idea of climate change, this was not a difficult sell. For those who did not, we shifted the conversation to being good stewards of the land and the inherent foolishness of wasting resources unnecessarily: Regardless of political inclinations, few tend to support unnecessarily burning resources with no benefit.

On the local level, the release of a report undertaken by another local social worker with sponsorship from the local United Way and other foundations, highlighted the increasingly difficult economic challenges facing the community's low- to moderate-income residents, who were eligible for little or no public assistance, but whose wages had stagnated while facing the state's highest housing costs (Barkdull, 2007). The report made a bit of a stir in the local media and press, and alarmed city officials who did not want to see their community unfavorably compared to others. Timing was good locally to promote the need to make living in the community more affordable; this approach had added appeal by speaking to the need to help individuals who were not able to receive help from often-maligned social programs.

The next event to dominate the headlines came with the approaching heating season. Energy prices began to escalate, and by the middle of that summer the nation was paying an average of $4.12 per gallon for regular gas at the pump. In the face of rising fuel costs, both the immediate and long-term benefits of an energy alliance were even more attractive. More efficient homes would immediately result in lower energy bills, and savings would continue to increase if energy prices continued to rise. Furthermore, what had by this time become the feasibility team's proposal could now be explained to conservatives as a mechanism for reducing domestic dependence on foreign oil. This readily enabled the team to build broader support among local elected officials.

As if global climate change and record high oil prices were not enough, 2008 threw yet another crisis at the world in the form of the mortgage crisis in the United States with its ripple effects on the global banking industry and national economies. As we continued to complete the very technical work of the feasibility study, we were also able to point out the value of an energy alliance's promise to create local jobs as unemployed individuals could be trained a hired to weatherize homes.

There were approximately ten thousand homes in our city, and most had been built during or previous to the 1970s; indeed, the housing stock near the city's core was over a century old and had not been adequately rehabbed in relation to energy efficiency. Some

homes had received a new layer of insulation during the 1970s, but since that time, materials, techniques, and the collective understanding about energy efficiency had all improved. Few local homeowners enjoyed the surplus finances to take advantage of these new technologies, nor did they have the tools or necessary training to do this work themselves.

As noted previously, successful CESD planning is enhanced by identification of a community need that can be addressed in a way that creates a ripple effect of additional improvements (Rubin & Rubin, 2001; Rubin & Sherraden, 2005). Our early efforts achieved this objective. Within a brief, 18-month period, we had the exciting prospect of launching an organization that could reduce the economic burden of households with modest incomes, produce good-paying blue collar jobs for the local economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions—while enjoying broad support across the political spectrum.

The team continued to engage local and elected officials formally and informally, gathering detailed information about the political landscape, and devising promotional appeals that would be effective in neutralizing potential ideological opposition to the effort. Although much of the work on the feasibility study was technical, team members contributed an equal amount of energy and attention to the highly political nature of the enterprise, and the honing of political skills by team members was essential to the early phases of this project. This aspect of local development work is also strongly emphasized by Rubin and Sherraden (2005).

Definition of an Energy Alliance

At this point it is helpful to briefly offer a description of what an energy alliance is, and how it works, along with the key players and the basic steps. The basic principle of an energy alliance is to make greater use of existing technologies to reduce residential energy use. While factories and SUVs are often the targets of those interested in addressing issues of global climate change, in many communities the greatest consumption of energy takes place in individual homes. In addition to constantly running refrigerators and ‘energy vampires’ (computers, DVD players, etc), one of the single greatest uses of energy is home heating. All of these can be done more efficiently, and the work to accomplish that generally requires only simple technologies with quickly recouped costs.

More specifically, energy alliances provide a ‘one stop shop’ resource for homeowners by connecting them to energy audits, trained contractors, and financing. Energy auditors employ various technologies to give homeowners information about the least efficient components of their overall energy system that could be more easily corrected, for the least expense, and with the greatest potential return on dollars invested. Trained contractors then confirm, correct, and add to that information and provide either specific bids for completing necessary work, or advice for do-it-yourself enthusiasts who may want to take on part or all of the work themselves. The combined information from the auditor and the contractor results in various options for making the home more efficient and estimates for projected savings. The resulting energy savings average close to 30% and the savings immediately offset the costs with total payoff of the original

investment in as little as two to seven years, after which time the homeowner continues to enjoy savings that increase as energy prices rise. The final step in the energy alliance process is to help make financing arrangements so that the cost can be spread over an appropriate time period with the result that homeowners incur no actual out-of-pocket expense—reductions in utility bills are generally greater than the resulting loan payments. The overall result is that an energy alliance helps connect available technologies and resources with no 'cost' to homeowners while simultaneously reducing carbon emissions. It is a model that is consistent with social work perspectives and benefits from the insights of community development theory.

INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL, MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND CROSS-SECTOR PLANNING

CESD initiatives require cross-disciplinary and cross-sector collaboration to successfully attend to the myriad of economic, social, and technical details that arise. While Rubin and Sherraden (2005) emphasize this aspect of work at the implementation and management phase, it was equally true in this author's experience during the planning phase. While the three-member feasibility team brought an array of managerial, organizational, interpersonal and political skills to the mix, the list of stakeholders had to be broadened to successfully undertake the feasibility study.

In addition to meeting with auditors, contractors, and bankers, the team met with two different organizations that had already been doing work that overlapped that of the proposed energy alliance: the local Community Action Agency (CAA) and a private business. Both of these entities were critical to helping the team define a more specific focus for the energy alliance, and how it could complement and not duplicate what was already available in the community.

The area CAA runs a weatherization program. Making use of federal funding, they had been retrofitting an average of about 100 homes per year in their four-county area. Their program was similar to an energy alliance in that they began with an audit employing the latest technologies including a blower door and an infrared camera. The blower door is draped across an open, outside door and has a large fan that blows air out of the building. The resulting negative pressure emphasizes any cracks or other weaknesses that might exist around closed windows or doors, and even voids where insulation had slumped inside walls. The infrared camera adds to this by allowing a quick scan of all areas to 'see' where those problems exist, which often include: improperly sealed electrical outlets, cracks around windows and doors, and problems in and around the foundation. These energy efficiency problems too often have no visible evidence and without the combination of the blower door and infrared camera it is unlikely homeowners could finds these weaknesses on their own.

However, the CAA's program is different from the energy alliance model as they only serve those who fall below certain income guidelines—and they offer homeowners little choice. Indeed, spending limits dictate the work that can be completed (the cap of $3,500 per home was raised in 2009). Generally speaking, CAA weatherization programs always spend the full amount whether or not it provides the best return on investment, but

most often, they are not able to spend the necessary amount to address the unique problems of each house. Additionally, they are only able to complete work on a limited number of homes compared to estimates indicating much greater numbers that could benefit.

The team also met with a businessman who had leveraged his sheet metal business and personal relationship with the mayor into contracts with local government to perform audits and upgrades for public buildings. His organization had already enjoyed favorable local press for work on some of the larger city and county buildings. The feasibility study team had originally imagined serving commercial, public, and residential buildings, but became dissuaded as we learned that doing this work with big, non-residential buildings was more complex on several levels. More importantly, the team was not interested in duplicating services or creating unnecessary competition.

The city was already being served by a business addressing large government and commercial buildings, and the CAA weatherization program was serving a modest number of low-income home owners; but neither was set up to serve thousands of middle-income homeowners. Due to the feasibility study team's effective educational and inter-organizational efforts, these stakeholders were supportive of the energy alliance proposal and were convinced that this was a good idea for the city. They saw an energy alliance as an essential service that could reduce the city's carbon output, stem the flow of local dollars to an energy company headquartered in another state, and produce numerous jobs in the local economy.

Completing the Planning Phase

Based on the responses the team was receiving and the data we were gathering, it seemed increasingly clear that the idea of an energy alliance for our community was viable. However, while auditors, contractors, and banks were already operating in the community in ways that contributed to the overall goals, none of those players could pursue this work unilaterally. And while it all appeared relatively simple, without an energy alliance to coordinate the process, the necessary steps that would result in significant reductions in residential greenhouse gases and the resulting community development were rarely taking place.

Energy audits had been available for years—often for free or at reduced costs—but the few people who took the time to have their homes audited rarely took the next steps: indeed, there was no clear guidance about what those steps might be. Contractors had always been available to do the work, but without the audit and the intervention of an objective third party, many homeowners were unsure about who to hire or about what work to have done. For instance, homeowners could contact a window installer or someone in the business of putting insulation in their attics—and, generally speaking, the contractor was more than happy to sell windows or more insulation—but it was unclear what should be done to assure the most effective changes, in what order, and in what amounts to assure the most favorable ratio of investment to savings.

Without the audit, coordination, and objectivity provided by an energy alliance, the homeowner had little sense of what repairs made the most sense from a financial

perspective. Finally, without the authority of an energy alliance, financing was rarely available for such endeavors and homeowners were left to invest with insufficient, object information about likely returns. While various tax incentives helped to encourage some improvements for homeowners, these were generally performed in an ad hoc serving the profits of contractors and suppliers. But, without a specific, intentional effort to maximize investments for consumers, the activity was less than it could have been. Ironically, the market-driven system was not serving local business interests or consumers. Very little was being done to reduce carbon emissions

In a similar fashion, the energy alliance model promised to move beyond the tired paradigms of government versus private sector, or Keynesian versus Supply Side economic theories. The government-sponsored weatherization programs carried out by the CAA imposed strict means testing on potential consumers, while the private sector pursued only the most profitable ventures, (generally large commercial buildings over residential dwellings). There was no incentive for either to serve the large number of homes that actually offered the greatest community-wide need, the broadest opportunity for reducing carbon outputs, and the most likely possibility of creating jobs while keeping money in the community.

To fill the gap, the feasibility team proposed a hybrid organization composed of government, private, and non-profit elements as a "one-stop shop." Essentially, local government would house and support a staff person to coordinate the work of energy auditors, local contractors, local banks, and homeowners. Such a position could be sustained with a mix of public sector funding and foundation grants. It was further recommended that the organization be structured as a nimble and flexible social enterprise (Yunus, 2009) that would be mission-driven; its governance structure should carefully ensure cross-sector alignment and accountability (Lawson & Barkdull, 2001). A CESDO's ability to balance its social mission with business concerns is critical to its viability (Rubin & Sherraden, 2005).

Our recommendation for launching the energy alliance met no opposition. Instead we received enthusiastic support from the various stakeholders we engaged—from conservative bankers and independent contractors, from visionary energy auditors imagining new ways of meeting energy needs in the most efficient fashion possible, and from homeowners seeking lower energy bills and greater comfort during the long winter.

In August, the team completed an interim report with a clear recommendation for a necessary 'awareness-raising' process—part marketing and part political campaign—to gain support for the idea and to create a sufficient customer base. This report was distributed to all stakeholders including the city. One of the mayor's assistants expressed his appreciation for the interim report, noting that it gave him something concrete to take with him to a meeting in Washington, DC to report on the progress of the city's Cool Cities program.

Work continued on the complete feasibility study with numerous meetings with community groups and government officials. A GANT chart was presented to the mayor's staff demonstrating a carefully coordinated and detailed schedule to secure seed funds and begin pilot projects to test the practical logistics of the model, and to screen

and hire staff. The feasibility study team had clearly exceeded the original obligation of 150-250 hours in the contract. In October of 2008, a completed feasibility study was distributed to the various city government offices and to local County Commissioners, whose support we had also won.

MOVING FROM PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

The next stage of the work, accomplished over the next year, took the most time, was the most frustrating, and yielded the fewest gains. A long series of meetings—some involving multiple stakeholders, others limited to direct talks with the mayor's staff—resulted in little more than confusion. Through the long winter and spring, the feasibility study team tried to generate support for implementation among city officials who had been beaten down by the vicissitudes of the Fall 2008 elections that swept a number of anti-government Tea Party activists into office locally and nationally. Despite having just won reelection, the mayor's staff felt under attack and was preoccupied with political vulnerability. While the team felt that we were simply asking for permission to write grants on behalf of the city to enter the next phase of the work—the implementation of pilot programs and the initiation of a marketing and education campaign for the public--we instead found ourselves on a treadmill chasing promises. At one point the feasibility study served as the center piece of a 'dog and pony' show for a U.S. Congressman where the city wanted to demonstrate the innovative things it was doing to promote a green economy. Our presentation was rewarded with a high level endorsement from the Congressman's office recommending that the city support our efforts. The city was proud of the endorsement but remained wary of actually taking the necessary steps. Their delaying tactics included repeated requests for additional information that had already been provided, meetings that concluded with vague promises to "move forward," and the absence of decision-makers at crucial junctures.

In the process of gaining cross-sector support, we had failed to manage the relationships as well with the city government—an entity on which we were completely dependent for success. In retrospect, the first two lessons to be taken from the whole experience might be 1) to keep the message simple and clear, and 2) to not become overly dependent on a single course of action. In meetings with the other parties, it was easy to keep the message simple as the focus was on just the portion pertaining to each individual group: Auditors quickly understood what their role would be; contractors were hungry for work; bankers wanted to make loans; homeowners wanted warmer homes and lower energy bills. But in the process of explaining to the city how that would all fit together, the description became more complex. Overworked staff members had not actually read the feasibility study and were unwilling to take the risk of moving forward in what had become a suddenly politically-fraught environment. Values conflicts and misunderstandings are typical challenges in CESD work (Rubin & Sherraden, 2005), and they increased the very real emotional and physical fatigue of the three feasibility team volunteers.

The team got mired in this unproductive relationship because, for two different reasons, we failed to understand the need to avoid dependence on a single course of action. The first involved the reality that connecting ourselves to the city was the most

promising place to start, including start-up funds and an office, along with other resources. After all, it was the mayor's office that had initiated our work, even if only indirectly.

The other misunderstanding may have resulted from the fact that none of the feasibility team members was looking for jobs. None of us was interested in actually managing the energy alliance—though we considered ourselves to be the best positioned to get it started—and each of us had other, full-time obligations. Our unwillingness to take a more active role in the implementation phase was a likely concern to the already-overworked city staff and the natural fear that the whole project might land in their laps. Assurance that we would remain involved as citizen volunteers as part of a strong supervisory board (Rubin & Sherraden, 2005) was a strategy that we thought would prove effective to overcome such concerns, but it was insufficient.

Our dependence on the city's active engagement had hamstrung the initiative at the end of the planning phase. The city was either reluctant or unwilling to make any further commitment at that time, but they kept requesting additional meetings and continued to talk about the Energy Alliance (EA) as though they both supported it and were involved in shepherding its development over the next 6 months.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY, CO-OPTATION, AND DISAPPOINTING RESULTS

The feasibility study team members had mostly moved on to other projects. As the lead, I continued minimal engagement during this period, until the city received an unexpected boon in the form of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) federal stimulus funds. The mayor's office had applied for and received several hundred thousand dollars in federal, energy efficiency funds. While the ARRA had included additional monies for weatherizing low income housing (and was a fantastic boon to the local Community Action Agency), the ARRA had led to the development of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG), including $3.1 billion to help states invest in energy efficiency and the green economy. The energy alliance had been one of the major parts of the city's EECBG application. After receiving word that the application had been approved, in May of 2009 the City Council voted to support development of the local energy alliance through an allocation of $175,000; further, the new organization would be housed in the Office of Urban Development. The County Commission had also received $64,000 in EECBG funding, and opted to devote those funds to the effort. Between the two branches of government, the EA now had $239,000 to implement the new CESDO, only $3,000 below what had been recommended for start-up in the feasibility study.

According to the plan outlined in the study, the next phase was to include sorting out the various legal issues, developing an accounting process, and creating the necessary boards. I was included as a member of the advisory board, although I was still concerned that the organizational structure for the effort did not resemble the recommendations for the nimble and accountable hybrid organization proposed in the feasibility study. Indeed, what seemed at the time like the long awaited victory turned out to be the beginning of a

series of disappointments: few of the recommendations in the study were followed; funds were not allocated for the public education campaign or to generate citizen involvement; and the need for twenty-four pilot audits in advance of the 2009 heating season—essential to the next developmental steps—were essentially ignored.

First, the job search dragged on through the summer months, and as fall approached the city explained that the grant money, though approved, had not yet been released by the federal government. This was discouraging as the city could have provided short-term funding in anticipation of being repaid when the grant finally arrived—certainly, they had sufficient discretionary funds in the spring of 2008 to fund the feasibility study. The window of opportunity to initiate work in advance of the coming heating season was lost.

Near the end of 2009 an individual was hired to serve as the Energy Sustainability Coordinator for the city. While she brought some limited experience necessary for such a role, the breadth of skills needed to accomplish the extremely complex work of starting up and managing the new energy alliance: project management, planning, and development skills, marketing, grassroots citizen involvement, along with personal, political, and inter-organizational skills (Rubin & Sherraden, 2005)—proved a daunting list. Some health-related problems in the new employee's family further hampered the effort.

There continued to be periodic meetings in which a dwindling number of the same individuals would arrive to rehash matters and to watch the initiative lose momentum. A series of training sessions were made available to create additional auditors, but this contradicted the reality that there was not yet sufficient work for those already trained—often at their own expense—to do that work. Similarly, contractors were being instructed on matters related to energy efficiency without any corresponding development of a customer base. Bankers were the first to stop coming to the meetings, and—most important of all—there was never any significant presence from homeowners or representatives of neighborhood organizations despite frequent references to long waiting lists of people wanting to make use of the energy alliance's services. Efforts to educate and engage citizens remained minimal.

Over the next two years, only about a dozen homes were audited. Some had repairs completed along with loans from a portion of the original grant to finance the upgrades. At one particularly disappointing meeting, the advisory board was informed that a large portion of the budget was going toward work on public buildings, though the feasibility study had stressed the need to focus on private residences. Indeed, the bulk of the budget was going to the sheet metal business owned by someone with personal connections to an elected city official. At that point it was made explicitly clear that the advisory board was not, in fact, being asked for advice at all, and that the energy alliance had become little more than another layer within the bureaucracy at the Office of Urban Development.

By the end of 2011, the original funding for the energy alliance was mostly spent. While some of that money went into loans to a handful of homeowners, much of it went to pay for a large retrofit of a public building and for two-years of salary for a single job. No meaningful process had been piloted or developed in relation to the energy alliance model. No equipment had been purchased. No extensive public education or marketing

campaign had been engaged; and visibility is foundational to successful CESD (Rubin & Sherraden, 2007). Rather than creating a new process to coordinate community resources addressing community needs, and developing a local model for dealing with a global crisis . . . $239,000 in stimulus funding had gone to create a sleepy bureaucratic office and a single job.

In an October 21, 2011 story by Patrick Springer, it was noted that the state where this work had occurred had "finished last among the states in a ranking of progress in striving toward energy efficiency." The same article noted that the state was among "the 10 states 'most in need of improvement (Springer).'" The director of the Great Plains Institute noted that the state stands "out for a lack of leadership (Springer)."

CONCLUSIONS AND CONNECTIONS TO SOCIAL WORK

Although the tangible results were disappointing in relation to the expectations of the feasibility study and its authors, the fact is that the work had multiple direct and tangential benefits. The efforts to create an energy alliance were central to the city's receipt of EECBG moneys. Fed by those funds the larger, umbrella effort known as the G-3 produced multiple projects that benefitted the city, including traffic light coordination, more efficient public buildings, development of a greenhouse gas inventory (updated annually), an improved recycling program, along with various other projects, awards, and additional EECBG funds. The director that was hired specifically to run the Energy Alliance did not fulfill the hopes outlined in the feasibility study, but she came to be seen as the lead for the G-3 and was able to leverage that work into a job with the state as vice chairwoman of the state chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

Utilizing Rubin and Sherraden's concept of CESDOs (Community Economic and Social Development Organizations) helped to benefit the community. The volunteers who participated in this project were successful in creating a new organization within the city government and in procuring Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants. The program did not perform as well as was hoped in relation to providing economic relief for moderate-income families or spurring local economic development, but the energy alliance continues to exist, which may provide an avenue for future change efforts (though it has not had a customer for over a year). The city has also maintained the alliance's website, and support for a more sustainable community is still broad within city government.

There is a widely held misconception that global issues like climate change can only be solved at the international level. While international cooperation may be a necessary component of the multi-layered solutions required, it is a mistake to neglect the need for local action. Furthermore, the reality is that international corporations and treaties, along with national policies have largely been—directly and indirectly—the cause of global climate change. Large governments, corporations, and various international institutions will inevitably seek to protect their interests with the result that, as noted by Rothman (2007), there is always a "danger that the large-scale components will dominate" and that national and even international objectives will receive greater support from institutions such as the World Bank "at the expense of the grassroots component (p. 26)."

Similar to Rothman's caution above, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) warn community practitioners about the dangers inherent in handing off grassroots efforts too soon to more-powerful institutions. The efforts to develop a community-focused energy alliance were indeed largely co-opted by the municipal government and its needs, and buffeted by a national election and the chase for federal funds. While aware of this potential danger, volunteers were concerned that to delay further to build and strengthen their grassroots effort would have been too risky; the window of availability to receive federal funds necessary to launch the alliance, and the very short time to react to this unexpected opportunity, seemed more compelling at the time. Issues of timing also played out in the very real (and too frequent) context of volunteer burnout.

The early phases of the energy alliance clearly had compelling ideas, the offer of professional services, and a near abundance (at least according to our budget proposals) of necessary capital. However, most of the other components were largely dependent on the second ingredient—capable leaders. The team had developed a strong base of support during the first phase, but as we handed off the project there was a corresponding decrease in that support. The new director aligned herself with the most immediate day-to-day interests and concerns of her employers in city government rather than the auditors, contractors, bankers, and most importantly the homeowners necessary for an energy alliance. The limited education and marketing efforts engaged by the energy alliance were largely directed by technocrats who did little to go beyond basic messages about the need for energy efficiency—there was no connection to global issues or the possibility of new ways to organize communities. Instead of building a process independent of city government, the energy alliance became part of a perpetual bureaucracy with its inherent tendencies toward self-preservation and limited innovation. As had been anticipated during the writing of the feasibility study, instead of creating jobs, assisting thousands of homeowners, and making a real reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the city was nominally involved in completing work on little more than a dozen homes—at tremendous relative expense—and then celebrated its success.

Energy alliances offer a model to move beyond the tired paradigms of government versus market forces and offer a promise to meet the "growing need to build human and social capital, develop employment and training opportunities, and ensure basic rights" (Weil & Gamble, 2005, p. 142). This type of innovative idea represents just one avenue for social work engagement in sustainable community development—an opportunity that Gamble and Hoff (2005) predict will continue to expand over the next two decades or so. Further, they note the unique role that social workers are positioned to play as ethical facilitators and mediators for "citizens forced to choose among competing values and development approaches" (Gamble & Hoff, 2005, p. 184).

This work had begun with a model deeply embedded in social work values, including efforts "to enhance human well-being" . . . "with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty (NASW, 2008, Code of Ethics, Preamble)." Furthermore, it was a model to connect communities around the world. It remains possible that a successful pilot could be replicated in similar communities in the United States, to the north in Canada, and on the other side of the world in China or Bangladesh where increasingly industrialized economies are generating

growing energy demand, and where the results of climate change are potentially most threatening. It is a model that embraces self-determination and understands that the person exists in their environment, including their social and their physical environment.

This paper began by chiding social workers, especially in the United States, for not paying sufficient attention to environmental issues. The model of coordination and collaboration inherent in an energy alliance offers hope for transforming other aspects of community both on the local and the global level, and a way to operate beyond restrictive paradigms that such work must fall under either government-led efforts or be driven completely by capitalist markets. Social workers have a moral obligation to involve themselves in such work, and to take leadership (Macy & Brown, 1998; Orr, 1994; Zapf, 2009). What Joanna Macy (Macy & Brown, 1998) refers to as the 'Great Turning became clear:'

> …if there is to be a livable world for those who come after us, it will be because we have managed to make the transition from the Industrial Growth Society to a Life-sustaining Society. When people of the future look back at this historical moment, they will see, perhaps more clearly than we can now, how revolutionary it is (p. 17).

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Adaptations of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in the North American Context: Local Examples of a Global Restorative Justice Intervention

David K. Androff

Abstract: *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) are restorative justice mechanisms for addressing human rights violations and injustice at the macro level. Mainly applied in the Global South, they have only recently been adapted within North America. The Greensboro, NC TRC was launched by grassroots and community-based organizations in 2004 to examine the causes and consequences of a 1979 incident of racial violence. The Canadian TRC was established in 2008 to address the legacy of colonial policies of assimilation and the forced schooling of indigenous populations. Through a comparison of these two cases, this paper will investigate how the North American context shapes the nature of the problems that these TRCs address, how they are organized, their relationship to the legal system, the role of civil society, and their relationship to poverty and reparations. Implications for social work, restorative justice and the potential for additional TRCs in North America are discussed.*

Keywords*: Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, restorative justice, human rights*

TRCS, SOCIAL WORK AND THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) are a popular human rights intervention based upon restorative justice principles that entail investigations into past human rights violations (Hayner, 2001). TRCs have been implemented around the world in diverse settings such as South and Central America, Africa, and Asia. While each one is unique, a TRC may be defined as a national or community-based intervention to repair social fabric damaged by violence and oppression through investigation (truth seeking) (Androff, 2012a) and dialogue (reconciliation) (Androff, *in press*). The first TRCs in the 1970s and 80s emerged in Africa and South America as tools to assist societies transitioning from dictatorships and regimes of political oppression. The most famous TRC occurred in South Africa, and was part of the political compromise in the transition from Apartheid to democracy (Minow, 1998). The high profile and perceived success of the South African TRC in contributing to the peaceful transition and forestalling a civil war inspired many subsequent TRCs around the world, including Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Peru, Morocco, and the Solomon Islands.

TRCs focus on providing the victims of human rights violations with information about the nature and details of crime; this serves to clarify the nature of the violence and to create opportunities for closure and healing for victims (Androff, 2012b). TRCs can include multiple forms of justice, but are centered on the restorative justice principles of responding to victims' needs, engaging multiple stakeholders, and attempting to rebuild the relationship and social fabric that are damaged by violence (Androff, 2010a). Through bringing together victims, perpetrators and community members to share their

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experiences before a public and supportive commission, TRCs contribute to reconciling formerly divided and antagonistic people. TRCs often incorporate elements of local or traditional culture, such as indigenous conflict resolution or community justice to facilitate reconciliation (Androff, 2008). TRCs conclude their work by publishing a final report with detailed findings from their investigation and participants' testimonials; these reports also make recommendations for moving forward, promoting further reconciliation, and institutional reform.

TRCs and Social Work

TRCs are multi-disciplinary interventions, drawing upon theory and practice from diverse fields such as law, theology, psychology, political science, anthropology, sociology, and social work. Androff (2010b) has explored the connection between TRCs and social work. TRCs are relevant to social work in the problems that they respond to and seek to ameliorate, such as assisting disempowered and vulnerable populations, confronting racism, and improving the social welfare of victims of violence and oppression; their methods, such as community practice, civic engagement, narrative recovery from trauma; and their goals, such as reconciliation and peace-building, building strong sustainable communities, and promoting social justice and human rights.

Social workers in South Africa provided therapeutic support and social services to victims as part of the TRC (Hamber, 1998; Sacco & Hoffman, 2004). In addition, social workers in South Africa contributed to the TRC through professional advocacy; social work educators and professional organizations submitted statements to the TRC detailing their complicity in Apartheid policies, such as not admitting Black students to social work schools and maintaining different standards of practice between white and Black South Africans (Loffell, 2000; Lombard, 2000). Social workers from Australia and New Zealand were involved in the Timor-Leste TRC in assessing the mental health needs of the largely traumatized population and designing a mental health services delivery system and policies. The TRC in Canada is holding public events at schools of social work, and coordinating outreach efforts to ensure the participation of indigenous populations (www.trc.ca).

Despite these connections, there are many missed opportunities for social workers to supplement and improve the work of TRCs (Androff, 2010b). There is a natural relationship between the values and goals of TRCs with the profession of social work's code of ethics. Social workers could contribute their professional knowledge and practice skills of assessing and working with vulnerable people by facilitating interviews and eliciting testimonials before TRCs, and providing therapeutic and social support to victims. TRCs represent an opportunity for social workers to deliver culturally competent psychosocial services, and to engage in advocacy on behalf of oppressed and vulnerable populations.

North American Context

North America differs in many regards from the settings where past TRCs have been implemented. Five characteristics of previous TRCs guide this comparative analysis of

TRCs: the background context of violence that they address; the nature of how TRCs are initiated, usually through a political transition; the level of cooperation with the legal system; the role of civil society; and the economic context of poverty, inequality, and development. Each characteristic is discussed in the contrast between the Global South and North.

Are the problems that TRCs respond to in North America qualitatively different than those faced in the Global South, or are they variations of the same problems? The Global South is a term that loosely applies to less developed countries, emerging nations, and what used to be commonly referred to as the Third World. TRCs in the Global South have addressed the problems of military dictatorships, political oppression, civil wars, "dirty" wars, ethnic cleansing, foreign invasion and occupation (Hayner, 2001). Nations in the Global North, typically industrialized, democratic, and situated in Western Europe and North America, are less often associated with the violence, strife, and corruption of the Global South. Yet there remain structural problems of violence, oppression, poverty, and injustice that TRCs can address.

Most TRCs have occurred in the context of a political transition (Hayner, 2001). TRCs are one mechanism that societies use to facilitate transitions from oppressive political states to democracy, and are often part of a new government's attempt to reckon with the past and set the stage for a new social contract with the people. TRCs are a part of the field of transitional justice; much of the discussion and debate about TRCs involves reforming social institutions; promoting national healing, reconciliation, and unity; and achieving accountability for perpetrators and effective justice for victims (Minow, 1998). However, governments in the Global North may be less likely to experience a political transition. If there is no overt or otherwise shift in power relations – can TRCs in the Global North still be called transitional justice? After a political transition, the new government often confers legitimacy upon the TRC; in post-conflict settings, TRCs can suffer from being perceived as overly sympathetic with particular interest groups. When there is no political transition, TRCs are sometime initiated and operated by the same government that was in power during the contested period, and may even bear responsibility for some of the abuses. How is the legitimacy of TRCs affected when the same government responsible for perpetrating abuses and injustice is implementing a TRC or similar intervention for its own past abuses?

Transitional justice mechanisms often compensate for the lack of or weak judiciaries. TRCs are frequently called "hybrid" interventions where they operate in tandem with legal systems. In Timor-Leste, the TRC referred "serious crimes" to the formal legal system, and perpetrators of "less serious crimes" could avoid prosecution by participating in community reconciliation ceremonies (Androff, 2008). In South Africa, perpetrators who made a full confession for their politically motivated crimes under Apartheid could receive legal amnesty (Minow, 1998). However, Western nations pride themselves on the rule of law and are characterized by strong independent legal systems that address a wide range of civil and criminal offenses. Do the functioning legal systems of the in the West diminish the role that a TRC can play, and how does such a system change the way that a TRC could operate? Restorative justice scholars and practitioners advocate for the reform

of criminal justice systems in the West, perhaps TRCs could add to such efforts (Beck, Kropf, & Leonard, 2011).

Priscilla Hayner (2001) has called civil society the "essential ingredient" of TRCs. Civil society groups have influenced the work of many TRCs to ensure their responsiveness and sensitivity to victims groups, women's groups, and children. In the West, there is a historical tradition of civil society groups organizing, advocating and influencing social and political institutions. Should civil society play a greater role with TRCs in North America, or is there less of a need due to the pre-existence of community based and grassroots organizations?

Most TRCs have occurred in the Global South, in many settings that have been characterized by mass poverty and deprivation, inequality, and economic and social underdevelopment. These conditions often exacerbate conflict or are causal factors in the precipitating violence. There is a growing recognition that economic and social development is a crucial component to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. Research from the Balkans (Stover & Weinstein, 2004) indicates that economic recovery can contribute to pro-social relations between antagonistic parties. TRCs have been increasingly concerned about the conditions of inequality and deprivation that must be remedied in order to achieve sustainable peace, and have given greater attention to the "positive" human rights, such as the right to development and material welfare. Early TRCs in Latin America made efforts to include reparations and restitution for victims of human rights violations and their families, yet also suffered criticism that they were "buying off" victims as a substitution for justice. How should TRCs in industrialized, developed nations focus on issues of reparations? In the context of a "richer" nation with higher standards of living and social welfare policies, is there less of a need for TRCs to include these issues? Of course, poverty exists in developed economies, and victims of violence and other human rights abuses also suffer material consequences of lost income and decreased standards of living regardless of the overall economic context.

Having raised several questions about how the differences between the historical, political, legal, civil, and economic contexts of past settings of TRCs contrast with that of many nations in the Global North, two case studies will provide examples to further investigate how TRCs may be adapted to various settings. The two case studies are drawn from the only TRCs to have been implemented in North America: in the United States and in Canada.

NORTH AMERICAN TRCS

Greensboro, NC

The GTRC was a community's response to the 1979 'Greensboro Massacre'. On November 3, 1979 a caravan of KKK and American Nazi Party members fired into a labor demonstration that was being held in a low-income neighborhood of Greensboro, North Carolina (GTRC, 2006; Magarrell & Wesley, 2008). Five people were killed and 10 were injured. The demonstrators were a racially mixed group with ties to the Communist Worker's Party. They had been organizing for labor rights and social justice

in North Carolina, and had gained union leadership roles in local textile mills. They had previously confronted the Klan, and there was an escalation of provocative rhetoric leading up to the attack.

The city of Greensboro did not react well to the shooting. They arrested and harassed the victims, and distorted the media coverage of the violence to portray the incident as an equal shootout between two radical fringe groups - rather than a one-sided attack. The victims were portrayed as dangerous communist agitators, outsiders without community ties. Many suspected Greensboro police complicity in the attack; later it was learned that the Greensboro Police Department and the FBI had an informant inside the KKK – and knowledge that they were arming themselves in advance of the demonstration, however there was no police presence on the day of the attack. Distrust of the city government deepened, particularly among low-income and African American residents.

There were three subsequent legal trials. Two criminal trials resulted in acquittals for the perpetrators by all white juries, even though the attack was videotaped in broad daylight. However, the District Attorney wasn't supportive of the victims, equating the killing of communists in the USA to the Vietnam War. The victims felt that the criminal justice system did not produce any meaningful justice for those killed. These events negatively affected economic, social and political dimensions of life in Greensboro, and the lingering racial tensions contributed to a climate of animosity. In 1985, the victims won a federal civil suit against the perpetrators and the Greensboro Police Department for the wrongful death of one of the victims, and used the settlement to fund their organizing efforts and to expose their story, discover the truth behind the violence, and pursue justice for the victims.

Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC)

25 years later, community-based organizations, grassroots groups, churches, and civil rights organizations partnered to create a TRC as a means of re-investigating the Greensboro Massacre and to promote reconciliation in the community (GTRC, 2006; Magarrell & Wesley, 2008). The International Center for Transitional Justice provided consultation, and the GTRC received funding through philanthropic organizations and individual donations. Although initiated in part by the victims of the Greensboro Massacre and their supporters, a selection process was implemented to ensure that the Commissioners who led the GTRC would be objective and independent.

The GTRC was launched in 2004; its seven Commissioners were mandated to examine the context, causes and consequences of the events of November 3, 1979, and to promote dialogue and reconciliation in the community. Although their focus was only one day, they used this one event as a lens through which to investigate patterns of racism, anti-union activity, and white supremacy over decades. In their investigation, the GTRC reviewed the evidence from all three legal trials, local and federal law enforcement records, newspaper articles and academic literature. In addition, they took approximately 200 statements given in personal interviews and public hearings. The GTRC held three public hearings; the first was focused on the events leading up to 3 November 1979, the second on the events of that day, and the third on the consequences

of the violence. In 2006, the GTRC finished its work by releasing a comprehensive Final Report, with recommendations for the community (GTRC, 2006).

The GTRC was a grassroots or community-based TRC. Some have called it an "unofficial truth project" (Bickford, 2007). Throughout the process, the Mayor and City Council of Greensboro officially opposed the GTRC, however all the African American City Council members voted to support it. While being a grassroots commission had some benefits, there were some clear limitations associated with the lack of state sponsorship. Chief among them was that the GTRC lacked subpoena power, and thus could not compel the participation of individuals, nor obtain official records. Another obstacle to the investigation was the strict control of information by federal agencies. Several documents released to the GTRC under the Freedom of Information Act were substantially blacked out. There was no question of amnesty – however the widows and survivors of the attack signed an agreement that they would not pursue prosecution if any new evidence was uncovered in the re-investigation.

While the majority of GTRC participants were victims and concerned community members, groups critical of the victims and the GTRC also participated. Greensboro police personnel, lawyers from the criminal trials, and some KKK members and a former Nazi came forward, giving statements and attending the public hearings. Although one perpetrator came forward, expressed remorse and apologized to the family of the demonstrator that he had murdered, many felt that the failure of more perpetrators to participate or disclose details about law enforcement complicity in the attack hindered a broader reconciliation in the community (Androff, 2010a). Despite these criticisms and its limitations, the GTRC became a powerful example of participatory democracy and for what citizens could achieve to face their community's past in spite of government resistance. Many participants felt that the GTRC's ability to bring people together in a peaceful setting who used to be violently antagonistic demonstrates the potential for reconciliation built on mutual tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The GTRC, as a community based restorative justice intervention, made important contributions and the grassroots coalitions forged in its creation and implementation have continued to work for political and social change in Greensboro.

Canada

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission addresses the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools which operated over 100 years as part of a national policy of forced assimilation (ICTJ, 2008). The residential schools, begun in 1874, were run first by churches and charity organizations and then by the state, primarily the child welfare system (Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010). The policy of forced schooling separated First Nations, Inuit, and other Aboriginal children from their families and placed them into institutional boarding schools. Children were not allowed to speak their native languages or practice their cultural and spiritual beliefs. These policies were aimed at changing the cultural identity of the child, or to "kill the Indian in the child". The schools were overcrowded and underfunded; children faced high rates of disease, malnutrition, physical and sexual abuse, and death. Over 150,000 indigenous children attended the Indian Residential Schools, the last of which closed in 1996.

This experience was deeply traumatic to the indigenous populations of Canada, which continue to struggle with numerous social problems such as high rates of poverty, disease, family violence, substance abuse and over-representation in the child welfare and criminal justice systems (Trocmé, Knoke, & Blackstock, 2004). Historical trauma refers to traumatic events that are not limited to individuals, but affect social groups, to communities (Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010). Based on research with Holocaust survivors and their children, the concept of historical trauma also attends to how trauma is passed down inter-generationally. In addition to collective distress, it is also about harm that was intentionally perpetrated by outsiders. Historical injustices and traumatic events have been connected to contemporary social problems. Indigenous populations in Canada suffer many disparities and disproportionalities across many domains of wellbeing; they experience lower life expectancy, high rates of disease, high incidence and concentrations of poverty, high rates of substance abuse and family violence (Trocmé, Knoke & Blackstock, 2004). In Canada, 30 to 40% of all children in the child welfare system are indigenous (Farris-Manning & Zandstra, 2003), and the rate of suicide among indigenous youth is 5 to 7 times greater (Health Canada, 2006).

Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CTRC)

The 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) was the result of years of advocacy, legal suits, and negotiation with indigenous communities and survivors of the Indian Residential Schools (ICTJ, 2008). In 2008, Prime Minister Harper made a formal apology on behalf of the state to all indigenous communities for the policies of forced schooling and assimilation, acknowledging that government policy was to separate and isolate indigenous children from their families and communities; churches and professional social work organizations have also apologized for their role in the Indian Residential Schools. The judicial agreement included $2 billion in reparations to be paid by the Canadian government and the 4 churches that also administered the schools. The Common Experience fund pays a lump sum of $10,000 to any survivor who spent any part of a year in one of the schools, and $3,000 for each additional year. The Independent Assessment Process allows for victims of physical and sexual abuse additional reparations of up to $275,000, but the burden falls upon the victim to document the abuse. The IRSSA also set up funds for healing and commemorative programs to address cultural and collective harms through the promotion of spiritual renewal, public education, memorials, and museums.

The IRSSA established a national level Truth and Reconciliation Commission with a 5-year mandate, allocating $60 million in funding. Supplementing the other aspects of the IRSSA, the TRC was created to allow the survivors to tell their story and to educate the public about the nature of the abuses suffered in the Indian Residential Schools. The purpose includes unearthing the previously silenced stories and providing validation and emotional relief for the survivors, as well as to combat the widespread ignorance about the history. The Canadian TRC is unique; it is the first to be established at a national level in a Western nation, the first to be initiated through the judicial system, and the first to focus colonial harms against indigenous people.

The CTRC began in 2008, and is currently ongoing, but has faced several significant challenges. There have been changes in personnel, funding cuts, delays, and tensions between the twin goals of accountability for perpetrators and reconciliation and healing. The CTRC does not have subpoena power to compel the participation of perpetrators, and its mandate does not allow for the naming of individual perpetrators. Furthermore, the CTRC faces the challenge of ensuring that victims perceive the process as legitimate. It is conducting outreach among indigenous communities across Canada to educate survivors about the process and to ensure that they have the opportunity to participate. As this TRC has been implemented relatively late in the history of the Indian Residential Schools, many survivors are passing on. The Timor-Leste TRC also faced challenges in conducting outreach to rural participants; many communities were wary of participating at first and regrettably many only felt confident about coming forward after the official process concluded (Androff, 2008). Despite these challenges, the CTRC is an opportunity to raise awareness about the impact of colonialism and atrocities committed against indigenous peoples, and has the potential to result in political and social change that benefits the indigenous population of Canada.

THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT REVISITED

Having explored the two case examples of North American adaptations of TRCs, a return to the characteristics of this unique context provides insights into the viability and future for how this global restorative justice intervention could be implemented locally.

How do the underlying problems and background contexts addressed by the GTRC and CTRC compare with previous TRCs? The GTRC was focused on one episode of racial violence between two groups, yet also was concerned with the nature of the state's involvement in the violence. The GTRC was particularly interested in the degree of complicity of the Greensboro Police Department, the FBI, and the ATF: how much foreknowledge did they possess about what the KKK and Nazis were planning? What could they have done to prevent the attack, either through neglect if not tacit approval? Some in Greensboro questioned if these law enforcement agencies had a more active role in planning the attack, and that perhaps the economic interests that were threatened by the demonstrators' success in labor organizing, such as the owners of local textile mills, also bear some responsibility. The CTRC also addressed an issue of state abuse, albeit much larger, that of essentially the colonization and forced assimilation of the indigenous population. The harms recognized in the IRSSA and the subsequent government apologies were the direct consequence of state policy; a concerted and organized effort to destroy a people, their culture, their communities, and their future through their children. From these examples, it may be that TRCs in the North American context can be effective at addressing the abuses and excesses of the modern state such as institutional racism and the effects of colonialism.

This may be a relevant direction for future TRCs in North America or other Western, developed nations in the Global North. Given that many nations in the Global North are characterized by strong government states, TRCs may serve as a vehicle for addressing the unequal distribution of power in society, overlooked problems that the state has failed to address, and historical abuses that remain contemporarily significant. Furthermore, as

many nations in the West have significant minority populations (for example, the US is rapidly becoming a minority-majority country), TRCs could be important tools for dealing with conflict between groups within a pluralistic state. In addition, as the pressures of immigration into developed countries increase, potential conflicts around race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture may present opportunities for applying TRCs to promote a positive vision of diversity and co-existence. One relevant example may be police abuse; community discord often follows episodes of police brutality and violence. TRCs could be effective tools for grappling with the issues of minority relations with state power.

TRCs in the North American context are not likely to be generated through a process of political transition. These governments are more stable, and less likely to engage in transitions from oppression to democracy. Most are democracies, and therefore open to social and political change from within the system. How does the lack of a political transition affect TRCs? The GTRC was limited in many ways be the lack of official state sanction, and in fact by the contemporary city administration's resistance. Many participants in the GTRC felt that its work was hampered and a fuller reconciliation was impeded by a lack of political change in Greensboro, because the same political, economic, and social interests that influenced the local government in 1979 essentially remained in power in 2004. Without the resources or stamp of legitimacy of state support, the GTRC's investigation and its outreach to all city residents was limited. The CTRC is also limited in some ways by the lack of political transition, and indeed many indigenous communities in Canada have questioned the authenticity and genuineness of the CTRC as it comes from the same source that perpetrated the original injustice. Some First Nations tribes have protested the CTRC for this reason.

Based on these examples, it is clear that TRCs in the Global North will face challenges of legitimacy connected to the lack of a transition context. TRCs in North America that are organized by or in concert with the government will be challenged to overcome perceptions and cynicism about being an exercise in political expediency. These TRCs are also at risk of being co-opted for ulterior political motives. TRCs that are not connected to the political system may suffer from enjoying less political support or be more likely to be resisted by the political structure. At the same time, political transitions can be messy and confusing, and there can be a benefit to efforts to address past violations within a stable economic and political framework. TRCs may be a tool to shift power within an existing democratic system.

How can TRCs in the North American context cooperate with existing legal and social service systems? Unlike previous TRCs, TRCs in North America are not likely to be implemented in a legal vacuum. However, the existing legal system, and in particular the criminal justice system is far from perfect and could benefit from significant reform. The GTRC was in part a response to the failure of the legal system to provide justice for the victims and hold the perpetrators accountable. The so-called functioning legal system resulted in acquittals for the killers, although there was a civil settlement in federal court. The CTRC was also the result of a civil settlement; in both cases there was no criminal sanction for the parties responsible for the abuses. Despite the shortcomings of current legal systems, the Canadian judicial system did render the IRSSA, which may point to

future possibilities. Neither the GTRC nor the CTRC has an official relationship with the legal system. The potential for hybrid TRCs, working in tandem with the courts, has not been explored. However there is a precedent for hybrid courts, possible examples include drug courts, mental health courts, and perhaps most appropriately tribal courts. These models may indicate how TRCs can partner with courts to provide a more meaningful justice for victims by promoting accountability while still attending to the restorative justice principle of restoring the social fabric.

There is a great opportunity for civil society organizations to make use of the TRC model in North America. The presence of a vibrant civil society can strengthen the work of TRCs, regardless if they are operated with or without state sanction. Either way, civil society groups have the potential to influence and support TRCs in North America. Civil society must be more active to ensure that TRCs are responsive to victims' rights, and can work to prevent their co-option by political institutions. TRCs in North America can be a vital tool for participatory democracy; a means for citizens to engage in civic action to address the problems of their community and society.

Can TRCs be a tool for addressing poverty and inequality in Western democracies? Obviously, poverty still exists in Western nations. Yet the relative high standards of living may mean that TRCs will focus less upon victims' economic welfare and place more emphasis upon reconciliation or healing. However, TRCs can serve an important function in addressing inequality by calling attention to the often overlooked, marginalized populations that exist, if somewhat hidden, in rich countries. Through participant testimonials, public hearings, and dissemination of Final Reports, TRCs can publicize the plight of poor and vulnerable people, drawing public support for supportive policies

What is the future for TRCs in North America or other Western democracies? There are several possibilities. Communities across the U.S. South have begun to explore organizing TRCs to address their own histories of racial violence and oppression, including in eastern North Carolina, Mississippi, and one in New Orleans to address the causes and consequences of the disaster following Hurricane Katrina (Magarrell & Gutierrez, 2006). A group of descendants from a preeminent New England family that profited from the trans-Atlantic slave trade have suggested that the TRC model may be useful for grappling with their legacy in the history of enslavement in the U.S. (DeWolf, 2008). Scholars such as Walters (2008) have called for a TRC to examine the contentious issue of reparations for slavery in the U.S. TRCs may be useful for addressing other issues of indigenous rights; the U.S. shares a history of forced schooling and destructive assimilation policies of indigenous people with Canada. Senator Leahy from Vermont, the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, made national news when he called for a commission to investigate torture, questionable interrogation techniques, and wrongdoings committed in the "war on terror" (CNN, 2009). It is a sad reality that there is no shortage of human rights violations, even in the Global North for which TRCs may be a useful intervention. Anywhere that there is community trauma, or an abuse of state power, TRCs can contribute to the recognition of harm to victims and the reconciliation of divided societies.

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Urban Heat Islands and Social Work: Opportunities for Intervention

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Abstract: *The urban heat island (UHI), formed by surface modification of soil and vegetation, increases minimum nighttime temperatures within cities and causes heat-stress among dwellers. Children, elders and low-income persons are disproportionately burdened by the UHI. These populations often lack the necessary biological, economic and social resources to cope with or prevent heat stress. Because UHI's are expected to increase with climate change, more social workers will be expected to serve the populations most affected by UHI. This paper addresses how the social work profession can play a role in efforts to address the effects of UHI's on vulnerable populations.*

Keywords: *Urban heat island, environmental justice, heat stress, climate change*

INTRODUCTION

Science has determined that surface modification of soil and vegetation can increase temperatures. Large amounts of soil and vegetation reduced to build city streets, homes and businesses increase temperatures. Any city with significant amounts of surface modification experiences increased urban temperatures, whether its natural climate is temperate, tropical, warm or arid (Harlan, Brazel, Prashad, Stefanov, & Larsen, 2006). Excessive heat lingers in urban areas well past daytime, and temperatures remain elevated into evenings and nights. Nighttime elevation of temperatures causes the most harm to urban dwellers. This increase in temperature within urban cores, when compared to adjacent rural and suburban areas, has been coined as the urban heat island or UHI. The UHI can negatively affect quality of life for urban dwellers. Excessive heat can harm individual health and wellbeing, especially individuals in temperate climates not acclimated to long intervals of excessive heat or vulnerable populations such as elders, children and people without access to air conditioning (Harlan et al., 2006).

Until recently, research and information on urban heat islands could not be found in journals on human services or social sciences as disciplines such as meteorology appeared to study UHI's and their impacts on communities. However, this has changed within the last two decades. The twenty-first century has led to growing interest and awareness of how temperature can affect human experiences. Recent research in the social sciences identify that urban heat islands appear to unjustly effect marginalized populations (Harlan et al., 2006).

SCIENCE OF THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND

There are three catalytic characteristics of cities that contribute to the UHI: surface modification, building density and population. While UHI occurs in all urban cores, variations in intensity are found due to season, geography and climate. When urban areas

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develop, open-land and vegetation are replaced by industrial landscapes and infrastructure which include: buildings, skyscrapers, houses, cement sidewalks and paved roads. These structures absorb heat and subsequently warm their surroundings. The Environmental Protection Agency summarizes the source of the urban heat phenomenon, "Surfaces that were once permeable and moist [are now] impermeable and dry" (Climate Protection, 2008, p. 2). Impermeable surfaces (such as stone, asphalt, brick and concrete) tend to be dark in color (for example, gray concrete, black tar roads, dark shingles) and they absorb solar energy at faster rates than vegetation and consequently warm their surroundings. The darker the surface landscape, the higher the rate at which it absorbs energy. The more surface energy absorbed, the more heat is released into the atmosphere.

Building density also contributes to the increased city temperatures. The majority of most buildings' surface area do not face open air or spaces, instead they generally face other warm buildings with heat becoming trapped in the city. The trapped heat is then released during nocturnal times (at dusk and at night). Therefore, cities become efficient heat incubators well past dusk (Oke, 1997). This peak in temperature is most pronounced within 3 to 5 hours after sunset. The experienced elevated urban temperature, when compared to surrounding rural areas, is what constitutes an Urban Heat Island.

The size and population of the urban area will also determine the power and strength of the UHI. On an average night, cities with populations over one million can experience large differences in temperature, anywhere from 5°F to 20°F (Oke, 1997). More importantly, as population rates increase in urban areas this difference in temperature is expected to grow. For example, including data during its period of urbanization from 1948 to 2000, Baker and colleagues (2002) recorded an increase of minimum temperatures in Phoenix, Arizona. Of particular significance is the Sky Harbor Airport where, "the average daily minimum temperature…increased by 5.0°C between 1948 and 2000 and the average daily average temperature rose by 3.1°C" (p. 191). Such elevated temperatures linger into the evenings and nights, when communities normally anticipate relief.

Urban heat islands also significantly lower the quality of water through thermal pollution. Roofs, pavements, buildings or landscapes that reach "50 to 90°F (27 to 50°C) higher than air temperatures" transfer heat to water and increase storm water runoff. On average, runoff from urban areas tend to be "20-30°F (11-17°C) warmer" than runoff from rural areas (Climate Protection, 2008, p. 15). Sewers release the heated runoff into streams, ponds, lakes and rivers. The increased temperature negatively affects these aquatic ecosystems. The majority of aquatic plants and life are especially sensitive to immediate changes in temperature. As a result, various types of aquatic life can encounter shock or die. The carcasses create bastions of bacteria contaminating drinking water. For low-income, warm, urban neighborhoods with streams and ponds, this does not bode well.

EFFECTS ON HUMANS

Children

Children, especially infants, are in critical stages of biological development that make them ill-equipped to deal with heat stress. According to Bartlett (2008), "Their more rapid metabolisms, immature organs and nervous systems, developing cognition, limited experience and behavioral characteristics" explain why children are "more likely to have long-term repercussions than…adults" as a result of heat stress (p. 502).

Children are faced with higher rates of vulnerability than adults to respiratory-borne illness and, in some parts of the country, vector-borne illness (Bullard, 2005). Given that internal organs develop during infancy and that heat islands perpetuate an increase of pollutants in the air, children are among the most vulnerable to respiratory borne illnesses like asthma. For children of low-income families unable to afford treatment, this is especially dangerous and detrimental to a child's biological and cognitive development. For example, in the urban community of Waterfront South, New Jersey, a community described as a "commercial corridor…with numerous industrial sites," administrators at one of the community's elementary schools report that "almost one-quarter of the students have asthma" (pp.128-129).

Children are disproportionately more vulnerable to heat stroke than adults because their thermoregulatory system, the system responsible for cooling the human body, is underdeveloped (Casa, Clarkson, & Roberts, 2005). Therefore, children are more sensitive to prolonged and dramatic increases in temperature. They also maintain a significantly decreased rate of sweat per surface area of the human body, making it difficult to adapt to heat stress. Thus, children are anatomically prone to absorb heat from hot environments at high rates because of "large surface area to body mass ratio" (p.122). Prolonged elevation of temperatures into evening and nighttime hours perpetuates their risk and vulnerability to heat related illness. Between 1979 and 1999, the most recent national data available from the CDC, 4% of weather related deaths due to heat were of children (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003). This low number may likely be due to the fact that children are cared for and monitored by adults. Elders, on the other hand, are less likely to have someone watching over them.

Elders

Elders are vulnerable to heat stress. In the most recent national data, 45% of deaths were to individuals over the age of 65 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003). Although thermoregulatory systems of the elders are developed, they may be damaged or impaired. Elders are more "susceptible to heat related illness…because they are not often able to maintain hydration" (Casa et al., 2005, p. 122). Basu and Samet (2002) find that the elders, like children, have a high sweat threshold that prevents their bodies from adapting to increases in temperature. Another variable that makes elders more susceptible to heat related illness and death can be explained by consumption of prescription medications. Basu and Samet (2002) report that "persons with chronic diseases of the heart or lungs may be more susceptible to the effects of high ambient temperatures, especially if they take certain medications (e.g., diuretics, beta blockers,

and tranquilizers)" (p. 1219). These medications can "limit adaptive responses" to the body (i.e. crippling the body's ability to sweat and cool itself in high temperatures). In light of increased temperatures during evening and nighttime hours, it is not surprising that the majority of people dying from heat related illness (heat stroke or exhaustion) in the United States are elder persons over the age of 65 (Basu & Samet, 2002).

One would think that elders in mild and temperate climates are immune from heat stress. This may be the case for suburban and rural dwellers, unfortunately not for those residing in dense areas of northern cities. Harlan and colleagues (2006) show, "More deaths are attributed to heat in temperate climates than in warm climates because people in temperate zones are less acclimated to high temperatures" (p. 2847). Even elders residing in temperate urban climates cannot escape the fatal heat stressors resulting from the UHI.

Another reason elders are susceptible to heat stress is because many live alone and lack the necessary resources to cope with heat related stress. In Chicago during the summer of 1995, one of the worst heat waves to ever hit the city claimed many lives and attracted global press. There were 525 Chicagoans deaths that "were medically confirmed as 'heat related' (Klinenberg, 1999, p. 255). Of those 525 deaths, 73% were elders over the age of 65. Most notably "the death rate for seniors above 65 was 16 times higher than the rate for those under 65" (Klinenberg, 1999, pp. 255-256).

Low-Income Persons

During the summertime, urban heat islands create a myriad of unmanageable consequences for low-income peoples and families. Increased energy consumption and emissions of pollutants bolster heat-related illnesses and contaminate drinking water. While businesses and the middle and upper class are safely nestled inside air-conditioned spaces, many low-income persons cannot afford to turn on, let alone own, air-conditioning units.

The effects are deadly and according to Klinenberg (1999), the majority of deaths from the heat wave that hit Chicago were in "low-income, elderly, and African American…regions of the metropolis" (p. 250). These areas were also the areas with the recorded highest temperature, "those hit hardest by the heat-wave" (Klinenberg, 1999, p. 250). Klinenberg also concludes that income was a contributing factor to 700 mortalities reporting that, "of the fifteen community areas with the highest death rates during the heat wave, eleven contained unusually high proportions of people living below half of the official poverty line…In addition…[to having] high rates of seniors living alone" (1999, pp. 254-255).

URBAN HEAT ISLANDS AND SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) definition of environmental justice includes "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and

policies" (2011). To further clarify, fair treatment "means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal and commercial operations…" (Center for Disease Control, 2008). Low-income persons, children and elders do indeed bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences and lack the resources to cope with heat stress and elevated nighttime temperatures. This environmental injustice is an issue within the purview of social work, as those most seriously affected lack the biological, social and/or material resources to cope with the effects of the heat island.

Ruddell, Harlan, Grossman-Clarke, and Buyantuyev (2010) established that the effects of urban heat can be immediate and fatal. They concluded that "the types of people most vulnerable to risk of exposure to extreme temperatures are minorities, elderly, and low income residents" (p. 199). Using available census data in the city of Phoenix, Ruddell and colleagues (2010) found that "median household income for the high Heat Intensity Class was just over half the income of the Low Intensity Class, and the percentage of minorities in the high intensity class was more than two times greater than the lower [Heat Intensity] class" (pp. 195-196). In other words, white, high-income earners can afford cooler temperatures and spaces at night, while ethnic minorities and the poor suffer disproportionately. Harlan and colleagues' (2006) study, which covers eight economically and ethnically distinct neighborhoods in the Phoenix metropolitan area, identifies that the UHI disproportionally affects marginalized communities and that these communities lack the necessary "material and social resources to cope with this heat" (p. 2847).

Harlan and colleagues (2006) bring this issue to light by comparing eight Phoenix neighborhoods. Two neighborhoods of significance are Black Canyon Freeway and Historic Anglo Phoenix. Black Canyon Freeway reports a median income of $25,785 with 43.8% people living in poverty. To add, 90.9% of the neighborhood is considered an ethnic minority and 10.4% of this community's population is under 5 years of age and 6.8% is over age 65. Historic Anglo Phoenix reports a median income of $77,404 with 9.8% living in poverty. 25.8% of the community reports being an ethnic minority and 14.4% is under age 5 and 5.8% is over age 65 (p. 2854). Here we have two neighborhoods with starkly different socio-economic and racial differences. Overall, "the difference between the lowest (*Historic Anglo Phoenix*) and highest average summer temperatures (*Black Canyon Freeway)* was 4 degrees Celsius" (p. 2853). The data suggests that "socially and economically marginalized populations [are] more likely to live in heat-stressed neighborhoods" (p. 2848). Those living in the hottest zones are more likely to be low-income persons of color. The higher the income, the more likely one is able to afford cool temperatures. The wealthy have power over the effects of the heat island whereas families of low-income do not. We speculate that families of low-income are fiscally and geographically unable to develop vegetative landscapes on or around their properties and lack the resources to develop "cool" buildings.

Because heat islands increase energy demands to cool buildings, urban cities report higher amounts of emissions from power plants and thus higher occurrences of smog formation (Heat Island Group, 2000). This translates into, "Steadily increasing downtown

temperatures over the last several decades which means that 5 to 10 percent of community-wide demand for electricity is used to compensate for the heat island effect" (Climate Protection, 2008, p. 13). Smog increases with temperatures (Heat Island Group, 2000).

There is an increasingly clear link between heat islands and neighborhoods with higher ratios of low-income persons, elders and children. There is also a demonstrated lack of material and physiological resources to cope with the effects of heat islands. Revisiting the 1995 heat wave of Chicago offers us the chance to review responses to serious Urban Heat Island issues and offers solutions to future social work interventions. The 1995 heat wave of Chicago was fatal for a number of marginalized persons. Klinenberg (1999) blames the lack of organization and activation of local, state and federal organizations on the high number of deaths of for these groups:

> During the heat wave several city departments failed to provide services that, had they been activated, would have saved hundreds of lives. The Police Department neglected to activate the local units designed to assist seniors, even though the heat wave represented precisely the kind of situation in which they would have been effective…The Fire Department, which is responsible for the office of Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Services, has no mechanism for issuing a heat emergency. The Department of Human Services did little to contact isolated seniors to warn them of the dangers of the climate, nor did it provide adequate transportation and security to help vulnerable residents…The Department of Public Health had no mechanism for coordinating emergency medical services…Throughout the city, public agencies rejected offers from volunteers because they had no idea what to do with them (p. 257).

Klinenberg's (1999) investigation paints a clear picture of what failed at the city and state level. It is important to note that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not offer direct emergency help for heat island disasters like that in Chicago; rather, the national EPA focuses on producing literature and directing communities to local and state preventative initiatives to alleviate the effects of the UHI. A full list of these initiatives is listed on the EPA website. Unfortunately, less than half of the states in the U.S. are represented in these initiatives (EPA, 2010). However, the website allows people and agencies to submit state and local initiatives. Although the EPA has made strides to organize and coordinate efforts online, many local and municipal organizations lack structure and resources to adequately respond.

INTERVENTION METHODS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers can focus intervention efforts to accomplish two goals. First, they can further efforts to mitigate the UHI's development (interventions to promote positive institutional change), especially given our current understanding of climate change. Second, they can improve emergency responses and coping methods to heat waves and lingering nighttime temperature hikes from the UHI (interventions to promote improved residual policies).

Organizing and Partnering to Mitigate Urban Heat Islands

Social workers can help communities or municipalities to gain an understanding of the UHI. They can organize meetings in dense urban areas. Communities can identify who possesses expertise in community planning, advocacy and organization, connections with local government officials and city planners, or who is equipped with legal expertise. Groups can begin to reach out to other social and environmental groups with similar agendas such as the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, The Audubon Society or other local and national groups that have invested in curbing the effects of climate change or maintaining urban vegetation. By garnering attention and support, they are able to empower themselves to elect leaders with likeminded platforms and to influence change at the local level. Fiscally, practical and structurally viable options to alleviate and eliminate the UHI and its negative effects upon marginalized persons include: subsidizing community gardens and tree planting, supporting and increasing vegetation, halting and reversing increased surface modifications, cool roof installments, and permeable and cooling pavement initiatives. Group members can then collaborate with the EPA to publicize, coordinate and organize their initiatives on the EPA's UHI website.

Plants and trees do mitigate the UHI. Plants and trees are able to intercept solar energy before it hits buildings and paved surfaces. Vegetation cools air through the process known as evapotranspiration. Trees also disrupt and block people and buildings from freezing winds during the winter. Although it depends upon climate, region and geography, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2012) reports that cities can save money by implementing full-scale vegetation initiatives. Vegetation and trees also reduce the thermal heat absorbed by storm runoff which also preserves aquatic ecosystems in urban vicinities. Tree planting programs can be cost effective and incentives should be offered to communities that plant them.

In one experiment conducted in Florida by Parker (1981, as cited in Akbari, 2001), measurements of energy consumption were taken before and after adding vegetation (trees, grass, bushes and shrubs) in the immediate area of an urban building. The result was a 50% savings in cooling costs (p. 12). This also decreases the amount of smog released into the atmosphere. First, trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. Second, dwellings require less energy to cool and thus less electricity is demanded and used from power plants. The results are undeniably beneficial. If implemented on a national level, savings could be limitless (Environmental Protection Agency, 2012).

Social workers can advocate for vegetation initiatives at the city or county level. Programs such as that found in the city of Minneapolis, in partnership with Tree Trust, is one example. For a small fee ($15-$25) residents can purchase a tree. In Austin Texas, efforts to mitigate UHI effects have resulted in "NeighborWoods," an effort to grow the urban forest. A non-profit project provided by TreeFolks provides free trees to families living in specified areas if homeowners agree upkeep the tree (www.http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/urbanheatisland/trees.htm). Projects such as these are good models to emulate in communities.

Another step to mitigate heat stress in vulnerable communities is through the use of cool roofs and high-albedo (reflective) building material. During the summertime, dark roofs absorb high rates of solar energy and, as a result, warm the atmosphere and the building beneath the roof. Roofs covered with a white coating are engineered to reflect significantly greater amounts of solar energy, thus decreasing absorption of heat. Aside from applying a particular white acrylic paint or elastomer designed for roofs, these cool roofs do not require any additional costs for maintenance. In one study conducted in an urban community of Atlanta, Georgia, a school rooftop with an unpainted, galvanized roof was painted with a white acrylic paint. The following year the school reported a 75% decrease in cooling costs (Akbari, 2001).

Much like cool roofs, converting dark smooth pavements into cool high-albedo pavements increases reflection of solar energy back into space. This decreases the amount of heat trapped inside the urban ecosystem while alleviating the associated fiscal costs of cooling buildings. When these initiatives are combined they have a significant positive impact upon communities. Another benefit of cool, reflective pavements includes a decrease in the demand for electricity and number of streetlights in urban areas. Because cool surfaces reflect more light, the visibility for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians on sidewalks and streets is significantly improved at dusk and at night. Cool pavements and sidewalks curb the effects of both light pollution and energy consumption.

There is a diversity of ways to mitigate the UHI. Every community's model will be different. As pointed out by a study that evaluated the effectiveness of mitigation strategies in the city of New York, cities ought to "implement urban heat island mitigation strategies appropriate to conditions in individual neighborhoods and communities" (Rosenzweig et al., 2006, p. 4). For example, New York City has more skyscrapers and buildings than the city of Minneapolis. It would make more sense for activists in New York City to first focus on developing initiatives for high-albedo roofs and pavements. In Minneapolis, a city with more open space and fewer buildings, it would make more sense to develop initiatives to preserve unmodified soil and to implement more urban vegetation. By gathering a diversity of knowledgeable, specialized persons at the local level can tailor initiatives to the needs of each urban area.

Organizing and Partnering to Cope with Urban Heat Island Effects

Because we understand the strategies listed above require significant amounts of time, social workers will need to help vulnerable persons adapt to heat stress in the immediate future. Efforts can help curb mortality rates until heat islands are reduced. Plans must be designed according to each community's respective demographics and infrastructure. As no two urban neighborhoods and communities are the same, adaptive plans should be localized to the community culture (Rosenzweig et al., 2006).

Social workers must organize at local levels by reaching out to the medical, mental health and human service communities to compile resources and information. Multi-lingual educational outreach with pragmatic, practical tips on how to prevent heatstroke and exhaustion is a first step. Information ought to include suggestions on how to prepare for extreme heat, such as: Stay indoors as much as possible, drink plenty of water, cover

windows with tin foil or outdoor awnings (this can reduce the amount of heat that enters a home by 80%), spend the day at public facilities (like libraries or schools), limit intake of alcohol, stay on the lowest floor and out of sunshine if air conditioning is not available (FEMA, 2010). Pamphlets should also include charts that illustrate the symptoms of heat related illness (heat cramps, sunburn, heat exhaustion and heat stroke) so people know when to go to the hospital.

Literature should also include locations of and directions to free cool zones for those unable to afford air conditioning or those especially vulnerable to extreme heat, like children and elderly persons. What can professionals do if their city does not already have designated cool zones? They can collaborate with city councils, law-enforcement agencies and fire departments to designate these zones. Libraries, public schools and community centers make great locations for cool zones. These zones should be within neighborhoods with higher density of low-income persons, elders and children or in close proximity.

In order to make sure the above strategies are correctly implemented, let us underscore past organizational errors that proved to be fatal. A key failure during the Chicago heat wave of 1995 was the lack of organization between agencies and low-income persons, elders and children. For example, the Department on Aging did not activate its own emergency measure to contact isolated elders living alone to warn them of heat stress. Volunteers were "turned away from local agencies and the Department of Human Services, the Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Services did not issue a heat emergency" (Klinenberg, 1999, p. 257). Recognizing these failures is the first step to making certain they do not happen again. Second, professionals must work with local agencies to decide the following: when to declare emergency heat waves, who can declare them, how to inform the public, where to implement free cooling zones and how to provide transportation to these cooling stations. Social workers can collaborate with urban hospitals to prepare staff to accommodate for more patients during heat emergencies. These efforts will help save lives.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Social workers have the potential to help eliminate the deleterious effects of the UHI and help empower vulnerable community members. However, we can expect many obstacles to prevent us from making change. In light of the current national political climate and anti-government sentiment, social workers will face an uphill battle. However, the battle is necessary, as increasing nighttime temperatures across the nation are breaking records every year. As reported in the Washington Post, "Preliminary figures from the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University show 28 cities from Washington, D.C., to Caribou, Maine, set record highs for average temperature from March through August" (Weil, 2010). These estimates do not bode well for those most vulnerable to heat stress. The social work profession's applied and social justice strategies for intervention, in partnership with other groups, can reduce mortality and morbidity rates of marginalized persons as a result of the rise in the UHI.

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Violence Against Women and Asylum Seeking: Global Problems and Local Practices Applied to Guatemalan Women Immigrating for Safety

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Abstract: *This paper, based on broader discussions surrounding gender violence and immigration in the U.S., provides critical information on the historical context of extreme violence against women and femicide plaguing Central American societies today. Drawing on experiences of precedent setting cases of Guatemalan women, the authors offer suggestions for culturally specific treatment of and support for women who seek asylum in the U.S. out of justified fear for their and their family members' lives should they return to their country of origin. The arguments presented are predicated on the belief that women worldwide share experiences of myriad forms of male domination and gender inequality which, however, play out differently on their bodies and lives in ways that must be accounted for in our attempt to offer them appropriate care and assist them in creating the tools they need to change their circumstances.*

Key Words: *Guatemala, femicide, violence against women, asylum, social work practice, immigration, battered women, PTSD, gender violence, trauma, interpersonal violence*

Social workers in the United States have been committed to the welfare of immigrant populations and human rights dating back to 1889 with Jane Addams and the women of Hull House (Healy, 2008). These early service providers in the settlement house movement declared their belief in the fundamental dignity of all individuals regardless of their ethnic origins, gender, or age. They shared their commitment to provide aid so individuals could build responsible, self-sufficient lives for themselves and their families (Addams, 1961). This tradition continues today, with the focus on providing a wide array of services for families as they adjust to life in the United States. Those services, no longer carried out in settlement house communities but more broadly provided at the community level by nonprofit organizations and some government organizations, have constituted important resources for people emigrating to the United States.

Over the last decades, complex issues related broadly to globalization have placed increasing pressure on social work professionals to respond with a variety of interventions within many different human service arenas (Lyons, 2006). Notably, Latin American immigrants, who comprise the largest immigrant group to arrive in the country in contemporary history (Lopez & Dockterman, 2011), have been the recipients of many of these services. As a result, it is imperative for social workers to learn about the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics of this diverse immigrant group.

Complicating the issues are intensifying political and social tensions in the United States over the legal status of both documented and undocumented immigrants (Gomes &

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Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Extremely divisive in nature, these issues place even more strain on a variety of health and human service resources. Inherent problems include numerous linguistic, cultural, and legal challenges related to access to and delivery of care and, ultimately, the human rights of immigrant populations.

Numerous researchers have written about the phenomenon of violence as an immigration push factor (Morrison & May, 1994; Zolberg, 1989). The subject, however, has not been adequately explored in the social work literature. More study is needed to include considerations of how this global problem, extending across regional, social, cultural, and economic boundaries, requires local solutions (Fischbach & Herbert, 1997). Our goal here is to identify social work assessment and advocacy practices specifically to assist asylum-seeking clients facing deportation, particularly women whose asylum case is based on violence against women.

Because of the brief nature of this article, we focus on Guatemala as the country of origin based on our collective expertise, as we have acted as expert witnesses for survivors of violence from Central American nations, most frequently Guatemala. Guatemala is the third most-violent country in Central America (Fox, 2012) and one of the most violent in the world for women (Costantino, 2006; Sanford, 2008). Recent groundbreaking legal precedence in gender violence-based asylum cases related to this particular country are important for social workers to understand and consider when engaging with Guatemalan women and others from neighboring nations with extreme levels of violence (e.g., Júarez, Mexico; Honduras; El Salvador). Further, the authors have chosen to address Guatemalan women, who, due to Guatemala and U.S. geographic proximity and intertwined histories, constitute a large segment of the U.S. undocumented immigrant population. Their cases present a broad view of the challenges service professionals face.

With the goal of informing the practice of service professionals, the first section gives an overview of Guatemalan immigration patterns and deportation dynamics. Next is a historical overview of the origins of complex systems and attitudes underlying extreme gender violence in Guatemala, with data to support assertions and discourse about the stereotypes and common misconceptions that interfere with providing appropriate care. Then, through discussion of legal precedence and a brief profile of several cases representing significant successes and a painful loss, the article underscores critical approaches to the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic differences between the client and the social service provider and among the Guatemalan women clients that effectively minimize the obstacles to a successful outcome.

BACKGROUND

Guatemalan Immigration Patterns, Deportation, and Gendered Dynamics

Approximately 4 million (3,998,200) Central Americans currently live in the United States (U.S. Census, 2011); more than 2 of every 5 Central American immigrants lack legal status, and 1 in 10 has some sort of temporary humanitarian protection (Terrazas, 2011). While most are seeking economic opportunities, these numbers include a small but

significant group seeking to escape mental, physical, sexual, and economic violence. Roughly 140,000 Guatemalans arrive each year to join the more than one million who reside in the United States. Guatemalans constitute the second largest national subgroup of Central Americans in the United States, after the Salvadorans (Cohn, 2010). Of these Guatemalans, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service deported 29,095 in 2010. Over the last 5 years, deportations from the United States have increased by 200% (GHRC, 2011a). The nature of these deportations results in hundreds of unattended children being left behind, unaware and unprepared for the trauma that follows (Gomes & Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Often social workers intervene in cases of family disintegration as a result of deportation, including offering child protection and psychosocial support interventions.

Invisible in these and similar statistics are the complexity and intersectionality of the crises and the ways in which these affect women differently from men. The recognition of these differences and the intense labor of attorneys and advocates nationwide have resulted in numerous precedent-setting decisions. Perhaps the most critical has been the precedent consisting of raising women to the status of a social group, a characterization that, considering women's history in all patriarchal societies, constitutes a given to women's rights advocates. Precisely this designation created the possibility of abused women being granted eligibility for asylum, as it expands or creates nuances of legally stipulated asylum eligibility beyond persecution based on religion, political beliefs, race, and nationality. Domestic and economic violence, genital mutilation, and sex slavery are among other gender-based crimes that may be considered for eligibility under this ruling. Later we further explore the feminization of immigration in the context of Guatemala’s extreme poverty and resulting social problems.

Guatemala: Created and Managed through Violence

Similar to those of most Central American countries, Guatemala's political, social, economic, and cultural histories have been shaped, at least since the 16th century, by ideologies of domination enabled through violence (Grandin, 2000, 2006, 2012). Guatemala emerged from conquest and colonization: absolute rule by elites driven by wealth and power. Roman Catholic dogma structured institutions as rigid patriarchal hierarchies. Small elites have designed economic policy to maintain control of the masses while exploiting their labor, most often with no regard for life. First Spain and then the United States used military and nonmilitary intervention that continues to prejudice state-civil society relations. The diverse local populations—Maya indigenous and ladino/mixed—consistently experience one of the largest income/wealth gaps in the world. Guatemala’s 23 Maya ethnic/linguistic groups, along with poor women and children from all ethnic groups, constitute the most vulnerable and excluded citizens; Maya women, then, struggle the most. Popular images and official policies have constructed the indigenous Maya and women in general as naturally inferior members of society who, when they refuse to assimilate or follow social norms, require constant vigilance and supervision. Women, particularly Maya women, have been treated as disposable and their lives dispensable (Costantino, 2012a; Grandin, 2012), even as they

have made and continue to make major contributions to the survival of their families and communities.

A most significant and recent event to exacerbate the misery and "violence of everyday life" (Chomsky, quoted in Grandin, 2012, p. 32) is Guatemala's 36-year Internal Conflict (1960–1996). During this war, the longest and most brutal in 20th-century Americas (Doyle, 2012), government, military, and paramilitary forces perpetrated genocide on the Maya. With U.S. financing and training, they savagely tortured and murdered over 200,000 citizens—mostly indigenous Maya—and disappeared tens of thousands more (Doyle, 2012, p. 37). This war on civil populations created thousands of widows and orphans, and displaced over one million people (Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 1998). As has been done for centuries, soldiers used rape as an element of war, making women's bodies the cultural symbol upon which the war played out. In the 1960s Guatemalan military members trained for, practiced, encouraged, and were forced to rape, torture, and kill with an unspeakable brutality; they often displayed publically women's mutilated bodies to create even more terror (Costantino, 2012a; Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 1998). Very young girls to mature women were forced to serve as sex slaves. These crimes remain in almost complete impunity (Myrna Mack Foundation, 2009; Sanford, 2008). By the time of this writing, only one of the highest-ranking military generals responsible for the genocide has been arrested and awaits trial. Another has been recently elected president (BBC 2011; Doyle, 2012; National Security Archive, 2011; Peacock & Beltrán, 2003). Against this enduring injustice, instead of peace and stability, the 1996 peace accords that ended the war ushered in an age marred by expanding militarization of civil society, intensifying nonmilitary violence, and a generalized sense of personal and collective insecurity as never before experienced—as it knows no ethnic, gender, socioeconomic boundaries. An explosion of ordinary crime, organized crime, drug trafficking by notorious Mexican cartels, gang warfare, and, in the service of landed elite and multinational corporations, "death squads,…now legal security companies," are ripping at the already tattered social fabric (Grandin, 2012, p 33). Guatemala is not truly "post-conflict," but rather a nation with a majority population suffering from past trauma and injustice, and extreme present insecurity and need.

The War on Women: Femicide

This insecurity is magnified by the wave of femicide plaguing Guatemala since 2001. Femicide or *feminicidio*—the killing of females by males because they are female, and in ways that correspond to their sexual body—has reached epidemic proportions Guatemala (Costantino, 2006; Sanford, 2008) with levels of brutality and frequency never before recorded in non-wartime. The femicide has spread to other Central American societies, such as El Salvador and Honduras (Central American Women's Network, 2010). In Guatemala and elsewhere, prosecution and conviction for gender and sexual crimes is almost nonexistent and almost absolute impunity for the perpetrator is the norm (GHRC 2009b).

Along with these more visible, "spectacular," types of violence, Guatemala's majority faces structural, systemic violence responsible for grinding poverty, high infant/maternal

mortality, food insecurity, chronic malnutrition, and illiteracy (Lovell, 1995; Moran-Taylor & Taylor, 2010; Morrison & May, 1994). These social problems are compounded by neoliberal economic policy and man-made environmental degradation; the last decade has witnessed persistent drought and devastating natural disasters. These stressors disproportionally affect women negatively, due to structural gender differentials in assets and earnings, all of which deepen related imbalances in access to education, health care, and physical mobility. Due to the reality that Guatemalan women are most often directly engaged in providing the basic needs of the family, the convergence of these stressors led to a "feminization" of migration patterns (Diaz & Kuhner, 2007; Smith, 2006).

Religious factors increase the discrimination and violence women suffer as the result of unsympathetic religious leaders. Roman Catholic and evangelical Christian constitute the two major religious preferences for Guatemalan women. These churches, in tandem with nationalist discourses on family values (Chant, 2006; Costantino, 2006), insist on the woman's obligation to protect the integrity of the family unit regardless of her personal "discomforts." As a consequence of the traditional exclusion of women from economic and educational opportunities—even though her survival and that of her children are at stake—a power discrepancy remains entrenched in every aspect of her life, and by extension, her children's lives (MacCulloch, 1998). Women are shamed into staying with violent men. A woman without a male partner or husband—be she never married, separated or divorced, or widowed—is rendered dangerous in these discourses because her independence brings chaos into the order established by religious and other social institutions. Thus, women, in these terms, require male vigilance and supervision.

Importance of Social Worker's Understanding of this Complicated History and Cultural Transaction in Practice

Why is this history important to service providers to Guatemalan women seeking asylum in the United States? This knowledge provides insight into the socially formative discrimination, exclusion, abuse, and exploitation that drives women—poor indigenous Maya and ladina—to emigrate, even as persistent fear, instability, and trauma follow them here (Gomes & Ross-Sheriff, 2011).

In addition, the profile provides a key to the savage viciousness with which men are attacking women. As part of the genocide and social reorganization, the military obliged thousands of civilian men and boys to serve in the Civil Patrol. There, they were forced to rape, murder, and mutilate members of other communities, their neighbors, and even their own family members. When the war ended, these males neither received nor had access to professional help to deal with the psychic trauma they experienced. Nor did they have job opportunities or a way to support themselves or their families. Thus, they had no chance to reintegrate into their communities, even if they survived the military's scorched-earth policy. In addition, tens of thousands of regular military, paramilitary, and death squad forces who committed the genocide, still have the guns and skills to use in their private search for a life in a decimated economy. As a consequence, the cycle of violence bears down on the women, who suffer ever more severe devaluation, discrimination, and physical violence.

While the historical background provides perspective to the violence individual men and larger social systems perpetrate on women, it does not foreground key insights into *who* Guatemalan women are. *Guatemaltecas*, as they are referred to in Spanish, do not constitute a homogenous group, as cultural, socioeconomic, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences are often substantial. Geography also factors into their diversity. The history of women's experiences, however, are not contained in national history, and as a result their resilience and the contributions they have made can be easily overlooked—a mistake for unaware social service providers whose concept of Guatemaltecas is based on the image of a poor and illiterate peasant with minimal ability to help herself, let alone others who depend on her. However, on the sole evidence of making the typical life-risking Mexico-U.S. border crossing in search of the security necessary to survive and provide for their children and other family members, Guatemaltecas demonstrate physical and character strength, intelligence, and resilience. They reveal their resistance to myriad forms of violence that targets and inscribes itself on their bodies and psyches.

This background information makes comprehensible indigenous Maya and other women's willingness to risk their and their family's lives to escape to the United States. Importantly, too, this brief profile suggests an additional fear they carry across two borders—Guatemala-Mexico and Mexico-United States; that is, fear of the United States itself. While relatively few U.S. citizens know about the historical and present-day effects of U.S. economic, political, and military policy in Guatemala, affected Guatemalans recognize and still experience its power; its traces are engrained in their collective memory (Grandin, 2000, 2012).

HOW VIOLENCE PLAYS OUT ON GUATEMALAN WOMEN'S BODIES

The above, necessarily brief, overview highlights the multiple sources of trauma Guatemalan immigrants carry to the United States and allows us to trace the roots of the terror ingrained in women's corporal and psychological memory. Data on the psychological effects of long-term exposure to violence, including interpersonal domestic abuse, reveal associations between that violence and mental health, observing psychological and physical consequences in the context of a woman's daily life, depression, stress-related syndromes, chemical dependency, substance use/abuse, and suicide among them (Fischbach & Herbert, 1997).

Guatemala remains statistically one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman and one of the worst in the Americas to be a child (Costantino, 2006; GHRC, 2009b). Understandably, gender violence constitutes a principal reason Guatemalan immigrants seek asylum, and injury and death are only the most visible consequences (Fischbach & Herbert, 1997, p. 1161). Guatemalan women, mostly young single mothers or heads of family, feel forced to migrate northward to feed their children and maintain their families back home (Smith, 2006). For other Guatemalan women, however, risking their life to come to the United States illegally is the last chance to save their own and often their children's lives by escaping severe physical and psychological abuse and death. Statistics confirm that their sense of terror is warranted. In 2010, police received 4,600 reports of domestic violence in that country of approximately 14 million inhabitants and the size of Tennessee. Experts believe these statistics to be low, as most

cases go unreported for fear of retribution by a male partner, husband, other family member or other man implicated in the crime, or the police to whom it is reported (Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA [GHRC], 2009a).

In 2010, men raped, tortured, and brutally murdered more than 800 women and girls in a surge of femicides. Since 2001, men have brutally murdered more than 5,000 Guatemalan females of all ages (3–81), social classes, and ethnicities. For the shock factor, they often leave the mutilated and dismembered bodies and body parts around town in public spaces. Of those cases of femicide, 99% remain in impunity. (GHRC, 2011b). This gendered killing, covered regularly and explicitly by the media, reveals an institutionalized misogyny and a sense of superiority and impunity ingrained in the masculinist psyche of that nation (Costantino, 2006). Millions of women, especially those in indigenous rural and poor urban areas, live with ongoing trauma, as the escalation of violence profiled above impacts their security directly and with deadly consequences (Amnesty International, 2006; Costantino, 2006; Myrna Mack Foundation, 2009).

So unstable and insecure is life for Guatemalan women that in 2010, Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-Moon designated Guatemala as the first UN site for its new global initiative to fight violence against women. He explained that Guatemala was selected because, although in 2008 women's organizations successfully pushed through passage of the "the femicide law," the incidence of femicide increases. This law is considered to be the first of its kind in the world, as well as the most comprehensive and progressive, as it codifies and sanctions a broad spectrum of types of violence against women. The State, however, has utterly failed to implement the new legal responses and protections made available through the law (Guatemala Human Rights Commission 2009c).

Guatemalan children, too, pay a high price for systemic and structural gender violence. UNICEF data from 2007 show Guatemala to have the highest percentage of chronically malnourished girls and boys in the Americas (over 50%, 80% in indigenous areas) and the fourth highest in the world (Nybo, 2009). Rates of infant mortality put Guatemala second after Bolivia (Kühlen, 2008). The UN International Labour Organization found Guatemala to have the highest rates of child labor in Central America. An estimated 1 million children work, 12,000 between the ages of 5 and 7; 56% of them are indigenous (Avendaño, 2011).

While these statistics shed light on why women risk everything to escape to the United States, concomitantly, they disembody the injustices and crimes committed. It is precisely the body and psyche of the violated woman that concerns us, as advocates for human and women's rights. We all struggle against corruption, indifference, hypocrisy, and pure self-interest that perpetrate and perpetuate violence against women. Recently in the United States, social workers, legal advocates, women's rights defenders, and healthcare providers have had to confront these conditions of abuse as they come into contact with Guatemalan women who seek asylum in the United States.

Survivors of Violence, Asylum Seeking, and Effective Interventions

The terrorizing lack of security in both public and private spheres for Guatemalan women, indigenous Maya, and, although not discussed in this paper, gay and lesbian citizens, render them appropriate for asylum (Central American Women's Network, 2010). Since 2009, in response to the cases of a Mexican and a Guatemalan woman, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in a landmark decision ruled that abused women constitute a social group requiring special attention, and as such are eligible for asylum (Preston, 2009). Gender-based violence is a global issue, and advocates' arguments for asylum are predicated on the belief that women worldwide share experiences of myriad forms of male domination, gender inequities, and power imbalances. Even in developed countries or high-resource countries, researchers are identifying "deeper associations between domestic violence and a broad range of serious health and social problems" (Fischbach & Herbert, 1997, p. 1161). Fischbach and Herbert (1997) note that in regions like Central America, with scarce material resources and greater social and political disruption, oppressive government structures, systemic non-enforcement of law, and high rates of impunity, the impact on women is magnified. According to the context in which the women exist, however, these forms play out differently on their bodies, psyches, and lives in ways that must be accounted for in our attempt to offer them appropriate care and assist them in creating the tools needed to change their circumstances.

The physical, emotional, and psychological consequences of this violence on women places increasing specialized demands on social service providers (Jones & Horan, 1997). They must respond not only with appropriate language skills and cultural sensitivities, but also with a range of social services that, to be most effective, require additional knowledge about the client, her home country, and her particular culture (Gomes & Ross-Sheriff, 2011). In addition to physical medical care, clinical services with an emphasis on trauma are critically important as individuals make significant cross-cultural adjustments while reconciling past human rights violations (Burnett & Peel, 2001). Social workers are often asked to assist with identifying low-cost legal resources and to offer expert testimony on the individual's trauma from violence, as this relates to legal grounds for asylum seeking, both previous persecution and ongoing fear of reprisal and violence.

Building a Legal Case While Being Sensitive to Long-Term Treatment

We authors have acted as expert witnesses for survivors of violence from Central American nations, most frequently Guatemala. Paramount to successfully assisting abused asylum-seeking Central American clients facing deportation, social service providers must design effective programs to make the legal case for asylum by first establishing a clear profile of the violence in context. Such strategies require exposing the structural, systemic, and culturally embedded exclusionary practices that have a material impact on the woman. The diagnosis and treatment vocabulary for women escaping gender violence in Guatemala and seeking asylum in the United States has both medical and legal consequences.

Some experts have cautioned against using the term "battered woman syndrome" and its vocabulary in preparing both a treatment plan and the legal case. They find using

“post-traumatic stress disorder,” the symptoms of which overlap with the battered woman syndrome, more efficient by avoiding the emphasis on pathology and not on a broader picture of the woman's and others' responses to the battering (Dutton, n.d.; Walker, 1991). By not recognizing women's strength and efforts, Dutton posits, the term battered woman syndrome perpetuates stereotypic images of battered women that, in the courtroom, "may inadvertently communicate to the jury or judge the misguided notion of an ‘abuse excuse’" (Dutton, n.d.; Gordon & Dutton, 1996; Walker, 1991). From a feminist perspective, classifying the trauma suffered as PTSD rather than battered woman syndrome stresses the ubiquity of this power inequality and the apparent abnormal nature of the stressors. PTSD takes the blame away from the individual woman, which is a significant goal when dealing with women from Guatemala. Similar to the stereotypes of other “third world” women, they are seen as submissive and overly religious women who accept abuse by macho men because that’s just the way it is in cultures south of the Rio Grande. In other words, battering is a natural, accepted part of *their* culture, and they are as helpless as children (Costantino, 2012b, in press). Countering these misguided cultural visions can make the difference between life and death for the abused woman. Recognizing and aiding the woman to (re)discover her strengths and resilience are key to her taking "responsibility" and therefore credit for her recovery and adjustment.

Even the language we use to classify or describe the elements of the case affects our and others' understanding, decision-making, and social service practice. The term *macho* is an easy catch-all dismissive classification—it is an overused, deceptive, and even dangerous noun or adjective, as it assumes in its construction (*machismo* originates from Spanish) that the root of the problem lies in Hispanic/Latino/Spanish cultures. Yet, the data on domestic abuse in the United States prove otherwise: One in every four women in the United States will experience domestic violence in her lifetime, and the number of women physically assaulted by an intimate partner each year is estimated at 1.3 million (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2007).

Macho creates a convenient or safe *us versus them* dichotomy that can interfere with the approaches to aid Guatemalan (and other Hispanic or Latina) female clients. The victimology shifts; sympathy comes to replace empathy. The strategy of helping the less fortunate (i.e., inferior, less capable) substitutes the empowerment of strong, resourceful women subjected to an individual man's or patriarchal institutional abuse. This latter abuse, when naturalized and ingrained in all social relations and institutions, renders the abused woman increasingly vulnerable as world economic crises proliferate; as militarization and intervention, in service of economic interests, intensify insecurity; and as climate change and man-made environmental devastation (open pit mining, dams, deforestation) drastically influences food production and plunge the majority of Guatemalan women into already extreme poverty and chronic food insecurity.

Caring for battered women in one's own social setting is challenging; to suddenly be confronting the layers of post-traumatic stress that Guatemalan women come with is daunting. Not only do cultural differences pose challenges on the social worker–client relationship, but language can be a significant obstacle. Many Guatemalans speak Spanish, and because approximately 50% of Guatemalans are indigenous Maya, they speak one of 22 Mayan languages that can be so distinct as to require another native

speaker of that language to translate from the Mayan language to Spanish and then English—as has been one author's experience. In some rural areas of Guatemala the majority of women are illiterate (MacCulloch, 1998). In addition, Maya women and poor ladina women have a deep, justifiable, suspicion of the medical establishment and intense fear of police and members of the judicial system.

In the immediate present, we need to engage in a self-reflexivity that would uncover our own preconceived notions about Guatemala, Guatemalan women, and/or abused women from any developing, “third world” country. We must continually work to create platforms for locating and then correcting the core causes of gendered violence nationally and internationally: the power inequality between women and men. Our differences may be greater than our similarities, as across cultures and geographies, identities are constructed from varying worldviews. One enduring commonality that women across the globe do share in varying degrees, however, is the inferior status allotted us by powerful social institutions—the state, religion, education, economic policy, healthcare systems—that implicitly or explicitly condone abusive gendered behavior and resist change in the paradigm.

Knowing the facts about the context from which Guatemalan women come, then, is essential to designing approaches and practices to intervene with and help resolve conflict within a woman (inferiority complex, ingrained trauma) as well as between her and her family.

CASE EXAMPLES FOR A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING INCLUDING LEGAL PRECEDENCE

Two cases have significantly influenced the discourse surrounding and the precedence for granting asylum in the United States: Guatemalans Rody Alvarado Peña, who requested asylum and withholding of deportation in 1996, and Mindy Rodas, whose brutal murder upon her relocation to Guatemala from Mexico informs expert witnesses' supporting arguments for granting asylum in similar cases before U.S. immigration courts. Knowledgeable and culturally sensitive social service providers and client advocates are more important than ever, as the immigration debates in the United States become increasingly vitriolic and less based on constitutional and international human rights law and treaties to which the United States is signatory. The surge in violence against women and femicide related directly to economic, political, and climatic crises are affecting women disproportionately.

The case of Rody Alvarado provides an instructive example. Alvarado's legal counsel for her appeal, Karen Musalo, forced the hand of the court to recognize women as a social group, and Alvarado as a member of that social group (Elias, 2010; University of California, 2009). In this way, the outcome of Alvarado's petition for asylum goes beyond her right to remain in the country to include the expansion of this category of the eligibility for asylum under international and U.S. law. In Alvarado's case, the court established a social group "defined by immutable characteristics and fulfilled the new social visibility": abused married women in Guatemala unable to leave a relationship (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2004).

For more than 10 years, Rody Alvarado's husband abused her in horrific ways. A former soldier with continued ties to the military, he repeatedly beat her unconscious, raped her, and kicked her until she hemorrhaged; he broke mirrors and windows with her head, pistol whipped her, and threatened her with a machete. Each time she attempted to get away from him, he found her and the abuse intensified. When Alvarado turned to the Guatemalan police and courts for protection, they refused to intervene in what they considered "a private matter." She attempted suicide and finally fled to the United States seeking asylum, leaving her two children with her mother in Guatemala (Elias, 2010).

Alvarado spent 14 years in an immigration status limbo in the United States. After being granted asylum the first time in 1996 by an immigration judge in San Francisco, the Immigration and Naturalization Service had the ruling overturned and asylum denied. The majority ruled that her claim did not "lie in our asylum laws as they are currently formulated" (Shelton, 1999, n. p.). This denial was then appealed and it took advocates and legal experts more than a decade to reverse it and establish new precedents in case law.

The story of Mindy Rodas is emblematic of the crisis of violence against women and impunity in Guatemala. Mindy's husband attempted to kill her by drowning, after slicing her face with a machete. This happened after he came to their home with another woman and announced he was leaving Mindy to live with this new partner. Mindy said, “Fine, I don't love you anymore,” which enraged him. He attacked Mindy near a river and then left her for dead, but she survived. She received legal and economic support and medical care in Mexico to reconstruct her face. During this time after the attack, Mindy made a video in which a blue surgical mask hid her remaining facial disfiguration. She described what her husband had done to her and she encouraged abused women to come forward and reject the abuse (Rodas, 2009). Mindy still experienced post-traumatic stress, depression, homesickness, and the desire to commit suicide. Consequently, in mid-2010, she returned to Guatemala from Mexico to see her family. It should be noted that Mindy was in Mexico to seek treatment including cosmetic surgery to rebuild her face, and also as a safety precaution—as the Mexican First Lady intervened by advocating for medical care and other services for Mindy, and welcomed her to remain in Mexico. Mindy, however, felt compelled to go home, and on December 17, 2010, once back in Guatemala, she disappeared. Her body was found the next day far from her small town, tortured and strangled to death (GHRC, 2011b). Because she was found in Guatemala City and there is no national register of missing persons, another month passed before her mother learned that Mindy's unidentified body had been found the day after she went missing and then buried in a cemetery with an XX or Joan Doe designation (Portenier, 2006). Mindy joined the thousands of other women who have disappeared with Joan Doe status.

Some women, nonetheless, who attempt to escape such violence have recently won their asylum cases in the United States. Three such cases are now presented to further illuminate recent asylum rulings.

The Case of M.O. and Rosa

The facts of Rody Alvarado and Mindy Rodas cases are known because of media attention and documentation made by human rights defenders, and in Mindy's case, by making her own testimonial video (Rodas, 2009). There are, however, many other cases which unfold in relative silence. This following case is a composite of one which a mother and daughter were recently granted asylum in the United States in the fall of 2011. It is offered as a composite to guarantee confidentiality.

M. O. left Guatemala as a 25-year old woman with her infant daughter Rosa. She crossed the border by a dangerous journey through Mexico and across the desert. M. O. chose that route as the lesser of evils—she was escaping the abuse of her husband who had repeatedly threatened to abduct her infant daughter and sell the child into human trafficking networks. Because M. O. had lived in fear of her husband for many years, after extreme physical beatings and humiliation, M. O. had credible fears of violence and child abduction (Estrada Zapeda, 2009; Rotabi, 2012, 2009, in press).

When the authors presented expert testimony to the court, the context of violence against women formed the basis for M. O. and Rosa's case, just as Alvaro's case demonstrated. Among the facts incorporated were both the rates of femicide and the general lawlessness related to impunity. Testimony included the second author's expertise in child abuse and abduction in Guatemala, including nefarious networks of child trafficking. On examination, the most critical aspect of testimony was twofold. First, the history of abuse that M. O. experienced at the hands of her estranged husband was primary to establishing a familial context of fear nested in the larger community or societal level violence. Then secondly, the history of child abduction in the nation and an absence of law enforcement response (Estrada Zepeda, 2009; Rotabi, 2012, 2009, in press) constituted critical factors in the final determination of asylum—both mother and daughter were granted asylum.

The Case of L. L.: Beyond a Narrow Definition of Violence Against Women

Not all cases are so clear, however. Another example of women seeking asylum illustrates the complexity of gendered violence and the impunity that reigns for those who seek to harm women. More importantly, it shows that the relationship between the asylum seeker and the perpetrator is not necessarily clear in domestic situations. Social workers need to be sensitive to the fact that men in Guatemala (for example, those in and with power, such as former military and landholders) can make a claim on women who are not their domestic partners.

Recently, the third author of this article served on two cases in Boston federal court that resulted in successful asylum claims. The women's asylum claim was based on complex stories in which the abuse was not clear cut; the perpetrators were not the women's former or legal domestic partners, but had made some sort of "claim" on them. In one case, the woman had some interest in a military officer that she met through her brother. On several occasions, she had contact with the man while she was visiting her brother in the military. Although her brother warned her about the violent nature of his commanding officer, there was some flirtation until the officer attempted to sexually

assault her. When the brother tried to intervene with the officer in his attempts to seduce the sister, the officer became violent. Afterwards, the officer was transferred to another military installation and the applicant went on to marry and have children. Over the years, however, the officer continued to pursue her and enter her life periodically. Although they were never in a domestic relationship, as far as he was concerned, she belonged to him, and consequently, the applicant and her family lived in fear.

This and other similar cases are successful because the lawyers and expert witness had a clear understanding of the larger systemic nature of impunity and gendered violence, and thus were able to argue such cases more effectively. The judge granted asylum based on his interpretation of a previous case in the matter of L. R., in which Mexican women became an eligible social group based on their on their inability to leave a domestic relationship, or they are viewed as property by virtue of their positions within a domestic relationship. Even though these two cases were not women who were in domestic relationships with their abusers, the lawyers and judges had a very nuanced understanding of gendered violence, of how women can be forced into a "relationship" without consent, and their resistance to the relationship is life threatening.

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS: FROM GLOBAL SOCIAL PROBLEM TO LOCAL PRACTICES

Women seeking asylum for reasons of violence, past persecution, and/or fears of future violence have multiple and diverse needs. Two areas will be considered for this brief discussion: clinical needs related to trauma and other mental health issues, and expert testimony.

It is important for social workers to understand that asylum seekers have been found to have a higher incidence of depression, anxiety, and other health conditions compared to the general population. Also, they often experience social isolation in a new country of residence (Burnett & Peel, 2001). And while social workers may make an assessment that counseling is needed, they must recognize that women originating from traditional societies may not find such an intervention to be comfortable or appropriate, and may resist. Social workers should begin by assuming that the conceptions of counseling—in a clinical setting—is quite foreign to many women and, when possible, the women would prefer to seek help privately in the family or community group (Burnett & Peel, 2001). Language and a client's perceptions of the power of the service providers can both pose major challenges. Relevant to these cases, one practice with a great deal of promise for helping women seeking asylum is the development of mutual aid opportunities, such as connecting with other women in a similar situation or even peer counseling. Such an intervention, based on informal social support, may be the best approximation of the care a woman would seek in her community of origin.

In order to make an assessment of appropriateness of the asylum petition, a psychological evaluation is a common practice—specifically a trauma assessment that will be used in court proceedings. This particular aspect of the investigation is critically important but often intrusive and brings up difficult memories that the survivor may prefer to forget (Burnett & Peel, 2001). As a result, a clinical social worker engaged in

such an assessment must understand the social dynamic and consider how to approach the survivor's history in a way to both develop a strong assessment and avoid any further trauma. Ultimately, this may be impossible, but the social worker should proceed with the greatest of caution in this clinical aspect of building a case.

A second expert witness is frequently consulted on the state of domestic violence and societal violence in the particular nation of origin. This is a particularly important aspect of developing a strong case and we authors have all participated as experts on the societal and family dynamics in Guatemala as well as other nations. It should be noted that this particular "expert witness" may be a social worker but not necessarily—experts come from a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology and women's studies. Ultimately, it is not the discipline of this individual that is central, but rather the role she or he can play in developing strong testimony on the state of violence in the country of origin and on the unique issues each case presents. This dimension of asylum-seeking strategy cannot be underestimated and it is our position that a highly articulate expert witness with years of research and practice experience in the country or region of origin can make the difference between winning and losing a legal case. Testimony carried out by such experts must be targeted and based on current data and case examples contextualized in Guatemala's history of violence against women and impunity.[1] This is notable because clinical assessment for trauma and intervention by master's-level practitioners, such as licensed clinical social workers, is entirely appropriate and is likely the best strategy for ongoing practitioner care, given social work's commitment to developing support networks, using culturally appropriate interventions, and upholding deeply held values related to social justice and gendered oppression.

Ultimately, all of these aforementioned practice activities fall under both clinical and advocacy domains. Navigating such a terrain for a social worker who may come into contact with a violence survivor from Guatemala or other Central American nations requires knowledge of the problems that have been outlined in this article as well as other competencies, including language skills or access to interpretation services for Spanish and often Maya indigenous languages. Making appropriate referrals for legal assistance and offering culturally sensitive care constitute a necessary and often a daunting process for social workers.

CONCLUSION

The knowledge of the evolution of Guatemala's masculinist and racist ideologies and the practices we design to address them are intimately interrelated and essential to effectively intervening for women. While the focus here has been on Guatemalan women,

[1] It should be noted that most frequently this particular work is carried out by doctoral-trained witnesses (PhD credential) as immigration judges prefer to hear from professionals with the highest of academic credentials in this particular aspect of case assessment. This assertion is made because master's-level practitioners who have engaged in this sort of expert testimony have experienced questioning of qualifications to make an opinion while doctoral-level witnesses are rarely challenged. This is particularly true when they have a research/publication record in the country and region under consideration.

their reality is shared with women in other Central American nations with similar past and present conditions; they are also experiencing elevated rates of violence against women (Central American Women's Network, 2010). Also, women in some areas of Mexico should not be excluded, including Júarez with its notorious problems of violence against women (Fregoso & Bejarano, 2010).

Differences in identity between groups of women and among individual women in any one country require social workers and advocates (e.g., expert witnesses and others) to create flexible frameworks from which to evaluate each woman's crisis. Without false cultural prejudice, we must empower her to self-assist, to imagine and use adequate actions. First, however, she must remove herself and/or be removed from immediate danger, and then begin the process of building a "self." This approach is time sensitive, since in the case of Central American women, the danger may follow them to the United States, where they may still lack any meaningful support system.

Advocacy is a core social work function. Advocating for changes in foreign policy or change in a sovereign nation is consistent with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, particularly section VI that focuses on global problems and our obligations to act (NASW, 1999). We have found such action to be fundamental in forcing the U.S. legal system to confront any and all gendered and racial/ethnic biases—whether rooted in misinformation, government policy pressure, or personal prejudice—that interfere in applying asylum laws equally and without prejudice. In addition, Central American states remain "locked into the U.S. sphere of influence" (Grandin, 2012, p. 34), and this unbalanced relationship still bears heavily upon the violence women experience in their home countries, their ability to address that violence, and the treatment they receive when they arrive in the United States. The arguments presented here are predicated on the belief that women around the world share experiences of myriad forms of male domination that play out differently on their bodies and lives in ways that must be accounted for in our attempt to offer them appropriate care and assist them in creating the tools, skills, and opportunities, needed to change their circumstances.

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Parental Involvement in an Emerging Democracy: The Case of Croatia

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Abstract: *Parental involvement in schools in an emerging democracy has gained significant attention among school administrators, educators, parents, local governments, and the international development community; yet, empirical data on this subject remains sparse. This study aims to examine the patterns of parental involvement in schools in Croatian communities. Using mixed-methods, the sample size consists of 294 elementary school parents, two focus groups (parents and teachers), and nine interviews with national and international stakeholders. The study found that, apart from the educational outcomes for children, parental involvement also may be an important platform through which parents can practice democratic behaviors and engage in community-building initiatives. Through school-related activities, parents learn to interact with a government institution, voice their interests, participate in decision-making, leverage and use power, and cooperate with each other and the community. Findings from this study can have implications for social work practice and social development assistance by recognizing how engaging parents in school-based activities can become a platform for community participation and democratic behavior.*

Keywords: *Parental involvement, democracy, community participation, Croatia*

INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have been turbulent for Croatia, including both a war for independence and major democratic transformations in political and socio-economic systems. With the growing democratization as well as preparation to enter the European Union (EU), important social transformations inevitably followed. Social institutions, including schools, had to adjust their practices to meet new requirements and expectations for civic participation. In the schools, parents and community members alike were called, through the new educational reform from 2005, to engage and participate in decision-making processes in local governments and schools.

Parental involvement in schools in Croatia became a topic of discussion among social scientists, educators, policy makers, and international development agents. International development stakeholders targeted parents and teachers with peace

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programming, reconstruction, and reconciliation programs immediately afterwards, and the interest continues. Parental involvement in Croatia is gaining even more attention from the international community in those communities that continue to be affected by the Croat Independence war.

However, although implementers have paid significant attention to parental involvement in schools, very little empirical research has examined parental involvement as a social phenomenon in communities undergoing democracy and post-war community building. Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore the patterns of parental involvement in Croatian communities markedly affected by the war and its aftermath, to understand the why and how parents participate in school related activities, and to link that participation to emerging democratic behaviors. Using data from a self-administered parent survey, we first discuss the dimensions of parental involvement in the Vukovar region. Further, through focus groups with parents and teachers, and interviews with community stakeholders, we identify and discuss the benefits of parental involvement in post war communities along with the factors that may contribute to increasing parental involvement in the elementary schools. We locate our research in the context of social transitions in schools in which educational reform demands a shift in parental involvement, thus inviting these changes to influence community members' democratic behavior and participation in community building efforts.

Parental Involvement in the Emerging Croatian Democracy

From traditionally centralized social institutions, functioning as a *locus* for acquiring knowledge, schools increasingly are becoming public spheres for practicing democracy, in which parents and the community come together to negotiate new roles in their children's education and in their own communities (Bauch & Goldring, 1998**;** Chan and Chui, 1997; Lewis & Naidoo, 2006; Mintrom, 2009). Parents are no longer perceived as passive listeners in their children's education. Quite the opposite, they became central stakeholders and active participants in the educational system. In the past, the parent - teacher meeting was hardly more than a platform for practicing authority of the school (state) over parents (the citizens) thus causing most parents to avoid engagement (Males, 1995). The new paradigm of parental involvement promotes a strong parents' participation and parents-school-community relationships in which parents, teachers, and the community are no longer insular entities, but allies in educating children in a new socio-political context (Bauch & Goldring, 1998; Dewey, 1921).

Parental involvement in schools is receiving increasing consideration in Croatia because of educational reforms put in place as part of Croatia's preparation to enter the EU. In order to come closer to the contemporary European education practices and prepare for its accession to the EU, Croatia was required to undertake serious actions related to its educational traditions and views on the role of schools, especially toward parental involvement.

As such, several elements of the educational reform are worth mentioning. First is the creation of *the Croatian National Education Standard* for primary schools, in which special attention was paid to broadening the definition of education to include both

transfer of knowledge and socialization; these standards also include the introduction of modern teaching methods requirements for ongoing professional training for teachers and cooperation among teachers, schools, parents, and local communities. For these reasons the *Education and Teacher Training Agency* was created (http://www.azoo.hr/). One of its responsibilities is to provide preconditions for the external evaluation of education. This change allows different stakeholders, including parents, to have a voice in improving the educational system. The assumption is that establishing a role for parents would lead to greater parental involvement.

The second document on *Strategy of professional training for teachers* 2009-2013 (http://www.azoo.hr/images/razno/Strategija_SU.pdf) suggests, among other propositions, higher involvement of local communities and parents in schools. In addition, the Croatian Education Sector Development Plan for 2005-2010 (http://public.mzos.hr/fgs.axd?id=14194) calls on teachers and school administrators to establish networks of contacts and partner relationships with parents and the local community.

Finally, the *Law on Upbringing and Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* (*National Gazette, 87/2008*) establishes specific school governance regulations, including mandating parents' participation on school boards—an institutional change that represents a step forward through increasing participation of parents in the educational system. However, without much teacher/parent training on parental involvement or guidance on how to implement this school reform, the challenge of working and promoting parental involvement within this new paradigm is shared by both - the parents and the schools.

Adding to this, the academic community in Croatia did not historically include parental involvement as a priority topic. Therefore, the literature on parental involvement in Croatia is sparse and only subsequent to 2009 has attention been paid to it. As democracy was unfolding in the newly independent Croatia, Males (1996) notes that schools must develop democratic practices and open their doors toward parents' engagement in educational processes. Her work calls for a shift in the parental role from passive to active—from engaging parents not only in school activities and their children's academic performance, but also in the school's decision-making process and in building partnerships between the school and the community. When the family, school, and the community work together, the rewards may go beyond improving students' academic success to improving schools' atmosphere, providing needed family services and support, and increasing parents' human capital through the connection of families with others in the school and in the community (Epstein, 1995). Echoing Males's work, a 2010 study on parental involvement (Pahic, Miljevic-Ridicki, & Vizek Vidovic, 2010) also finds school-parent communication in Croatia to be traditional, in which schools would determine the educational goals and subsequently, and sporadically, inform parents about those goals. Investigating the differences in the perception of school-parent cooperation between parents who are not included in school advisory bodies and parents-representatives in school bodies, the study discovered that parents showed interest in engaging in school because they believe such participation would benefit their children

With this shift, parental involvement in schools becomes especially challenging, particularly in those communities affected by war and divided along ethnic lines. One such area, the Vukovar region in eastern Croatia, continues to be heavily affected by the Croat Independence war. More than 15 years after the end of the war, the city of Vukovar remains ethnically segregated. The ethnic division is especially marked in the educational system (Freedman et al., 2004); Croatian and Serbian children attend different classrooms, on different floors, and often at different times. Both the academic and international development communities have focused on the school segregation, but much of the research done in schools examines residents' views on the war and prospects for reconciliation (Corkalo et al., 2004), with little focus on parental involvement *per se*.

In addition, research on parents', teachers', and students' attitudes toward the present and future of education (Corkalo Biruski & Ajdukovic, 2008)—specifically, the role that public education plays in the process of reconstruction (Corkalo Biruski & Ajdukovic, 2007; Freedman et al., 2004)—occupies the research agenda. These foci add great value to the body of literature on schools, but parental involvement continues to receive short shrift in the literature. This article serves to fill the gap and provide an understanding of parental involvement in the Vukovar region, typical of communities struggling toward democratization and post-war community building.

Parental Involvement and Community Participation

For decades of work and research, parental involvement in schools has been mainly focused on outcomes derived from involving parents in their children's education, and both literature and schools' experience have established a clear relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievements and motivation to succeed in school (Clark, 1983; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush, & Darling, 1992). This focus of research also established that schools clearly are interconnected with the community in which they exist, to the people they serve, and to the values they uphold. Schools and parental participation may be used as a platform to become civically engaged in the community. When parents practice parental involvement, this behavior engenders participation in education and in the overall community concerns (Castells, Flecha, Freire, Giroux, Macedo, & Willis, 1999). More precisely, researchers have examined parent participation as a civic capacity (Stone, Doherty, Jones, & Ross, 1999) or as community leadership development (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). The underlining thesis is recognizing that investments in parents will encourage citizens to engage in a more vigorous civic life. By working with parents to hone their skills and increase their participation in decision-making groups at the school level, and most importantly, by participating and working with other parents in traditional events such as a spring carnival, parents begin to become acquainted with each other, learn to respect one another, and eventually begin to see themselves as participants in school/community programs as opposed to viewing the other as a competitor (Schraft & Comer, 1979). Their research supports the assertion that principles of participation, empowerment, civic engagement, and asset-based community development bolster the parent involvement initiatives and create greater community capacity.

Contrary to the parental involvement/ community building approach, there are scholars who examined the role of schools in post-war social reconstruction and identified that, while schools have the potential to be central social institutions for socialization and community reconstruction, they may also play a divisive role in a community. A case in point is the city of Vukovar in Croatia in which researchers (Corkalo Biruski & Ajdukovic, 2007) identified that parental attitude and behavior may be connected to children's discrimination toward those who are seen as different from themselves. The view is supported in Weinstein, Freedman and Hughson's (2007) work in Croatian schools, by recognizing that schools are considered positive social agents in communities, but they can also contribute to identity-based conflicts. Nonetheless, this study suggests that schools are not only education institutions; they are also institutions that can take on responsibility for community building efforts.

Although it is worth spending time on discussing this possible relationship between parental involvement and community building, until parental involvement is empirically studied in a war-torn community and clearly defined, it is premature to discuss the parental involvement-community building equation. Thus, the main purpose of the study aims to examine the patterns of parental involvement in elementary schools in the Vukovar region, to understand how and why parents participate in school related activities, and to link that participation to emerging democratic behaviors. Lastly, it aims to identify specific factors that contribute to increased *positive* parental involvement in elementary schools in the region of Vukovar, Croatia.

Research Context: The City of Vukovar and its Region

The City of Vukovar is located on the river Danube, on the border with Serbia, in a region of the country well known for its fertile land and wine production. Before the 1991-1995 war, the area was an example of a functional and integrated multiethnic community, in which more than 20 ethnic groups made their home and peacefully coexisted for decades. These communities had been characterized by dense social networks and ethnic integration, in which community members socialized with one another without regarding or even necessarily knowing the other's ethnic background (Corkalo Biruski et al., 2004; Corkalo Biruski & Ajdukovic, 2009).

Nevertheless, the pre-war instability and war overtook this community and erased the calmness and the spirit of togetherness. Pre-war instability was marked by the continuous economic, social and political crisis in Yugoslavia during 1980s and by the breakdown of both communist rule and of federal state itself by 1989, as well as of ideological and value system. Political instability created the atmosphere of fear and production of national animosity and hate that, coupled with and the first free democratic elections held in former Yugoslav republics suddenly brought upon the rise of national issues and closed ethnic groups within themselves. Silence and deterioration of inter-personal trust and inter-group relations soon became a common place in many heterogeneous communities, such as Vukovar. Trust was lost even before first shots in the war were fired, and thereafter the Vukovar community developed as separate, ethnic communities (Corkalo Biruski & Ajdukovic, 2009).

During the massive and overwhelming war that followed, Vukovar community was severely traumatized as thousands of lives were lost – many in one of the first mass-murders of the following wars, families have fallen apart, with intense massive destruction of housing, infrastructure, and symbolic eradication of symbolic objects. The war attempted to erase all culture and history belonging to other groups. Many Vukovar citizens of Croatian origin have disappeared, with tens of thousands expelled from their homes throughout the rest of Croatia. Extreme traumatizing experiences, suffering and losses have burdened this community, especially its Croatian majority, and contribute to poor prospects for community recovery and healing. Thus, reconciliation among citizens appears difficult (Corkalo Biruski & Ajdukovic, 2009).

The post war atmosphere does not appear to foster social interaction and it is possible that the divisions within schools have deepened disconnections among the community members. The Erdut Agreement signed in 1995 aimed to facilitate the integration of the minority groups in Vukovar, including Croat students and teachers (who were displaced in 1991), whereas the schools for Serbs in Vukovar had operated and served the existing Serbian community from 1991 to 1998. Several provisions of Erdut Agreement such as separate schooling for Croat and Serb children, remained in place for years after its expiration in 1998. According to Erdut Agreement, the Serbian community has chosen 'A model of schooling' [1] with all teaching held in Serbian language and script, in practically separated schools, while it was also possible to choose more integrated 'B model' or 'C' model. All this said, division remains today[1] .

Today, the city of Vukovar remains divided, symbolizing the reality that a deeper sense of reconciliation has failed. The ethnic communities are separated by mistrust, divided institutions and disappointment. Lately, some people report positive improvements, as some participants have mentioned in our pilot study. However, Vukovar and its region still remains a stark contrast when compared to multi-ethnic and integrated city of Vukovar prior to war.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design and Procedures

This study applied a mixed research methodology using principles of participatory research (Israel, Schulz, Parker & Becker, 1998; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006) within a cross-sectional research design. For the quantitative aspect of the study, data were collected using a self-report questionnaire for parents during their parent-teacher meetings. Focus groups with parents and teachers, and interviews with community stakeholders were the main source of data for the qualitative segment of the study. Parental involvement is conceptually defined as any form of interaction between parents and schools, such as: *parenting*, which encompasses any form of interaction between parent-child school activities; *communicating*, reflecting on any type of parent-school communication and in turn monitoring the students' academic progress and development; *meeting/volunteering*, reflecting on the parents' participation in school governance and meetings in the school; and *collaborating*, through which parents identify and connect

resources form the community with the school to help students develop and achieve their academic full potential (Epstein, 1991, 1994, 1995).

Planning and setting up the field research was an important first step. The principal investigator (PI) was from the school of social work from a university based in the United States. Two other co-PIs included a faculty member from another U.S.-based university and a faculty member from a university in Croatia. The research team also included a community research partner based in Vukovar. Although the community research partners were well respected in their community, the school principals demonstrated a high level of mistrust toward any post- secondary education was experienced. It is assumed that the mistrust stemmed from many years of partnerships with research projects, national and international, that did nothing but collect data to satisfy academics' publication interest or project requirements, without much responsibility towards enhancing the well-being of the community. Thus, as part of the participatory process that the researchers intended to promote was to step back, and let the community members decide whether they would collaborate on this research initiative, laying down the clearly identified steps of the research and post-research plan. From the six elementary schools approached, two confirmed their interest in the study and two new elementary schools (outside the city of Vukovar) heard about the project and asked to be included in the sample. The levels of participation (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995) used in this study was consultative and collaborative among the schools, the community and the research partners.

Description of Sample

Due to perceived low levels of trust at the community level, we employed an availability sample, based on schools' interests in further studying parental involvement. The sample consisted of 294 elementary school parents from two urban and two rural schools in the region of Vukovar. Both urban schools participating in this study are considered segregated schools in which children from different ethnic backgrounds, majority Croats and Serbs, attend school at different times, or in different classrooms. One of the rural participant schools has five branches in small villages around the town of Vukovar–most of them being predominantly Serbian ethnicity. The sample characteristics of our study participants are presented in Table 1.

For the qualitative segment for the study, an availability sampling approach was used to recruit participants for the focus groups with parents and teachers and for the interviews with stakeholders. The parents and teachers were from the schools where the quantitative questionnaire was previously administered. The participants come from different ethnic backgrounds and were from both rural and urban areas. The teachers' focus group was made up exclusively of female participants while the parents' focus group consisted of both males and females. There were five participants for the teachers' focus groups and six participants for the parents' focus groups. Nine stakeholders participated in the interviews. They were parents, school principals, and local governance representatives involved in education and governance of elementary schools, along with representatives of non-governmental organizations and research institutes that work on education and social change in elementary schools in Vukovar.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	229	79.5 %
Male	59	20.5 %
Age		
22 to 29	29	11.4 %
30 to 35	105	41.2 %
36 to 40	74	29.0 %
41 to 49	44	17.3 %
50 and above	3	1.2 %
Ethnicity		
Croat	90	33.0 %
Serb	181	66.3 %
Others	2	.7 %
Education		
Elementary School	34	12.5 %
Three years of Secondary School	16	5.9 %
Secondary School	194	71.6 %
College or University	25	9.2 %
Graduate School	2	.7 %
Employment Status		
Employed Full-time	131	47.0 %
Employed Part-Time	7	2.5 %
Unemployed	132	47.3 %
Retired	8	2.9 %
War-veteran	1	.4 %
Marital Status		
Single/never married	3	1.1 %
Married	260	91.5%
Separated/Divorced	10	3.5 %
Widowed	4	1.4 %
Not married but living in a marriage-like relationship	7	2.5 %

Instrumentation and Measurements

For the quantitative aspect of the study, we used the Parent and School Survey (PASS) adopted from Ringenberg, Funk, Mullen, Wilford, and Kramer (2005). Prior to its application, an instrument testing for cultural sensitivity took place based on which several questions where removed or adjusted. Both the survey and the focus groups and semi-structured questions received IRB approval. The survey had 46 main questions and 85 contingency questions to gather more data on specific themes under examination. To measure the main research variable – parental involvement – a factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis with a Promax rotation. Out of 18

questions that measured parental involvement following Epstein's conceptualization (1995), only 16 loaded into three major factors: Parent-Child-School Activities, Parent-School Relations (communication and monitoring), and Parent-School-Community Collaboration. Moreover, to test the internal consistency reliability of each scales, Cronbach's alpha were calculated (See Table 2). While the alpha is low (.666) for the Parent-School-Communication scale, we believe it is due to this new paradigm of linking and understanding schools and parental involvement in a changing community and political climate.

Table 2: The Reliability of Parental Involvement Scales: Parent-Child-School Activities, Parent-School Communication, and Parent-School-Community Collaboration

Parental Involvement Scales	Items	Mean	SD	Coefficient Alpha
Parent-Child-School Activities	6	17.55	3.14	.711
Parent-School Relations	5	16.11	2.54	.739
Parent-School Community Collaboration	5	13.20	2.52	.643

For the qualitative component of the study, semi-structured interviews were run for both the focus groups and interviews.

Quantitative data analysis. Demographic and survey data was entered in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS); frequencies and descriptive statistics were calculated. Factor analysis was performed to create parental involvement subscales, which helped explain the dimensions of parental involvement in Croatian communities.

Qualitative data analysis. The analytic approach used was a basic hermeneutic inquiry while content analysis was the method used to sort through the documentation. The digital recordings of the focus groups and interviews transcribed on to a word processing document. The transcriptions were then exported on to Atlas.ti which was the qualitative data analysis software used to code the data.

In analyzing the focus group and interview transcripts, three researchers conducted line-by-line coding by identifying relevant text (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003) or meaning units (Engel & Schutt, 2009). We then categorized these relevant text or meaning units into repeating ideas or themes. With each of the three coders, a peer-debriefing session was conducted to discuss the list of themes and their supporting meaning units or relevant text. As a peer-debriefing group, we developed theoretical constructs that demonstrate how the themes relate to one another. We then wrote our theoretical narrative, which discusses the theoretical constructs we came up with concerning parental involvement. The theoretical narrative weaves together our theoretical constructs, the voices of the research participants, and the literature on parental involvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dimensions of Parental Involvement

Several findings emerged regarding parental involvement in the Vukovar region. We begin with a discussion of the dimensions of parental involvement. Although we operationalized parental involvement through Epstein and Dauber's (1989) and Epstein's (1991, 1994, 1995) six constructs (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community), our factor analysis results revealed only three main factors that explain the existing dimensions of parental involvement in that region: Parent-Child-School Activities, Parent-School Relations (communication and monitoring), and Parent-School-Community Collaboration. It is not surprising that volunteering and decision-making constructs did not retain in the factor analysis. These are constructs anchored in democratic practices, new to the schools and the parents. Until schools recognize that the responsibility of education must be shared, and that parents need social and political skills to make the school work to their own and children's educational advantage, the struggle to promote volunteerism and parents' participation in schools and decision-making process will continue. Among the skills that might help parents successfully participate in various school-democratic structures are: knowledge about persuasive speeches, strategies of community practice, decision-making practices, budgeting, voting, power, and parliamentary procedures (Schraft & Comer, 1979). However, this does not imply that it is the school's role to teach parents such skills. Since the schools struggle to embrace democratic practice in the new educational reform, the civil society organizations (CSOs) may be a starting point in the engagement of parents to become community leaders, insuring that citizens take a more active role in matters that affect their own lives.

A closer examination of the each of the three dimensions of parental involvement echoes the reminiscence of an authoritative, centralized school system, in which schools are still perceived as solely responsible for children's education. First, when examining the parent-child-school dimension, data reveal a medium to low involvement of parents in their children's school related activities (Mean=1.91, SD=.776). Seventy-four percent (74%) of parents reported a medium to low involvement in their children's education (see Table 3).

Specifically, the itemized parent-school activities' subscale highlights that parents engage in a low level of reading to their children (52% of parents surveyed reported that they do not read to their children) (see Appendix 1). This finding was also supported by our qualitative interviews, in which a teacher clearly stated that *"I encourage parents not to read to their children, as this is our job; they should nurture them, feed them, clean them, and our job is to educate them"*.

Table 3: The Parental Involvement Subscales

Subscales	Mean	SD	N	%
1. Parent-Child-School Activities	1.91	.776		
Low			73	35%
Medium			83	39%
High			55	26%
2. Parent-School Relations	2.13	.706		
Low			46	19%
Medium			116	49%
High			76	32%
3. Parent-School-Community Collaboration	1.77	.725		
Low			66	41%
Medium			69	42%
High			28	17%

The subscale is rated on a 3-point scale, ranging from 1=low, 2=medium, 3=high

Second, our data show that parental involvement measured through the parent-school relations is medium to high (Mean=2.13; SD =.706). Eighty-one percent (81%) of parents reported that they felt comfortable visiting the school, talking with the school administration, and getting informed if any problem were to occur with their child while in school (see Appendix 1). Parent-school relations are basic to building strong parental involvement programs. While Croatian scholars (Males, 1995; Pahic, Miljevic-Ridjicki & Vizek Vidovic, 2010) have identified that parents-school relationships remain authoritative, the fact that schools and parents continue to communicate with one another is an asset for a democratic parental participation. The focus should now be on helping both parties recognize that they are equal stakeholders in their children's education with different roles. When parents feel respected and engaged in their children's education, they become more willing to attend school functions and stay connected which consequently influences students' academic success.

Lastly, our data reveal a medium to low parent-school-community collaboration (Mean=1.77; SD =.725). Low involvement in parent-school-community collaboration was reported by 41% of parents; 42% reported medium involvement, and only 17% reported high involvement (see Appendix 1). This is an important finding, especially in the context of educational reform. With the major societal changes during this reconstruction period, schools can no longer remain in traditional roles. This is a time in which both, the school and the parents must unite their efforts to build bridges with community services and resources that would strengthen school programs, family practices, and students' learning and development (Epstein, 1995). Further information on parents-school-community participation will be discussed when presenting the qualitative findings.

Defining and Explaining (The Why) Of Parents Participation

The qualitative component of this study focuses on depicting parents', teachers', and stakeholders' narratives reflecting on parental involvement in the region of Vukovar. The focus groups and the interviews sought to discover how each of these groups defined parental involvement, the rational 'being involved', and the factors that might enhance parental involvement.

The research participants' understanding of parental involvement can be categorized in two ways. The first refers to the ***conventional understanding of parents participating in parent-school meetings, parent teachers associations, school councils, and similar venues*** to address concerns about their children's academic outcomes. The second understanding of parental involvement provides a broader perspective of parents' participation in schools by viewing it as a way of building communities - ***parental involvement as community building.*** Parents inevitably become part of a community without consciously thinking of it. They begin to spend time with one another and develop relationships. The following quote illustrates that: "*When your child starts going to school, you will have to meet the other parents regardless of whether you want it or not. You become a member of the community that consists of the parents of all the children that go to the same class. You get to know people… start talking to them and develop relationships*" *(Parents focus group).* Especially in communities affected by ethnic division, this is an important finding that calls for a closer examination of the role that parental involvement may play in building social capital in the community.

Apart from relationships with other parents, parental involvement also serves as ***venues for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to dialogue on issues beyond school matters***. *"I like it when the parents feel free, and actively participate, when they want to exchange their opinions with me" (Teachers focus group).* For example, *"On the Open Doors Day ...the environment is informal so while talking to the teacher, issues might be mentioned that otherwise would not. It is a chance to improve things. On parental meetings usually particular topics are discussed, you cannot bring up anything besides that, but if the occasion is informal it is easier to talk about other things, such as concerns about the community, neighborhood, or other topics alike" (Parents focus groups).* The fact that parents use parental meetings as an opportunity to address other community concerns seems to indicate that parental involvement, aside for being a central factor for students' academic success, it may also provide a space for building democratic skills (community engagement and public speech). What these findings suggest is that parental involvement might be an important platform to practice democracy and achieve community. It is with no doubt that when parents begin to share their ideas and dialogue with their community members, regardless of their professional community roles, they build a sense of community and begin practicing democracy. In other words, our findings support Mintrom's (2009) work on the relationship between local democracy and education. When communities invest in parental involvement, and create that platform for parents to become involved, parents begin to exercise their voices opening opportunities for stronger democratic engagement.

Our findings also recognize that parental involvement ***enhances parents' sense of personal power and their sense of community contribution***. The opportunity to be involved, whether by being a guest speaker, or giving a workshop, affirms parents of their own capacities and contribution to that school and that their voices count. The occasion offered by participating in decision-making on their children's education trains parents on democratic practice. Parents not only learn to articulate their views but also listen to different points of view. These venues for interaction between parents and schools are akin to the Citizenship Schools organized by Septima Clark and other civil rights organizers in the South that taught African-Americans basic literacy as well as democratic literacy (Levine, 2004). Parental involvement in schools can thus serve as citizenship schools for communities rebuilding from conflict.

At the same time, the increased sense of personal power and community contribution that parents experience creates new power struggles between them and the teachers and school administrators. The more parents get involved, some teachers become uncomfortable with parents over-stepping their boundaries, even while they encourage greater involvement of parents in the schools. *"There is always the risk that the parents will try to meddle into the school's business, which is not always desirable. Parents think they do not know less than the teachers, but still they do not have the methodological and pedagogical knowledge as a person who mastered that as faculty does. Parents are not always welcome to interfere into the expert's field, but they play the greatest role when it comes to their child's upbringing."* With more parents becoming involved in decision-making around their children's education, such conflicts will be inevitable. The idea is not to avoid these conflicts but to handle them thoughtfully. Unless managed wisely, such conflicts can actually hinder rather than strengthen social relations of parents with other teachers. Encouragements of dialog related to these topics would also facilitate parental role construction and enhance their motivation for involvement as well as make teachers more prepared for parental involvement into schools and educational reform.

Factors Enhancing Parental Involvement

The following conceptual constructs delve into the factors that enhance parental involvement in schools. First, parents and teachers shared ideas of how to engage parents, to take part in decision-making concerning their children's education as well as in school policies. Although the typical structures of parent councils were suggested, there were also ideas shared about ***simplifying ways for parents to be more involved.*** "*Having fun is what matters, not educating; education is for teachers to worry." "Others also talk about allowing the process of parental involvement take its natural course rather than strictly enforcing it."* This gets back to Comer and Haynes's work (1991) on the pyramid of parental involvement which suggests three levels of parental involvement. The first level is that in which parents get involvement in general activities around school, such as Christmas celebration events, gardening programs, flower festivals excursions, and bread days. By attending these events, parents not only share their resources and capacities with the school community, but activities help them build a sense of pride and satisfaction by seeing their children performs. When parents are encouraged to attend school events and are reminded of the good 'news' of their children's performance (as opposed to the more

'bad' news), they tend to become more interested in coming back or participating in parental involvement initiatives (Comer & Haynes, 1991).

Along the same lines, other constructs shed light on ***how often parents might participate*** in school activities and ***how teachers and school officials may make a conscious effort to include parents in decision-making and in the conduct of activities*** (*Involving parents as often as possible).* One way of building parents' capacities, apart from providing opportunities for on-going training, is to ***create opportunities for their participation***. Hands-on experience is believed to be one other way of enhancing parents' knowledge and skills in school involvement. The other two levels promoted through this pyramid of parental involvement are parents involvement in the day-to-day classroom activity and school activities (level two), and parents elected by the parents group to participate in the school planning and management structures (level one) (Comer & Haynes, 1991). This pyramid of parental participation could be a good starting point for enhancing parental involvement programming in the Vukovar region. With the school division along ethnic lines, starting with parents' encouragements to participate in general school events and then moving to more specific involvement of parents in academic activities and leadership may help build a sense of trust and belongingness among community members.

CONCLUSION

By examining Croatian parental involvement in postwar communities, this mixed-methods study contributes to the empirical literature on parental involvement and community participation. Our data demonstrate that when parents become involved in a school related event, they form new relationships, learn that their voices count, get involved in decision-making processes, and create a space in which to dialogue about mutual concerns. In doing so, parental involvement may become a platform to practice and learn democratic behavior. However, for this to happen, we also learn that parents and schools have to be educated and empowered to embrace new roles and responsibilities in an emerging democracy.

Especially in areas affected by war and an ethnically divided community, our findings remind us that by supporting parental participation in school, we are investing in the community as a whole. While the literature on parental involvement and community building is at a formative stage, primarily consisting of case studies of school reform (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007; Stone et al., 1999; Wohlstetter & Briggs, 2001), this study goes further through the provision of empirical evidence that supports the relationship between community participation and parental involvement. Furthermore, this study calls for further research that will provide additional empirical evidence on the relationship between parental involvement and the social fabric renewal in post war communities.

Notes:

1. Three different models of education are available to national minorities in Croatia (Doolan, 2010): Model A schooling is implemented entirely in the language and script of the minority. However, students have the obligation to learn Croatian language as well. Model B schooling is bilingual, as science is taught in Croatian language, and humanities are taught in the

language of the national minority. Model C schooling is implemented in the Croatian language, with additional two to five classes dedicated to learning the language and culture of the national minority. An additional two to five classes are allocated for studying the language and literature of the minority, as well as its history, geography, music, and art.

The number of preschool, elementary school, and high school students who were schooled in the Serbian language in the year 2010 was 3 742 (Office for National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2011).

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APPENDIX I

I. PARENT-CHILD-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES SUBSCALE

Subscale Items	Mean	*SD*	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Q3: I frequently talk with my child about school	3.60	*.546*	1	1	37	61
Q6: I read to my child every day	2.42	*.881*	16	36	37	11
Q9: I have visited my child classroom several time in the last four month	3.05	*.804*	6	12	53	29
Q10: There are many children's books in our home	2.97	*.899*	10	12	49	29
Q11: I have attended activities at my child school several times, the past four month (School presentations, kids acting, singing, recitals, participated in parents-teachers meetings, parents' workshops, etc.)	2.83	*.785*	6	23	53	18
Q13: Reading books is a regular activity in our home.	2.69	*.921*	14	22	47	17

II. PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONS SUBSCALE

Subscale Items	Mean	*SD*	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Q1: I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school	3.13	*.779*	8	1	61	30
Q2: If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterward	3.24	*.664*	3	5	58	34
Q14: If my child will have problems (academic or behavioral) in school, I would know how to get extra help for her/him.	3.16	*.751*	6	5	58	31
Q17: I feel comfortable to come to my child's school.	3.22	*.712*	7	8	57	28
Q18: The leaders (school directors, teachers) of our children's school facilitate honest conversation among students, and families from different ethnic backgrounds	3.23	*.752*	5	5	52	38

III. PARENT-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COLLABORATION SUBSCALE

Subscale Items	Mean	*SD*	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Q5: I always know how well my child is doing in school.	3.18	*.773*	6	5	54	35
Q7: I talk with other parents (regardless of their ethnicity) frequently about educational issues.	3.05	*.747*	6	9	61	24
Q8: My child attends community programs regularly (library readings, NGO extra-curricular activities, and other community fun events).	2.82	*.840*	8	20	52	19
Q15: In the past 4 months, I volunteered (help clean the classroom, assist the school with various activities, etc.) at my child's school.	1.93	*.665*	23	65	9	3
Q16: I know of many programs for children in my community that are free and accessible to everyone, such as art-fairs events, eco-projects, library programs, NGO programs, etc.	2.40	*.879*	18	33	41	8

Local and Global Poverty: Insights Using a Rights-based Approach

Ankita Deka

Abstract: *Social workers have proposed various conceptual models to explain the relationship between structural oppressions and poverty. These models are grounded in critical social work and each provides an understanding of how systemic issues impact the sustenance and reinforcement of poverty. With rapid economic globalization and further social and economic exclusion faced by people, poverty has become even more deep and complex. This paper argues for the adoption of a rights-based framework in social work to address issues of endemic structural poverty. Grounded on the principle of the inalienability of basic human rights, the rights-based approach changes the discourse on poverty by creating accountability, equality, transparency and participation from welfare states and civil society. The paper also provides a critique against traditional human rights perspectives in poverty alleviation. The paper provides a context in which the rights-based approach could be pursued in global as well as local contexts.*

Keywords*: Poverty, rights-based approach, social exclusion, human rights*

In the last few decades, social work professionals have used various conceptual and theoretical approaches in understanding and addressing global and local poverty as it relates to social inequities and structural injustice (Krumer-Nevo, 2008; Weiss, 2003). Many of these approaches have their roots in critical perspectives which allow practitioners to develop anti-oppressive practices that challenge the historical and contemporary subordination of marginalized groups (Morley, 2008). Given the tenuous relationship of neoliberalism and capitalism with the role of the welfare state, it has become fairly apparent that social services for the most marginalized have become an unnecessary victim. In the context of this volatile body politic, social work educators, practitioners and researchers have to facilitate strategies for change that can counter the marginalizing effects of poverty both in the local and global sphere. The purpose of this paper is to propose a conceptual framework based on the rights-based approach that will be able to integrate critical social pedagogies even as it advocates for the restoration of the inalienable rights of individuals and groups who are most vulnerable in society. This approach has been used in countries of the global south with marginalized populations; however this approach is somewhat new to the anti-poverty interventions in social work in the United States. The paper also argues against the more conservative rights-based approaches applied in social work that uses the notion of rights and obligations as a dualistic, reciprocal function.

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

A rights-based approach to address poverty in social work would imply the focus and attention on the attainment of a human life with respect and dignity for those that face much vulnerability in society as an outcome of being poor. In the development literature where this approach has been widely used, the approach is multi-thronged with

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implications for legal, socioeconomic and political rights (InsightShare, 2011). Historically, the rights-based approach was used by development organizations because the earlier models of delivery of goods and services by the welfare state to address systemic problems of poverty and marginalization was deemed unsuccessful on various fronts (Offenheiser & Holcombe, 2003). Research has also indicated that over reliance on the market forces to 'lift all boats" when it comes to poverty alleviation has not been particularly successful either. Studies suggest that in most countries the chasm between the rich and the poor is ever widening, and many groups are unable to make it out of the poverty traps (Nambissan, 2010). Therefore, given that the shrinking welfare state is much less accountable to deliver for the poor and the marginalized, and where market-friendly policies are creating wealth concentration in the hands of few, poverty alleviation is best approached from the rights-based perspective. Essentially, the rights-based approach re-conceptualizes our understanding about poverty by elaborating a fundamental difference in our understanding of the 'poor as helpless victims'. It explains poverty as an outcome of social exclusion and marginalization and envisions that the poor are stakeholders who are capable of shaping their destiny. Therefore the poor are no longer perceived as vulnerable citizens who merely need public goods and services to alleviate their suffering, but they are stakeholders who challenge the fundamentals of how resources and goods are allocated and distributed in society.

The rights-based approaches have been used and understood in many different ways in the development literature with some of the fundamental principles of this perspective including; participation, accountability, equality and non-discrimination, transparency, and empowerment (Gready, 2008). Rights-based approaches have their root in the fundamentals of human rights perspectives that address issues of inalienable political, economic, legal and social rights for those that are disenfranchised in the society. However, it is widely acknowledged that the human rights perspective in general has been unable to address poverty and pro-poor policy related issues for a very long time (Gready, 2008). For example, poverty related issues were not central to the human rights discussion early on mainly because of the over emphasis on civil and political rights for most of the 20th century (Lauren, 1998). Even in countries of the global north humans rights perspectives frequently sidelined the emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights (Frediani, 2010). The main reason that was argued against inclusion of these rights was that they were not enforceable by law. Therefore, the centrality of human rights approaches were often based on the workings of the legal systems, implying the precedence of rights that could ultimately be enforced through legislation.

In the late 20th century and early 21st century, rights-based approaches have been able to broaden their scope of addressing issues of social disenfranchisement. Gready (2008) says that in the post globalization era, various stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations were able to argue for a more comprehensive set of rights. These rights focused on the "indivisibility of civil–political and economic–social rights, process and outcomes, engagement on multiple levels from the local to the global, top-down and bottom–up approaches, public and private spheres, individual and collective rights, service delivery or emergency responses, and structural change**"** (Gready, 2008, p. 736). These complex set of rights have provided opportunities for

various stakeholders to engage in interventions that helps establish a more concrete approach to poverty, which can challenge systematic structural barriers that impact the lives of those living in poverty.

Rights-based approaches are based on a shift from a technical understanding of rights to a politically motivated understanding which is premised on three key components: that individuals have rights, the state or government is obliged to safeguard those rights, and people need to participate for the attainment of those rights (Eyben, 2005). Amartya Sen's critical work on the relationship between poverty and human rights has also influenced the development of the rights-based approaches. Sen (1999) puts a new emphasis on the relationship between entitlements, opportunities, freedoms and poverty (Eyben, 2005). He suggests that 'functioning and capabilities' which also refer to achievements and access to resources and goods in society are crucial components in explaining well being of individuals (Frediani, 2010). The capabilities approach of Amartya Sen informs the rights-based approach in several ways. First it allows for the non-utilitarian understanding of poverty as a mere outcome of material deprivation. Second it can provide the framework for expansion of freedoms for those who are deprived, and those other actors such as the state needs to play a pro-active role to facilitate the enhancement of freedoms (Frediani, 2010). The rights-based approach is a viable strategy for addressing poverty as it supports the notion of universality that all human beings share a common humanity that needs to be realized irrespective of their national origin, gender, ability, religion, racial ethnic identity or culture. However, this tenet of universality does not strip away the fact that all rights are rooted in the context of being; therefore rights are essentially local in nature. Ife and Fiske (2006) have further developed the idea of localization of universal rights by stating that although most universal rights have been widely critiqued for their over dependence on western philosophical tradition, while the universality of rights does not necessarily imply a homogenizing effect. They argue that the moral humanity associated with the concept of rights does not mean sameness where every individual needs to fit a certain normative ascription of the attainment of rights (Ife & Fiske, 2006).

The rights-based approach is consistent with social values and ethics, the social work profession is committed to the idea of creating equity and justice for individuals and groups that are at the margins of society. The inclusion of rights decenters the mainstream debate on poverty where poverty is seen as an outcome of individual pathologies rather than as an outcome of exclusionary social structures. The rights-based approach also allows us to explore that poverty also co-exists with other forms of social oppression such as racism, sexism, ableism, and ageism (Davis & Wainwright, 2005). The fight against poverty therefore is clearly a political strife that looks into historical and contemporary forces that perpetuate, reinforce and sustain social inequities. In that sense the rights-based approach is premised on the belief that it is a counter to top-down policies and programs that have attempted to alleviate poverty without taking into context the lived experiences of those living in poverty. This paper argues that a rights-based approach has to be understood as a critical social intervention against poverty that uses a bottom up strategy with stakeholders. This approach allows for room to explore the

intersectionalities of structural oppressions and how they create advantages for few and lack of privileges for others.

EXPLORATION OF POVERTY DISCOURSE IN SOCIAL WORK

The professionalization of social work has simultaneously led to more focus of the discipline on systems and processes of social exclusion (Davis & Wainwright, 2005). Since its inception the late 19th century social workers have been interested in issues related to the poor (Krumer-Nevo, Weiss-Gal, & Monnickendam, 2009). The professional code of ethics also clearly outlines the commitment of the profession in addressing poverty (National Association for Social Workers, 2000). At the international level social workers are committed to addressing issues related to poverty and social justice. Much of this commitment is seen as a response to the growing number of poor within countries, and also the country to country differences when it comes to poverty rates (Krumer-Nevo, et al., 2009). The market friendly policies and structural adjustment programs initiated in the last two decades in countries of the global south have also created significant hardships for the poor within countries (Nambissan, 2010). Conceptualizing and measuring poverty is also considerably difficult as different institutions and entities have varying interpretations of poverty. Most definitions of poverty are expert driven, and have very little perspective from the poor themselves (Serr, 2004). Poverty is usually defined in terms of absolute and relative terms; absolute poverty refers to lack of sufficient income for basic needs and relative poverty refers to poverty in relation to income levels of others in the society (Serr, 2004).

The global poverty rate, or percentage of people living under less than $1.25 a day has declined, absolute poverty rates have remained steady (Woolcock, 2008). The regional differences both within and outside the countries however have a huge influence in the interpretation of this data. While China and India have experienced the decline of poverty in both relative and absolute terms, very little has changed in Latin America, and Africa continues to have high numbers of people experiencing absolute poverty (Woolcock, 2008). In the United States, in the post recession period from 2007-2008, about 47 million people lived below the government defined poverty line (Abramsky, 2012). Within these figures, there are huge disparities by race as well; while a quarter of Blacks and Latinos live under the government defined poverty estimates, about 12% of Asian-Americans and less than 10% of Whites live under the poverty line (Abramsky, 2012). Poverty continues to pose a serious threat to populations living both in the United States and other parts of the world.

Around the world social work professionals continue to interface poverty through their clients, since significant number of social work clients even when they have other overt problems also experience poverty (Healy, 2008). Social work literature on poverty related issues often takes a critical view of individualized interventions and models of practice that are incapable of explaining the structural issues and their causal relation with poverty (Krumer-Nevo, et al., 2009).

Poverty interventions in social work in the United States is not altogether new, the 19th century Charity Organizing Societies (COS) and Settlement House (CH) movements

are some of the earliest known organized efforts to address poverty within the profession. The two approaches differed in outlook on poverty, with the COS focusing on the pathology of individuals experiencing poverty and how aid from the state could create long term dependency (Weiss, 2003). The SHM focused on understanding how structural issues created challenges for an individual to achieve their full potential including their material and financial well-being. Modern casework largely evolved from the COS orientation that put emphasis on orienting an individual to the environment by improving their psychological health (Weiss, 2003). On the other hand SHM significantly influenced the development of advocacy and activist strategies that critically examines the role of the state and other agencies in the financial deprivation and marginalization of certain groups (Abramovitz, 1998; Weiss, 2003).

Contemporary social work practice on poverty alleviation is clearly influenced by the historical ideological orientations. Neo-conservative values and assumptions within social work challenge individuals facing poverty to take personal accountability of their condition; they advocate that the welfare state should restrict its role of service delivery and should allow the market to provide opportunities for all (Weiss, 2003). Radical social workers have critiqued the over-emphasis on the psycho-pathology of individuals living in poverty and have instead advocated for state level interventions through policies and programs to address systemic and structural causes of poverty. Social work practice is heavily influenced by values, assumptions and ideologies; therefore it is not surprising that the literature is ripe with varying approaches and orientations toward issues related to poverty. The long standing tension between individual versus structural causes of poverty is often blurred by the normative assumptions of social workers.

International literature on poverty has also enlisted the idea of poverty as a process of social exclusion, whereby individuals are denied access to full participation in civil society, which restricts their ability to seek and benefit from social, economic and cultural goods (Davis & Wainwright, 2005). The concept of social exclusion takes into account the various factors such as age, race, gender and ability, it also throws light on the compounding effect of exclusions and how it creates economic and social vulnerability (Becker, 2002). Poverty as social exclusion paradigm was popularized in Britain because of growing social inequities that could not merely be attributed to income disparity, hence a more holistic approach of understanding poverty as the loss of dynamic access to individual, social, cultural and political goods was later developed (Barry & Hallett, 1998). Poverty research in recent years has also shifted its vision to include the lived experiences of those living in poverty in the centre stage of poverty discourse. This perspective alters the traditional understanding of viewing the poor as lacking any legitimate understanding and input on the conditions that impact their lives (Krumer-Nevo, 2008).

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

In recent years discourses related to the impact of economic globalization and its impact on the vulnerable populations, particularly the poor have received much attention. Neo-liberal policies and structural adjustment programs introduced in countries of the global south have had profound influence on national policies, particularly on pro-poor

policies (Triegaardt, 2008). Economic globalization has allowed for the capital mobility and the proliferation of capitalist growth, while the poorest people on the planet have been adversely affected by the fallouts of globalization such as low paying jobs, loss of social safety nets, and loss of sources of livelihoods (Dominelli, 2010). As a phenomenon, globalization has been described in various ways such as the integration of global economies, social and cultural transactions, transference of western individualistic values around the world and the likes. Economic globalization has resulted in the nation states cutting back on subsidies and assistance to the poor. In South Africa, for example, the poor have mobilized to demand access to basic services such as housing, sanitation and water (Ballard, Habib, & Valodia, 2006). Globalization has transformed the modernist idea of a welfare state as a proactive agent in the development and enforcement of social welfare policies (Ahmadi, 2003). Globalization has created a shift in roles, where international relief and aid agencies are taking over the role of nation states in addressing problems of endemic poverty (Jordan, 2008). Social workers in many countries of the global south are highly critical of anti-poverty programs fostered in conjunction with economic liberalization. Their main contention is that globalization intensifies the economic and social disparities between groups, particularly between those who hold privilege in society and those that have been historically sidelined. Globalization does not operate in value neutral or gender neutral ways; therefore in countries such as Africa where women are subjugated to the very bottom ranks in society, the economic benefits of globalization of women are usually never accessible to women (Sawpaul, 2001).

Social work research and practice has put significant efforts in developing and implementing various strategies for poverty alleviation, the approaches mentioned are some of the most recent innovations in the literature, while the discussion is not comprehensive it provides some insights into the poverty and social work literature internationally.

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGY

Community based movements around the world have become very active in response to growing levels of income and wealth disparity, environmental degradation, lack of sustainable growth (Gooden, 2008; Pyles & Lewis, 2007). These movements have often taken the issues of the poor to the center stage of the political landscape. Much of this community work is geared toward transformation of systems and structures that allow inequities to thrive in society (Mizrahi, 2001). Social work practice particularly in recent years has come under a lot of fire for losing the firebrand activism and radical thoughts that was the hallmark of the profession in its early years. The increasing tilt of the profession toward micro interventions following the lead of evidence based medicine is a historic reinforcement of the COS methodologies. Although, clinical social work will always be a key aspect of the profession's identity, it is unfortunate that social workers are abandoning the pursuit of the ideals of structural equity and justice (Jewell, Collins, Gargotto, & Dishon, 2009). Resource constraints, growing backlash from conservative legislators are some of the key reasons that keep social workers disengaged from public

discourse on disenfranchisement of our key constituencies (Jewell, et al., 2009). Although the construct of social justice for all is adequately addressed in the NASW code of ethics, there is a functional treatment meted out to the concepts vis-à-vis practice. Many social workers are not engaged in massive social transformation efforts through advocacy and mobilization, therefore they are not presented with opportunities to apply their expertise in achieving social justice (Abramovitz, 1998).

With growing populations of people living in poverty around the world it is imperative on social workers to reactivate our synergies of working to transform institutions and structures that allow inequities to thrive. The rights-based approach is rooted in critical pedagogy that challenges essentialist ideas of poverty as a phenomenon of those who are lazy, irresponsible and therefore unworthy of social support (Sidel, 2000). The rights-based approach challenges the hopelessness that is embodied in this rhetoric, which fails to account for how historical and contemporary policies and structures allow for intergenerational poverty to thrive. Rights-based approaches provides a tool for social workers to identify and name the social inequalities that perpetuate social injustice and inequities (Offenheiser & Holcombe, 2003). A rights-based approach in social work could pay particular attention to issues of vulnerability and disempowerment in specific local contexts. All social identity groups face discrete challenges depending on how and where they interface dominance and subjugation. Therefore, it is important to understand that although the paper argues for a universal appeal toward integrating rights-based approaches in social work, the fundamental marker of this approach is that the interventions are only contextual and local in nature. Therefore, a rights-based strategy to fight rural poverty in India could differ significantly from the strategies of combating urban poverty in the United States. The argument here is that as a philosophical, moral, value orientation rights-based approach provides a radical context for social workers to understand and challenge the status quo on the plight of the poor.

In order to outline the basic framework of a rights-based intervention on poverty, I adopted Kapur & Duvvury's (2006) assumptions about the approach . Although, Kapur & Duvvary's work focuses mainly on the development agenda, the framework outlined below pays specific attention to poverty intervention. The framework provides an opportunity for the dualistic reciprocal function of rights and responsibilities outlined in the human rights perspective to be revisited. The critical piece about this framework is that it lends legitimacy to the rights of an individual, which are otherwise often dubbed as entitlements by the welfare state. In order for an individual to live a life of human dignity (human rights principle), the individual is entitled to access and exercise those rights. It also puts onus on the welfare state as well as civil society organizations to provide access to the rights. The reciprocal dualism envisaged through this framework is distinctly different from the human rights perspective in general, which does not acknowledge the complexity in which rights and duties are often manifested. Some key areas to explore are as follows:

- Exploring and understanding the locale of vulnerability, who are the perpetrators, existing power imbalances, and recognizing power hierarchies.
- Building accountability and transparency in right holders and duty bearers.

- Strengthening local capacities through training and support (critical community mobilization) that will allow right holders exercise their right vis-à-vis their vulnerability, and duty holders to seek and meet obligations.
- Facilitating stakeholder participation, particularly those whose lives are adversely affected by poverty.
- Empowering stakeholders to critically appraise how violation of their social, political, economic and cultural rights has contributed to their state of poverty. Consciousness rising is a key outcome of this approach.
- Developing competence among stakeholders to articulate and advocate effectively about other intersecting forms of oppression that compound their state of poverty.

This framework is a versatile tool for social workers to engage in anti-poverty interventions, when they are fully cognizant that various social identity groups such as women face varying levels of oppression that compounds their poverty. Rights-based framework of understanding gendered poverty for example in countries of the global south can for example focus on how women often lack decision-making power in the formal and informal sphere, they have little or no access to markets, and they continue to share the highest burden of poverty (Ruwanpura, 2004). Understanding this critical nexus of material deprivation with structural oppressions such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, employment and income can provide significant breakthroughs in poverty alleviation strategies by social workers. A feminist redefinition of this approach has often highlighted few key components: focus on social versus individual nature of rights; rights are often pursued in relational and communal contexts; rights should reinforce the need for redistribution of resources; and right bearers need to be identified in regards to their multiple social identities (Kapur & Duvvury, 2006). For example in the work with girls education in India, the approach facilitated a shift in cultural patterns where traditionally girl's education was opposed simply because it was established cultural norm (Kapur & Duvvury, 2006). This approach facilitated windows of opportunity for the community to take control on their collective destinies (Kapur & Duvvury, 2006). Additionally, in a study by Jewell et al. (2009), the authors described an anti-poverty program that used a human rights perspective for critical education and appropriate intervention on poverty. Several aspects of this intervention had close orientations with the rights-based framework. The Women In Transition (WIT) group made up of former welfare recipients used their leverage to educate and develop support against poverty, developed a strong toolbox of skills for members such as programs on strength and resilience to combat poverty in their lives (Jewell, et al., 2009).

The rights-based approach provides an apt context for social workers interested in anti-poverty work. Although the orientation of the framework is philosophical in nature given its value orientation in the inalienable rights of individuals, the framework can provide concrete community mobilization strategies. In that sense unlike other approaches that are merely of esoteric significance, the rights-based a approach can be used as a tool for consciousness raising and social change as it relates to poverty. The

framework also provides a great platform to understand the complex nature of American poverty with its intersectionalities in race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability and age. The specific analyses on power structures in society can help pin-point the locales of many forms of systematic oppressions and their impact on poverty. The key aspect of the approach is that it is a process geared toward social change, in that sense it is not an end in itself (Kapur & Duvvury, 2006). As with any other approach, particular attention needs to be given on the planning strategy, community organization, consciousness raising and social action, empowering communities by building capacities, networking with other stakeholder groups and organizations, organizational growth and development, and finally an ongoing evaluation and monitoring of strategies (Kapur & Duvvury, 2006). The key distinction is that most stakeholders will remain stakeholders in the process, this entire design and execution of strategies toward poverty alleviation must be driven by stakeholder participation. In sum, the rights-based approach is a strategy for anti-poverty work and it fits naturally with social work interventions and our professional values.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Although the rights-based approach presents several opportunities for social workers to understand and address issues of structural injustice and inequity as it relates to poverty, it is not without its challenges. Jewell et al. (2009) state that there are specific challenges in implementing a human rights perspective in anti-poverty interventions. The three challenges they identified were: identity politics, legitimization from other organizations, and organizational barriers. While the rights-based perspective differs in its value orientation from human rights in that it focuses much less on the dualist reciprocal function of rights and duties of citizens, nevertheless there are overlaps in the approaches. Hence, it is legitimate to expect some of the same concerns impacting the rights-based initiatives. Jewell et al. (2009) point out that given the historic nature of marginalization and identity formulations, it is hard to find common ground and language to address poverty concerns among many groups. On one hand the identity formulations provide visibility to subordinated groups, on the other hand it is harder for the groups to see how different issues can be connected to multiple identities (Jewell, et al., 2009). Therefore, it is a practical challenge to incorporate the intersection of the poverty phenomenon with the intersections of identities in a framework. The other challenge in incorporating a rights-based approach in anti-poverty work is that institutions are generally classist in nature, and because this perspective confronts the basis of this institutional classism, it is possible that institutions may alienate themselves from poverty movements (Jewell et al; 2009). As with any movement or organization fighting against structural injustice, rights-based advocates are likely to face resource constraints particularly given the nature of the work.

Although, the rights-based approach differs significantly from a human rights perspective, there is some confusion among professionals about the distinction. Since the human rights perspective focuses more on a universal set of rights that are presumed to be enforceable by law, there is some unease among certain constituents about its commitment in addressing systemic causes that causes the violation of rights in the first place. Also the human right perspective tends to rely heavily on civil and political rights

and pays much less attention to economic, cultural and social rights. Rights-based approach advocates have to be mindful about creating a framework whereby there are able to explain the similarities and difference between the approaches. Finally, rights-based approaches like many other advocacy and social change strategies requires a certain kind of political will from various stakeholders including social workers for it to be successful. Given the complexity of the nature of this intervention in unearthing power and oppressions, and mobilizing stakeholders for social action, there are considerable challenges in steering the work. Although, the limitations need to be carefully examined, it is imperative that social workers do not get dissuaded from this approach of poverty alleviation. The challenges can be outweighed by the significant opportunities that the approach can present to many vulnerable social work constituents.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The rights-based approach will provide social workers engaged in anti-poverty intervention work a perspective of interrogating systemic structures and processes that perpetuate poverty. Using this type of strategy, social workers can create new foray and linkages between traditional community organizing and direct social action. The rights-based approach is an effective strategy that has both universal and local appeal. In other words, although the philosophical arguments in favor of the approach may might initially appear somewhat universal in nature, nevertheless in reality the approach is grounded on diverse local contexts. Rights-based approaches although widely popular in countries of the global south such as India, can be relevant in understanding poverty in western contexts. Furthermore, the rights-based approach offers a critical social perspective even for clinical social workers by creating a compelling argument in favor of exploring the larger context in which social work clients seek services. The rights-based approach provides a critical framework to social work professionals to advocate for a just and equitable society where systems of oppressions based on social exclusions can be dismantled. The character of social work needs to be redefined by our active engagement in such public discourse and social workers should be in the frontline of this work (MacKinnon, 2009).

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