2010

Planting the seed : the lasting impact of an explicit anti-racism mission on white graduate students of the Smith College School for Social Work : a project based upon independent investigation

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White Graduates of the Smith
College School for Social
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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to investigate the ongoing impact of an explicit anti-racism mission on white graduates of the Smith College School for Social Work (SSW) and to determine which elements of the anti-racism experience are most salient. Specifically, which salient experiences influence white graduates in continuing to engage in anti-racism work in the field of social work. Data was gathered from 85 white participants who completed the MSW program between 1994 and 2009. An online survey instrument was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data on participants' attitudes and behaviors related to anti-racism and their recollections of the program as it influenced their learning about racism and whiteness. Significant findings are presented. The most notable finding is that all participants underwent some change or transformation in attitudes and behaviors due to the anti-racism experience, although to varying degrees. Affective consequences of anti-racism pedagogy and the crucial role that professors play in these processes are discussed. Recommendations derived from participants' responses are put forth.

PLANTING THE SEED: THE LASTING IMPACT

OF AN EXPLICIT ANTI-RACISM MISSION ON WHITE GRADUATES

OF THE SMITH COLLEGE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK

A project based upon independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> Sometimes we are blessed with being able to choose the time and the arena and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle wherever we are standing… The real blessing is to be able to use whoever I am wherever I am, in concert with as many others as possible, or alone if needs be. (Audre Lorde, A Burst of Light, 1988).

Shella Dennery – you have embodied all spirits of teacher, mentor, adviser, and role model. Thank you times a googleplex.

Rani Varghese and Joshua Miller – you have inspired me beyond reason.

Yoosun Park – thank you for taking the time and for breathing the first flickering embers into this project.

Ryan – for alternating between cataclysmic inspiration and firm, sisterly direction; this thesis exists, in many ways, because of you.

Ellen – for encouraging my words when I felt they would never come, for being a constant source of support.

Gina – your math lessons and statistical kingliness has seen this project through.

Patrick – for believing I could sparkle.

My mother and father. It is absurd how much you two believe in me. It counts. It matters. It has meant the most.

Tharyn, for teaching me to write from the inside out.

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INTRODUCTION

> I think the hard work of a non-racist sensibility is the boundary crossing, from a safe circle into wilderness…to travel from the safe to the unsafe…This willing transgression of a line, which takes one into a new awareness, a secret, lonely and tabooed world – to survive the transgression is terrifying and addictive. To know that everything has changed and yet that nothing has changed; and in leaping the chasm of this impossible division of self, a discovery of the self surviving, still well, still strong, and, as a curious consequence, renewed (Patricia J. Williams, The Alchemy of Race and Rights, 1991).

The institutionally and socially embedded constructs of power and privilege are maintaining forces that fuel racism in the United States, presenting multilayered challenges for white social workers who benefit from these same constructs. Research reflects the basic agreement that whiteness is a central tenet and maintaining force of racism in the United States. The field of social work has indicted racism as a human rights violation and challenged those within the field to combat racism. Educational institutions have evolved to challenge racism and other interrelated forms of oppression, although at varied paces and with varied outcomes.

The field's governing bodies have made policy changes that echo the interminable importance of anti-racism and anti-oppression pedagogy and practice. According to Bailey (2008):

> Others are called upon to dare to recognize their own potential power, mourn the loss of what might have been, and marshal their energies to seek correction in society's processes. Even those within the social work profession can be paralyzed against change because of benefits of white privilege or the blindness of internalized racism (p. 34).

In addition to learning about the non-dominant others with whom social work is often concerned, white students must commit themselves to develop a heightened level of

self-awareness and practice deeper engagement with painful material. Anti-racism as an ideology requires a transformational shift in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that have been socially constructed and reinforced by unearned white privilege. "Social justice, equality of relationship, and the search for some sense of wellbeing for ourselves and others are at the heart of what we, as social workers, value," state Donner and Miller (2005, p. 125).

Cultural competence has moved far beyond the once monolithic focus of learning about the non-white other and has expanded to incorporate white racial identity development and self-understanding. At the graduate school for social work examined by this study, anti-racism is found in an explicit mission statement governing practices, policies, curriculum, and pedagogical approaches. All of the scholarly contributions reviewed by this study reflect a keen awareness of the interrelatedness of whiteness and racism.

Until recently, the bulk of current research on pedagogical processes and desired outcomes for white students learning about race, racism, and oppression have emphasized learning about the "other," or those who are marginalized by the same systems from which whites benefit. The central theme of cultural competence has been the study of people, spaces, and identities that exist outside the normative white dominant culture. In fact, a critical shift has occurred in the past two decades, informed in part by the upsurge in theoretical and empirical research on whiteness. The critical study of whiteness has influenced a shift away from older models and suggests new implications for pedagogy, practice, and activism within the field of social work. Accordingly, the scholarship on whiteness has grown. Literature from fields of social work, psychology, and counseling,

will be reviewed in the following chapter, so that the broader interplay of whiteness studies and anti-racism pedagogy can be understood.

The formative era of multicultural approaches appear to have shifted to reflect a more intersectional and relational approach which requires that white students learn not only about the "cultural other," but that they also engage in a critical self-examination which may influence a more developed racial identity.

This mixed method study investigated perceptions, attitudes, and clinical practices among white graduates of the Smith College School for Social Work (SSW), which voted to become an anti-racism institution in 1994. This study grew from the researcher's personal and academic interests in anti-racism; the researcher is a white student of the institution being studied. Essentially, this study sought to explore the degree to which a committed institution cultivates the same commitment in its white graduates, and specifically, how anti-racism as an ideology and practice is internalized in the white psyche, beyond the institutional gates.

Additionally, the researcher was interested in identifying the aspects of the SSW program that white graduates found to be most salient, and if this saliency is related to behavior and attitudes associated with anti-racism. The study's qualitative component attempted to detect the collective aspects of the anti-racism commitment that could be interpreted as generally applicable to any white student of anti-racism pedagogy. Findings from this study may contribute to the ongoing evaluation of the anti-racism commitment within the institution. It may contribute to the larger bodies of knowledge concerned with how issues of race and racism are addressed in social work education.

This study found a complex variety of factors that appear to influence how white

SSW graduates sustain a stance of anti-racism. Other factors are identified that appear to influence resignation or refrain from ongoing anti-racism activism. The findings are aligned with previous research on what influences white individuals learning about race and racism.

These findings may prove useful for graduate schools of social work in evaluating and developing curriculum and policy that is informed by, or works towards a goal of, becoming an anti-racism institution. Participants' recommendations will be presented alongside the recommendations put forth by this study. The findings may be useful to the institution itself in evaluating progress made and areas for improvement.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foucault (1982) argues that an ideology or body of knowledge cannot be understood separately from the power structure in which the knowledge was created. In this sense, clinical social work practice must be understood in relation to the pedagogy and theory from which it is taught. In order to most effectively and ethically serve oppressed and vulnerable populations, white social workers must be equipped to combat unjust systems from which they reap unearned benefit and privilege. As this literature review will highlight, a foundational knowledge of privilege, power and racism comes from a well-formed racial identity fostered by the self-reflection required of social work education and practice. Research supports the efficacy of pedagogical approaches that infuse clinical practice with tenets of antiracism, especially for whites.

Anti-racism pedagogy has been conceptualized, informed and critiqued by a multitude of disciplines, including those of social work, psychology, counseling, psychoanalysis, philosophy and cultural studies. This review of the literature will present an overview of the research and theory that reflects the interconnectedness of studies in whiteness, racism, and anti-racism. Here, literature from the fields of whiteness studies, anti-racism pedagogy, and social work practice will be reviewed. The last section will outline the initiatives and curriculum of the Smith College School for Social Work, which has made explicit its mission to become an anti-racist institution.

This study will use repeatedly the terms race and racism and because there is an intricate web of historically rooted definitions and understandings, the following

definition represents how *race* is understood in this study. Van Wagenen (2007) puts

forth:

> Race is a social and historical construction, rather than an inherent, fixed,
> essential biological characteristic. Scholarship in sociology, anthropology, in legal
> studies - the home discipline of the movement called Critical Race Theory (CRT)
> - renders this point a virtual unquestioned certainty (p. 157).

The definition of racism as it appears in the Statement of Anti-Racism (2004) of

Smith College School for Social Work can be found on the school's website:

> Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived
> categorical differences, value assigned to those differences, and a system of
> oppression that rewards and punishes people based on the assigned differences. It
> is manifested politically, socially, economically, culturally, interpersonally, and
> intrapersonally, and grounded in the unique history of racism in the United States
> (p. 1).

Donner and Miller (2005) add that racism is "multifaceted and pervasive and has been a

varying but ongoing characteristic of American society since its inception" (p. 125). The

social work profession claims roots in anti-oppression work and social justice is one of

the field's six core principles (NASW, 2006). The field's two governing bodies, the

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council for Social Work

Education both endorse commitments and policy statements aligned with tenets of anti-

racism. The NASW policy statement on racism states:

> NASW supports an inclusive society in which racial, ethnic, social, sexual
> orientation, and gender differences are valued and respected. Racism at any level
> should not be tolerated. Emphasis must be placed on self-examination, learning,
> and change to unlearn racist beliefs and practices in order to be fully competent to
> join others in the full appreciation of all differences…. Racism is embedded in our
> society and unless we identify specific instances and work to remove them we are
> part of the problem rather than a mechanism for the solution (p. 18-19).

Studies of Whiteness: Privilege and Invisibility

The study of whiteness is itself the study of racism. The literature presented in this section will reflect basic agreement that whites are responsible for examining, or, interrogating whiteness (hooks, 1995). In fact, "Over the last half-century, notable scholars of race have argued that white people would continue to deny or ignore systemic racism until they studied whiteness" (Macmullan, 2005, p. 268). Many scholars of color have examined and deconstructed whiteness throughout history (Baldwin, 1993; Helms, 1990; hooks, 1995; Morrison, 1993).

The emergence of the field of whiteness is concerning to some of its own leading scholars who argue that its growth could eclipse pedagogies of multiculturalism and anti-racism. MacMullan (2005) presents and deconstructs these arguments, explaining that critics of whiteness studies fear this focus could distract from the critical attention racism itself. Essentially, pouring scholarly attention into the ideology of the dominant/white culture buttresses this space, again, as central and normative. In other words, "that whiteness studies might drag university curricula back to traditional, Eurocentric paradigms or enable whites to claim the mantle of victims of racism" (MacMullan, 2005, p. 285). In response, Rothenberg (2005) clearly states: "As for the concern that looking at whiteness and white privilege will deflect our attention from racism, this could not be further from the truth. *White privilege is the other side of racism*" (p. 1). hooks (1995) adds that it is "crucial that 'whiteness' be studied, understood, discussed – so that everyone learn that affirmation of multiculturalism, and an unbiased inclusive perspective, can and should be present whether or not people of color are present" (p. 43).

Within contemporary academia, the field of whiteness studies is still relatively young. "The luminaries of race studies have long called for the study of whiteness as one of many necessary steps towards the eradication of racism" (Macmullan, 2005, p. 269). bell hooks (1995) comments on how the feminist movement helped instigate the contemporary study of whiteness. "Increasingly, more and more individual white revolutionary feminist activists are critiquing the racism of their white peers with the same militancy as their women-of-color peers" (hooks, 1995, p. 102-103). Over the last two decades, there has been an increased focus on whiteness within fields such as psychology (Tatum, 1997), social work (Pinderhughes, 1989) and psychoanalysis (Altman, 2000; Leary, 1995; Suchet, 2004). There is basic agreement across disciplines that understanding whiteness and white privilege is crucial to understanding how racism functions. In fact, "over the last half-century, notable scholars of race have argued that white people would continue to deny or ignore systemic racism until they studied whiteness" (Macmullan, 2005, p. 268). In the United States, white privilege reinforces and maintains structures that guarantee sociopolitical and economic wealth to some groups while reinforcing systems which guarantee marginalization of other groups (Miller & Garran, 2008).

In 1988, the white feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh published an essay on white privilege and male privilege that is now often cited as a seminal piece of scholarship. McIntosh presented a list of ways in which white privilege benefits its recipients in unwarranted and usually unacknowledged ways, such as consistently being mirrored by images of other same-looking people in newspapers and television. Speaking from the psychoanalytic perspective Suchet (2007) points out that the lived experience of

whiteness encompasses much more than a marker of racial categorization. "It is an ideology, a system of beliefs, policies and practices that enable white people to maintain social power and control" (Suchet, 2007, p. 868).

In a feminist exploration of racism and the social construction of whiteness, Frankenberg (1993) explores the lived experience of whiteness. Using theoretical analyses of race, racism and colonialism as a framework, the author presents her own qualitative data from 30 interviews with white women. Here, whiteness is defined as a site comprised of three dimensions: a location of structural advantage, a specific lens with which whites see themselves, others and society, and a set of unquestioned cultural behaviors and norms that never need to be named or defended (Frankenberg, 1993).

White privilege is most difficult to recognize by those who reap the most benefit from it. In fact, invisibility is the most critical component of whiteness and white privilege (Donner & Miller, 2005; Dyer, 1988, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993). This invisibility of whiteness functions and is maintained in numerous ways on individual, structural, and ideological levels. bell hooks (1995) explains: "In a white supremacist society, white people can 'safely' imagine that they are invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted, and even now collectively assert, over black people accorded them the right to control the black gaze" (p. 35). On a structural level, Dalton (2005) states that "Whiteness is meaningless in the absence of Blackness; the same holds in reverse" (p. 16). Thus, the invisibility of whiteness is maintained through the visibility of the non-white "Other" (Dyer, 1988). According to Vodde (2000) white privilege remains invisible because of individual and collective assumptions that society is one of meritocracy, which has been accepted as a basic American truth. Dalton (2005) names

the inability of whites to understand themselves as racial beings as "race obliviousness" which is bred in part by another collective ideal: "the curse of rugged individualism [...a] peculiarly American delusion that we are individuals first and foremost" (p. 115). Racial identity is defined as "a sense of group collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1990, p. 3). In a pivotal piece of scholarship, Helms (1990) introduces stage models for racial identity development of whites and people of color. There are two phases of white identity development comprised of six stages: Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independent, Immersion/Emersion, and Autonomy. Advancing from one stage to the next is not a linear process, nor is it automatic by any means. In fact, many do not advance to the second stage, that of Disintegration, until they are exposed to information on racism and people of color beyond that which they understand based on stereotypes gleaned from others and media (Tatum, 1992). Advancing in racial identity development is dependent upon a complex web of factors, including exposure to information about race and racism. Woven throughout the stages are critical incidences where shifts in one's thinking, beliefs, and behaviors are accompanied by cognitive dissonance, denial, resistance, guilt, and anger. Moving through these affective states requires self-reflection, motivation, acceptance, and drive to effectuate change. This stage is also where instructors play a crucial role in modeling an anti-racist identity. Tatum (1994) writes, "For Whites, there are two major developmental tasks in this process, the abandonment of individual racism and the recognition of and opposition to institutional and cultural racism" (p. 463). Helms (1990) stresses the importance of white people coming to terms with their whiteness, which includes accepting oneself as part of racism,

internalizing a new sense of being white, and working towards a white anti-racist identity.

Avoiding learning about racism and refusing that one benefits unwittingly from white privilege are both processes that restrict whites from developing mature, healthy racial identities. This stunting in growth contributes, and perpetuates, the cycles of oppression (Ayvazian, 1995).   In social work, privilege can be understood as an unearned, or unintentional force that reinforces dependence, unjust power dynamics between clinician and client, and creates a barrier to reflective social work practice (Pinderhughes, 1989).

Literature on individual and systemic privilege began appearing in social work discourse in the late 1980's. Not until 1995 did the discussion reach the level of mainstream social work discourse. Privilege is defined as: "The invisible advantage and resultant unearned benefits afforded to dominant groups of people because of a variety of sociodemographic traits" (Franks & Riedel, 2008, p. 1). It is important to note the overlapping convergence of two interrelated bodies of knowledge (whiteness and racism) represented in scholarly literature. Discourses on social work and white privilege assert that both foundational knowledge and deeper self-reflection make for better clinicians. The NASW policy statement on racism states:

> It is incumbent in solidarity with those groups who are subordinate to join forces together with the profession of social work to bring about a more just and equitable society in which power, status, wealth, services, and opportunities are enjoyed by all. Even those who are not consciously racist tend to accept white privilege and the benefits of discrimination against others (NASW Issue Statement, p. 16).

Current social work literature on white privilege understands it as contributing to dynamics of power, both systemically and in the therapeutic relationship. Every reviewed piece of scholarly work on white privilege noted the harm and destruction it causes and called for social workers to work towards dismantling it (Vodde, 2000). Systems of privilege contribute greatly to the power dynamics inherent in social work education and practice. White social workers, then, find themselves in a double-bind situation, benefitting from the very institutions that oppress and marginalize the people with whom they often work. Keenan (2001) comments on the paradox by applying Foucault's ideas on power relations to cross-cultural psychotherapy. "Foucault's conceptualization of disciplinary power provides a frame that describes the tensions clinical social workers experience operating within, while striving not to be completely of systems of power relations" (Keenan, 2001, p. 211).

Anti-Racism Pedagogy and Social Work Education

Over the past two decades a significant pedagogical shift has been noted in regards to the way diversity and multiculturalism have been taught within social work education. This has been largely informed by an upsurge in research from multiple disciplines including psychology, (Tatum, 1992, 1994) and whiteness (Dyer, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Helms, 1990). Nagda, Spearmon, Holley, Harding, Balassone, Moise-Swanson, and De Mello (1999) review these pedagogical frameworks and empirically evaluate the outcomes of a required diversity course in which an interracial group dialogue approach was used. This study examined outcomes for BSW students in a diversity course composed of roughly equal numbers of students of color and white students. Findings included unanimous agreement among students that the dialogues

were a critical component of their learning. Challenges identified by students included the limited time; they proposed that the weekly class meetings, which met for 80 minutes, were not enough. The researchers discussed their findings and implications for infusion of intergroup dialogue into social work pedagogy:

> By engaging students in direct explorations of their own and others' personal experiences of oppression and privilege, intergroup dialogues provide a learning space where they can contextualize these experiences within larger patterns of social relations […] an important ingredient in changing destructive and oppressive social relationships (Nagda, et. al., 1999, p. 444).

A central tenet of the reviewed literature is the critical requirement of the learner to employ self-awareness, reflexivity and introspection (Davis, 1992; Garcia & Van Soest, 1997; Spears, 2004; Abrams & Gibson, 2007). These tools are fostered by critical pedagogy, which emphasizes respectful and dialogic relationships between educators and students and has goals of creating social change and egalitarian social relations. Problem-posing teaching methods depend "on a dialogical theory of praxis and knowledge and a revised relationship between teacher and student" (Bartlett, 2005, p. 345).

The Institution's Role in Anti-Racism Pedagogy

Miller, Hyde and Ruth (2004) highlight the importance of a conscious institution that implements the same practices that are being taught in the classrooms. "Social work education needs to address the lack of precision regarding such concepts as cultural competence and sensitivity and multicultural awareness. Until then, [teachers] are left to articulate a vision and purpose, course by course and school by school" (Miller, Hyde & Ruth, 2004, p. 416). Furthermore, the racial makeup of the campus itself is influential to students. Garcia and Van Soest (1999) point out "when a student body or faculty is not

very diverse, a program seems dishonest from the perspective of students in a diversity course" (p. 164).

The literature addresses pedagogical obstacles met by white educators who teach courses on racism as well as suggestions for addressing them: instructor legitimacy, racial privilege, the racial makeup and racial identity development of students, and institutional and professional context. "Learning must include experiential components that lead to self-awareness and social action strategies that go beyond the classroom" (Miller, Hyde & Ruth, 2004, p. 411).

Garcia and Van Soest, (1999) use critical incident methodology to analyze educators' reports of challenging classroom events within courses on diversity and oppression. The authors suggest implications for this method to be used for "emotionally laden content that is related to diversity and oppression" (Garcia and Van Soest, 1999, p. 150). Their findings support educational methods that highlight "the importance of faculty communication and group process skills to work with and overcome barriers posed by strained classroom interactions" (Garcia and Van Soest, 1999, p. 164). Strained and difficult interactions are expected in courses on difficult topics, such as racism. Educators are encouraged to be equipped in responding, as they increase the likelihood of students' shutting down and avoiding similar material in the future. "The damage done by a poor experience in a course on race and racism … is perhaps worse than the damage done by not ever having dealt with the issue" (Miller, Hyde & Ruth, 2004, p. 417).

Empirical Findings on Outcomes for White Students

Tatum (1994) conducted a study and applied Helms' six-stage theory to analyze changes she witnessed in white students taking her course on the psychology of racism via thematic analyses of students' journal entries. Tatum used pre- and post- tests to measure cognitive and emotional changes after taking her course. White students underwent "clear emotional changes, reporting higher levels of white guilt" and reported higher levels of feeling "responsible for helping to correct problems of racism and for taking action" as well as becoming "more aware of racism, including its pervasive and institutional nature, and more clearly realized the extent of white privilege" (Tatum, 1994, p. 51).

Spears (2004) points out a limitation of research on teaching cultural competence in social work education. The author observes that the "instructional criteria for multicultural practice lack coherent structure and organization" (p. 272). Spears conducted a mixed method study in which 33 MSW students were evaluated before and after a cultural competency course and compared with a control group. Results indicate that development of racial identity positively influences level of cultural competence. By the end of the 15-week course, white students who matured in racial identity attitudes also exhibited higher levels of culturally competent practice. The course methods reported to be most influential included experiential exercises on privilege and cultural heritage, a collective art project, guest speakers, films, agency assessment exercise, learning about racial identity development and the teaching dyad (the teaching dyad included Spears, an African-American female and a white male).

In a similar study, Garcia & Van Soest (1997) conducted an exploratory investigation of MSW students enrolled in a required diversity and oppression course. At the beginning of the course, students audio-recorded their responses to an interview guide, including questions about their social and racial identities. Near the end of the term, students listened to their tapes and were asked to write about this experience in their final papers. Findings were gathered through content analysis of the papers that included responses to the taping exercise. Of the 26 participants, 92% experienced strong negative emotions while listening to their tapes. The study presents interesting patterns among white/non-Jewish students. Affective responses of white/non-Jewish students included shock, amazement, guilt, and shame while multiethnic students experienced dismay, sadness, and pain. Student awareness of privilege and oppression increased markedly by the end of the course, as did awareness of systemic racism. White students reported the highest levels of hope for feeling better equipped to combat racism and oppression.

Despite the positive findings reported by the aforementioned studies, the strong resistance white individuals have towards material about privilege, whiteness and especially racism and of course, the same would hold true for white students of social work (hooks, 1995). People of color are forced to recognize and made repeatedly aware of their racial categorization, whites have the unique position of staying unaware of their whiteness, possibly moving from birth to death without even considering their whiteness. As Tatum (1999) points out, the development of a positive white identity is not an innate, naturally occurring process. In fact, as Dyer (2002) explains, whites experience racism in a profoundly different way than people of color. "They do not imagine that the way whiteness makes its presence felt in black life, most often as terrorizing imposition, a

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power that wounds, hurts, tortures, is a reality that disrupts the fantasy of whiteness as representing goodness" (Dyer, 2002, p.167). An illustration of this is given by hooks (1995) who describes how many of her white students express shock and rage when they become aware that their whiteness is studied by black students. According to hooks (1995), this reaction "is itself an expression of racism" (p. 34).

Bonilla-Silva (2006) encourages whites to make "a personal and political movement" from a position of colorblindness towards becoming antiracist (p. 15). He defines an antiracist as one who understands institutional racism and acknowledges ones' own unwilling participation in it. "The ride will be rough, but after your eyes have been opened, there is no point in standing still" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 16). He uses the term 'race traitor' to describe whites who reject color-blind ideology. As SSW resident faculty member Yoosun Park (2007) pointed out during a panel discussion on anti-racism at the school, "Anti-racism work is necessary: anti-racism work is difficult" (SSW, Summer Lecture Series, 2007, p.1).

Now, the question must be posed: What does it mean to be anti-racist? Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007) define an ally as someone with agent status, (such as a white person who benefits from the dominant ideology) who consciously rejects the dominant ideology and takes subsequent action on a regular basis. According to Adams, et al. (2007), an ally believes that eliminating oppressive power structures is necessary in eliminating racism and an ally believes this is beneficial to both dominant and oppressed groups. The authors outline characteristics of an ally behaviors including: taking responsibility for one's own learning, acknowledging the privilege which benefits them on a daily basis, and a willingness to be challenged, to consider change, and to commit to

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taking action, despite the fear which accompanies all of these things. Spencer (2008) writes from the social work perspective and comments on the interconnection of being both a social worker and an ally: "Allyship requires tremendous humility. It means never being truly culturally competent, but rather, recognizing that the pursuit of critical consciousness is a lifelong process. My reflection as a social worker continues, for I am still a work in progress" (p. 101).

Emotion in Anti-Racism Pedagogy

A number of scholars in the field of social work education have called for a more pragmatic and comprehensive approach to design and delivery of content on diversity, racism and oppression (Bronstein & Gibson, 1998; Vodde, 2000). A widely uncontested claim is that curriculum needs to reflect a framework that legitimizes learning about emotions, such as guilt, frustration, and critical thinking in order to prepare students for some of the struggles they will encounter as practitioners dealing with diversity issues. Effective engagement with difficult material is related to affective responses and emotional processes. In an empirical study on critical classroom events, Garcia and Van Soest (1999) present tools for effective instruction of diversity and oppression content. Emotional reactions and self-reflection are highlighted as critical processes for instruction of this material:

> Through faculty acknowledgment of their own emotional responses as well as a willingness to work their way through it, faculty can greatly enhance their facilitation of class interaction and learning. This requires faculty awareness of their own collusion with injustice and Euro-American male privilege (p. 163).

Self-Reflection in Anti-Racism Pedagogy

Literature on anti-racism pedagogy further supports the claim that knowledge acquisition must be accompanying by experiences that foster and encourage self-reflection and provide room for students' affective experiences. Findings of Miller, Hyde & Ruth (2004) build on the evidence that emotional experiences are crucial in learning about racism. "Classes that do not allow time for introspection, empathy and other emotional tasks are providing students with only intellectual tools and learning will remain shallow" (p. 419).

Vodde (2000) presents a framework for challenging privilege in social work education. The author provides evidence that content on diversity and oppression cannot be successfully taught through multiculturalism frameworks hinged on studying diverse populations. He argues that diversity content in BSW and MSW programs will fail to promote social justice unless those in charge of delivering such content have undergone a confrontation and a keen self-examination of personal privilege, both within society and within the school of social work. White, male social workers, who derive the most benefit from privilege, are encouraged to take a proactive stance to explore the possible effects of one's own privilege in social work education and to take action in de-centering those effects (Vodde, 2000).

Literature on race and ethnicity in clinical social work supports that a necessary strength of the white clinician is to be culturally attuned, not only to their clients of color, but also to themselves as individuals yielding unearned privilege and power. Social workers, then, are challenged by being in a privileged position while also trying to dismantle unfair systems. Pinderhughes (1989) claims that a clinician's integrated

personal identity is a crucial prerequisite to "constructive engagement with clients" with racial and ethnic identities that are different from the clinician (p. 69). This marked a notable shift in the paradigm of cultural competence in which clinicians were encouraged to understand the racial, ethnic and cultural differences of others. Instead, emphasis was placed on understanding oneself through self-reflection and racial/ethnic identity development.

<center>*Anti-Racism in Social Work Practice*</center>

This section will review pertinent literature from the field of clinical social work practice, and will discuss how conceptualizations of race, racism and privilege are understood in the context of the therapeutic relationship between clinician and client. The literature from the field of social work education supports the claim that self-awareness and identity development are integral ingredients for effective clinical practice. Racial identity and other social identities become integrated into a cohesive sense of self. Self-awareness is crucial to effective clinical practice including recognizing transference, countertransference, racial enactments, and more effective use of relational and intersubjective approaches to clinical work (Miller & Garran, 2008; Shonfeld-Ringel, 2000). Miehls & Moffatt, (2000) argue "the social worker identity is based on a relationship of reflexivity through which the construction of identity is made present through working on the self" (p. 346).

Anti-racism pedagogy in social work education stresses the importance of fostering of self-reflection through intersubjective and dialogic approaches. Even the physical space of classrooms can promote this kind of experience. Tatum (1992) notes

that the circular arrangement of chairs "communicates an important premise of the course – that I expect the students to speak with each other as well as with me" (p. 3).

Practicing social work often means assuming a position of power over individuals, communities and systems, whether or not this power is qualified, earned, or desired. Even the language used to signify recipients and providers presupposes concepts of authority, control and capacity: the client (person or entity helped by another) and the clinician (the professional who practices or teaches) become part of system in which qualities and capacities of each are assumed and largely based on social constructions and language. As Miller and Garran (2008) point out, the power dynamic in social work is often regarded as a necessary evil of "doing good" which can be leveled if the social worker is also intent on fighting racism. "Spurred by professional mandates and buoyed by a belief in their ability to make a difference, helping professionals are positioned to take a leadership role in the move to dismantle racism, empowering ourselves and seeking to inspire our clients" (Miller & Garran, 2008, p. 277).

Shonfeld-Ringel (2001) explores the dynamics of power and authority within cross-racial clinical social work, arguing that the working alliance must be understood within the context of race, ethnicity and culture, specifically when the client is non-western and the clinician is white. An important variable in establishing a working alliance is "an awareness of the influence of the therapist's power and authority on the treatment process, both politically and psychologically" (Shonfeld-Ringel, 2001, p. 57). White social workers operate from a multiplicity of unharnessed power – within the advantageous circumference of institutional and racial privilege. This predicament is best described by Kovel (2000) as "living in a contradiction between a perception of a world

seriously out of joint and the liberal meliorism inherent in my professional identity –

from one side, unbounded and radical horror, and from the other, an optimistic faith in

the technical resolution of human problems" (p. 579).

Gaertner and Dovidio (2005) explain that aversive racism is enacted by those who

"sympathize with victims of past injustice, support the principle of racial equality and

regard themselves as non-prejudiced, but at the same time, possess negative beliefs about

Blacks, which may be unconscious" (p. 618). A challenge in clinical practice "is how to

recognize the social reality of race without losing sight of the way in which our

conceptions of racial differences are based in and perpetuate discriminatory social

arrangements" (Altman, 2000, p. 592).

Racism is deeply embedded in the white psyche and defense mechanisms like

denial and repression work to bar it from entering the conscious mind (Altman, 2006).

According to Altman (2006) it is impossible to erase the unconscious and therefore there

will always be traces of racism that are out of reach, lodged as it were, deep inside the

psyche. These psychological processes, along with historical, institutionally embedded

concepts, are at play in keeping whites in the same socially constructed positions of

oppressors. Suchet (2004) argues "whites have dissociated the historical position of the

oppressor from collective consciousness, due to our inability to tolerate an identification

with the aggressor" (p. 423). This tendency to dissociate from the systems of privilege

from which whiteness operates, may further inherent power differential between white

clinicians and clients of color.

One way that race and racism is explored in literature on clinical practice is

through understanding of transference-countertransference phenomena (Suchet, 2004).

Because the intersubjective space between clinician and client is where unconscious material is enacted, unpacked and experienced, the therapeutic relationship is a ripe breeding for racial enactments to occur, especially for a white clinician/client of color dyad. However, if the clinician has worked towards developing a cohesive and antiracist white identity, dismantling racism and reparative work is also possible (Altman, 2000; Perez Foster, 1998; Shonfeld-Ringel, 2001; Suchet, 2004).

Therefore, a graduate level clinical social work program operating under an explicit anti-racism mission may serve to counteract this tendency in the white individuals it graduates. This pedagogical framework, which has been implemented at the Smith College School for Social Work, will be outlined in the next and final section.

Anti-Racism Mission of Smith College School for Social Work

Teaching clinical practice at Smith College School for Social Work (SSW) is guided by an over-arching social constructivist stance and tenets of social work practice: 1) values, ethics and self reflection, 2) cross-cultural knowledge and skills, 3) empowerment and advocacy (Basham, 2004). SSW is the only known graduate program for social work with an explicit commitment towards anti-racism. Basham (2004) notes that in December, 2004, SSW faculty voted into use a revised statement of anti-racism, which was adopted in 1994:

> Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived categorical differences, value assigned to those differences, and a system of oppression that rewards and punishes people based on the assigned differences. It is manifested politically, socially, economically, culturally, interpersonally, and intrapersonally, and grounded in the unique history of racism in the United States. Smith College School for Social Work is committed to addressing the pernicious and enduring multilayered effects of racism. Anti-racism initiatives promote respect for and interest in multiple worldviews, values, and cultures. The School for Social Work develops and teaches knowledge, skills and values that enhance

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the ability to mutually affirm each other's equal place in the world. In addition, self-reflection and deepening conversations about race shape the School's anti-racism mission and promote culturally responsive practice, research and scholarship, and other anti- racism activities. (Retrieved January 14, 2010 from http://www.smith.edu/ssw/admin/about_antiracism.php).

In the years since the mission was adopted, there has been a well-documented shift in the SSW curriculum, as well as changing demographics in the student body and faculty. These shifts have been noted in the SSW Anti-Racism Progress Reports (Jacobs, 2009) which are evaluative summaries prepared by the Anti-Racism Consultation Committee and published by the Dean every two years. These reports outline efforts and changes in anti-racism efforts as well as curricula, publications and projects by students, alumni, faculty, and the school itself.

Several of the school's MSW candidates have chosen to fulfill the SSW thesis requirement by conducting empirical research on the anti-racism mission. These have included research projects on the effectiveness of the anti-racism initiatives (Ilustre, 2001) and evolution and history of the anti-racism mission (Vaughn, 2008). A few scholarly articles have been published by members of the SSW faculty, which explain the history, challenges, and pedagogy behind the anti-racism initiatives.

Basham (2004) explains that the school's overall mission is to combine a pedagogical approach to teaching clinical practice while simultaneously addressing individual and institutional racism as it relates to the field of clinical social work. Basham (2004) notes, "as an educational community, we have struggled continually with defining and asserting the operational definition of anti-racism … we clearly need to engage in more active dialogue about what constitutes clinical practice grounded in anti-racism" (p. 290).

The decision to focus specifically on racism and not a more general term such as anti-oppression, which "covers" many sociocultural identities that are marginalized is discussed in school documents. This choice is also supported by literature. Iris Marion Young (1990) argues against using a monolithic approach to combating different types of oppression. The author expands on the five "faces" of oppression including exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.

In a speech given to students during the anti-racism orientation in the summer of 2007, resident faculty member Fred Newdom (2007) addressed SSW's decision to focus specifically on racism during an orientation. Newdom (2007) stated:

> We did that with a full recognition that this could well be seen as stating that other forms of oppression were less significant, destructive, hurtful, and painful to experience. That wasn't our intent at the time and still isn't. Plainly and simply, we made the decision that we did at that time because we believed that racism has a unique legacy in this country with our history of slavery and Jim Crow laws, the internment of Japanese residents during World War II, race-based immigration laws, the denial of entry to Jewish refugees from the holocaust, and the near genocide of Native people, and it seemed critical to us to afford that legacy a place of primacy in our overall work against oppression. In this country's current climate, in which Muslims and people of Arabic and South Asian descent are racially profiled as potential terrorist threats and where the racial fault lines exposed by Hurricane Katrina are still apparent, it is clear that racism is still very much with us (p. 3).

Newdom also elaborates on the complicated process that in part resulted in the decision to work towards becoming an anti-racist institution. Newdom (2007) describes the role that SSW students played in the decision making process:

> Students at the school, pointing out what they perceived as a lack of commitment to opposing racism on our part, took actions that led to a series of faculty-student-administration dialogues here. And, as you will come to learn about the culture of Smith…There were moments of incredible frustration and anger; there were moments of breathtaking honesty and compassion; and there were moments of utter confusion and lack of clarity. All of that was to be expected and our expectations were met (p. 2).

For its white students, SSW uses methods of teaching antiracism at individual, group, and institutional levels that intend to foster recognition of white privilege and racism, so that they might gain or strengthen the capacity to hold those aspects of themselves rather than disavowing them. Basham (2004) defines the pedagogical approach as: "infusing anti-racism with the central principles that determine excellence in clinical practice" (p. 291). Basham (2004) links this to the November, 2003 update of the SSW definition of anti-racism, and notes that "self-reflection and deepening conversations about race shape our anti-racism mission and promote culturally responsive practice, research and scholarship" (Basham, 2004, p. 292).

In addition to the ideological and pedagogical structure of SSW, the anti-racism initiatives include institutional, curricular and student-run components. All students in their first year are required to attend the Anti-Racism Symposium, which is meant to introduce the overarching concepts of racism and purpose of anti-racism at SSW. The symposium is followed by mandatory small group discussions facilitated by faculty members, which can occur once or over the span of the 10-week academic term. There are also student groups including "Unlearning Racism" (a process group typically attended by white students) and the Anti-Racism Task Force (an appointed board of faculty, staff and students who review issues related to racism and monitor the progress of the mission throughout the school year).

The Council for Students of Color is an active student group that has been an integral force in shaping the anti-racism mission. In fact, in the summer of 1987, a Minority Alumni Conference was held and widely attended by graduates from all over

the country. What culminated from this retreat were 33 proposals which would inform

the next two decades of SSW anti-racism efforts:

> These proposals were far-reaching and went far beyond any strategic tweaking of the procedures in the admissions office or the awarding of financial aid. Collectively these proposals made clear that the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body would require changes in all areas of the School's institutional life; e.g. the recruitment and retention of a more diverse support staff; the inclusion of diversity content throughout the curriculum and not just in designated "diversity" courses; greater attention to "required" diversity content in the field curriculum; and the recruitment and retention of agencies and supervisors, etc. (Jacobs, 2009, p. 1).

"Racism in the U.S." Course

A major component of the anti-racism mission is a required course taken in the

second academic term entitled "Racism in the United States: Implications for Social

Work Practice." Every student who graduates from SSW is required to take this course,

however students are given the opportunity to select one of three sections offered. These

sections are: Multiple Perspectives, Dominant Perspective and Clinicians of Color

Perspectives. While students can elect to be in any section regardless of their racial

identity, it is implied that the Dominant section be for white students and the Clinicians

of Color section be for students of color, although this has not always been the case

(Vaughn, 2008). The "Racism" course uses a co-teaching model, with a dyad with a

professor of color and a white professor. The course design and teaching methods are

representative of critical and engaged pedagogy. According to hooks (1994), engaged

pedagogy "means teachers must be actively committed to a process of self actualization

that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers

students" (p. 15). The course uses dialogic and reflective approaches and is formatted,

according to the syllabus, (Miller & Varghese, 2009) in the following way:

This course is based on an educational approach that encourages students to interact intellectually and emotionally with the information and perspectives presented in class and readings so that new learning informs the student's professional and social reality more fully. These goals are reflected in how class discussions and written work for the course are designed such as small group discussions, dialogue, exercises, presentations, case studies and videotapes. These will be utilized to examine issues of racism and how they affect one's social work practice. Students should expect that much of the "learning product" (qualitative and quantitative) of this course emerges as a result of their own willingness and efforts to engage in critical self-reflection and dialogue, with themselves and others (p. 3).

Conclusion

Although the SSW anti-racism mission and curriculum are unique, there is a plethora of scholarly thought that informs the design, implementation and desired outcomes for social work students learning about race, racism and anti-racism. This study sought to examine outcomes for white students who graduated from SSW over a sixteen-year period, beginning with the year the anti-racism mission was originally voted into use. Many of the findings are aligned with theories and scholarship on white racial identity development and anti-racism pedagogy. As all of the participants in this study are social workers, the overview of literature will aid in illuminating the findings of this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Formulation

This study is an investigation of the impact of an explicit anti-racism mission on white graduates of Smith College School for Social Work (SSW). The guiding questions of this research are: 1) To what extent does the anti-racism mission influence professional, clinical, and racial identity development in white social workers? 2) Which elements of the program do white graduates experience as most salient? 3) In what ways do white graduates continue the mission of anti-racism efforts in their clinical practice and sociopolitical involvement?

This study was designed to gather and analyze data that may be useful in evaluating how anti-racism education is experienced by white social workers and how this experience changes over time. The data may also lend itself to bodies on knowledge on whiteness, white racial identity development and social work pedagogy. This chapter will provide an overview of the processes by which this research was conducted including sampling, instrument design, data collection and analysis.

Study Design and Sampling

This mixed method study purposively sought white alumni of the Smith College School for Social Work (SSW) from the graduated classes of 1994 through 2009, in order to explore phenomena over time and since the inception of the anti-racism mission. Inclusion criteria for participation included: 1) Receiving an MSW from SSW, 2) Graduating from SSW between 1994 and 2009, 3) Identifying racially as white or Caucasian, and 4) Currently working in the field of social work. Excluded from the study

were individuals who did not meet eligibility criteria, or who did not agree to the Informed Consent. (Appendix A). This study was approved on December 13, 2009 by Smith College School for Social Work's Human Subjects Review Committee. A copy of the approval letter can be found in Appendix B.

The non-probability and purposive sample was obtained through two methods of recruitment. Using snowball sampling, the researcher sent the study's recruitment letter (Appendix C) and informed consent by email to professional and personal contacts within the SSW community. Recipients were asked to forward the email to others who might be eligible to participate.

Additionally, assistance in publicizing the study was requested from the SSW Office of Alumni Affairs. This resulted in the second method of recruitment, in which a shorter version of the recruitment email appeared as an announcement (Appendix D) in the electronic alumni newsletter, *In Brief: Alumni E-News and Updates*, on January 15, 2010. The newsletter is also posted on the Alumni Affairs website, http://www.smith.edu/ssw/alumni/enews.php.

It is unknown which method of recruitment elicited more participants, as they were not asked to report how they learned of the study. The survey was open from January 10, 2010 to April 15, 2010. A total of 101 surveys were submitted and 85 of these were included in the final data set. Incomplete surveys were excluded from the study.

Instruments and Data Collection

An online survey, "*The Smith Anti-Racism Experience*" was designed by the researcher, specifically for this study (Appendix E). The survey was developed because

there is not an existing instrument that explores the multiple variables with which this study is concerned. All data collection took place using the Internet. Participants could access the survey directly by clicking on a hyperlink that was listed in all recruitment materials (www.surveymonkey.com/antiracismstudy). The survey contained a total of 29 questions. There were six qualitative questions and 23 quantitative questions. Respondents were asked a number of demographic questions, including their age, gender, graduation year, licensure status and length of social work practice since graduation.

Using an online survey is beneficial to both the researcher and participants. Participation can occur at a time or place that is convenient to the participant. The researcher can view data and track response rates as soon as surveys are submitted. Additionally, this method is more time efficient for participants than face-to-face interviews or handwritten surveys. Additionally, surveys are useful when participant anonymity is desired, as was the case for this study, which aimed to gather personal, subjective information including salient memories of the anti-racism experience. Because the researcher was operating from within the institution that participants were asked to discuss, it was a goal of this study to maintain participant anonymity. Identifying information including name, phone number, geographic location and addresses were not collected because recruitment and data collection took place on the Internet and this data was not relevant for the research question. Additionally, procuring informed consent was conducted on the survey webpage, negating the need for forms to be signed by participants.   The survey was designed so that IP addresses of participants were not recorded. The survey was designed to be user friendly and to require 30 - 45 minutes to complete.

The survey's welcome page gave brief instructions on how to navigate through the survey. Participants could exit the survey at any time and could refuse to answer any question. Respondents answered four screening questions to ensure they were eligible to participate (See Appendix F). Skip Logic was employed within the survey tool so that ineligible respondents were redirected to the survey's end page where they were thanked for their interest in the study and informed that they weren't eligible to participate in the study. Eligible participants were taken to the Informed Consent page. Participants indicated that they had read and agreed to the Informed Consent by checking a "Yes" box. Those who did not agree were directed to the survey's end page.

Respondents who indicated consent were taken to the actual survey, which was divided into four sections that each contained between five and nine questions. The survey sections were titled with headings: Demographics (questions 1-5), Current Social Work Practice (questions 6-12), Reflections on the Anti-Racism Experience (questions 13-21) and Implications & Recommendations (questions 22-29). The survey was designed in this manner to be user friendly and to reduce frustration on the part of the respondent. Each page of the survey contained an exit button and a progress bar that tracked progress and remaining percentage of the survey.

The survey used nominal, matrix, ranking and rating scale question design. Modes of answering questions included pull-down menus, check boxes and entering text into comment boxes. The demographic information included age, gender, year of graduation from SSW, number of years in practice, and licensure status.

Of the survey's 23 non-qualitative questions, eleven contained comment boxes to provide participants with the chance to elaborate or provide specification. This was

intended to increase response rate and sharing of details that might illuminate quantitative data.

Participants could refuse to answer any question and exit the survey at any time. Participants were reminded in recruitment materials and the Informed Consent that they would not be able to withdraw from the study after submitting the survey, as individual surveys could not be identified.

Data Analysis

Responses from the 85 surveys were downloaded from the host website and sorted into a spreadsheet containing all data and individual documents containing all responses to each question. The researcher assigned each respondent a numerical code. Data was then transmitted to a secondary statistician for aggregation and analysis using STATA. Analysis was conducted by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Thematic coding was utilized to analyze the qualitative data.

This study sought to explore the degree to which an explicit anti-racism mission affects post-graduate outcomes for white social workers. The findings are understood as multidimensional, and include graduates' subjective perceptions and how the anti-racism experience is compared with other components of the SSW program, including the strong psychodynamic focus, intensive academic summers and the intensive field placements. Variables include how the anti-racism experience is seen as influential to clinical skill, racial identity development, social work identity and employment decisions. The findings are also measured objectively by the level of post-graduate involvement and number of hours spent participating in anti-racism work.

All dimensions and variables were analyzed in relation to anti-racism exposure prior to entering SSW. They were also analyzed in relation to the ways participants reported being involved and affected by various elements of the anti-racism mission while attending SSW. Elements include membership in student groups related to anti-racism, courses, professors and events described as salient or memorable. The variable of affective responses experienced in the required second-year course, "Racism in the U.S.," was analyzed alongside previous exposure, other salient experiences and outcomes.

Descriptive statistics allowed for comparison of participants in terms of numerous variables. In order to find trends and relationships within the sample, participants were grouped by graduation year, professional role, "Racism in the U.S." course section, post-graduate anti-racism work and by response to question 25, which asks participants to select one statement which is "most true" and is meant to measure the level of interest and commitment to anti-racism since graduation. The program STATA was used to analyze and formulate a comprehensive summary of all variables. Inferential statistics, such as the T-test for independent means and comparisons of means were used in addition to frequencies and percentages.

Responses to the survey's open-ended questions provided the qualitative data for this study. Open-ended questions were designed to elicit narrative responses from respondents regarding their experiences and salient memories of the SSW anti-racism experience. These items were posed in the form of prompts, rather than questions, for example: "If applicable, try to recall an experience (at SSW) during which you may have felt challenged because of your racial identity, whiteness or privilege."

Using content analysis of the narrative data from open-ended questions, the researcher reviewed all textual responses in order to identify commonalities and idiosyncrasies. The researcher then coded the themes so that qualitative data could also be analyzed in relation to the quantitative data. The data will be shared in greater detail in the findings chapter of this paper.

Ethics and Safeguards

All data collected from participants will be kept secured and confidentially. Participant IP addresses were not recorded by the host website and participation in the study was anonymous. Only the researcher had access to original data. After data had been downloaded from the host website each participant was assigned a numerical code before the data was made available to the statistician, who had reviewed and signed a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix G). All documents containing data were kept on a password protected zip drive belonging to the researcher. Only the researcher and the statistician had access to the zip drive and password needed to access it. All data from this study will be stored in this way for a period of three years or until it is no longer needed by the researcher.

Risks posed to participants of the study were minimal and included the chance of experiencing discomfort or guilt while taking the survey, which included questions on racism, privilege and reflections on the required course, "Racism in the U.S." The last questions of the survey asked participants to make recommendations on the SSW anti-racism mission and related curricular components.

Benefits of participation included opportunities for self-reflection and contributing to the SSW community. Participating in this study could elicit a graduate's

renewed interest in reconnecting with other SSW colleagues. Participants were

encouraged to think critically about their graduate education and commitment to anti-

racism work. This experience might positively influence the likelihood of seeking out

anti-racism trainings and caucus groups.   Ultimately, participants contributed to the body

of knowledge on anti-racism in social work education and provided recommendations

that may inform ongoing revisions and efforts at SSW.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study examines how white social workers recall their experiences of an anti-racism commitment and related pedagogy within a graduate school for social work. This study looks at how these experiences inform outcomes, involvement, and attitudes related to anti-racism. The major questions guiding this study were: 1) Which components of the SSW anti-racism commitment are related to post-graduate involvement with anti-racism amongst white SSW graduates? 2) Are there relationships between graduates' perceptions of the anti-racism experience and post-graduate employment decisions, commitment to anti-racism and involvement in anti-racism activism? 3) Which components of the anti-racism mission are most salient or influential to white graduates in their development as whites and as social workers?

A brief overview of sample demographics will precede a thorough presentation of the quantitative and qualitative findings. The findings indicate measurable differences in outcomes for white SSW graduates depending on graduation year, level of involvement in anti-racism initiatives, and attitudes towards anti-racism. Findings related to post-graduate training and clinical practice will be presented.

Demographics

The sample for this study included white social workers that received their MSW degree between 1994 and 2009 from the Smith College School for Social Work in Northampton, Massachusetts. The sample (N=85) included 73 females, 10 males, one participant who identified as "other," and one participant who did not indicate gender. The average age of participants was 36 with a range of 25 to 67. Each graduation year

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was represented by at least one participant. The most represented graduating classes were 2009 (n = 14) and 2007 (n=14). Thirty-six participants graduated between 1994 and 2004 (42%) and 49 graduated between 2005 and 2009 (58%).

The sample included 59 licensed social workers, two unlicensed social workers, and 24 working towards licensure. Primary social work roles were identified as: clinical practitioner 87.1%, supervisor 3.5%, administrator 3.5%, academician 1.2%, and 4.7% other. Participants reported practicing social work in a variety of settings including private practice (n=23), community mental health agency (n=31), medical (n=10), federal or government agency (n=4), social services (n=7), school K-12 (n=14), college or university mental health (n=3), military or V.A. (n=2), outpatient clinic (n=19), substance abuse program (n=5), and "other" setting (n=9). As participants could select as many settings as were applicable, 45 participants reported working in more than one setting and 31 reported working in two or more settings. Populations with whom participants' reported working included adults (n=65), elderly (n=22), adolescents (n=57), children (n=46), infants (n=6), families (n=48), and couples (n=25).

Selected Quantitative Findings

Prior Exposure and Influence of SSW Anti-Racism Mission

Two variables were measured in order to determine if preexisting attitudes might affect post-graduate outcomes. These included: level of exposure to anti-racism prior to entering SSW and influence of the anti-racism mission in the decision to attend SSW. Prior to entering SSW, 46 participants had "some" exposure and nine participants had "much" exposure. Thirty had no exposure to anti-racism until entering SSW. Thirty-four point five percent of participants were somewhat influenced by the anti-racism

commitment in their decision to attend SSW. Twenty- three point eight percent were

influenced "very much," 27.4% were not influenced, and 13.1% were unaware of the

anti-racism commitment prior to entering the program.

This study was concerned with how white professional social workers perceive

their current level of commitment to anti-racism work and their attitude towards the

importance and relativity of this work. This variable was measured by participants'

selection of one of seven possible statements (see table below). While both general and

broad, these statements are intended to capture participants' attitudes and self-report of

anti-racism commitment.

Table 1

Statement of Current Level of Commitment to Anti-Racism

Chosen statement:	Frequency *(n =x)*	Percent
I have never felt strongly committed to anti-racism work.	n=2	2.4%
I feel that my level of commitment to anti-racism work has decreased over time.	n=6	7.1%
I haven't thought much about my commitment to anti-racism work.	n=3	3.6%
I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate.	n=13	15.5%
I feel my commitment to "doing the work" is present, but I haven't been able to engage (or take action) as much as I would like to.	n=31	36.9%
I have continued my commitment to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker.	n=28	33.3%
None of these are true for me.	n=1	1.2%
No response given	n=1	1.2%

The participant who selected: "None of these are true for me" added: "I think my

knowledge and skills are an ever-evolving experience." Participants who selected the

statement: "I feel my commitment to "doing the work" is present, but I haven't been able

to engage (or take action) as much as I would like to" identified challenges to

engagement and action. One participant wrote, "Most of the work I have done has been

on an individual level, I would like to find more group level work." Another participant

added:

> I came out of school fired up and called people on things in ways that were not
> viewed as appropriate in my setting, so I have had to be more thoughtful about
> how to address concerns. I feel I still stand in the same place, but am not able to
> take a lot of action. I organize diversity-related events…but must do that at a
> more surface level than I would like; i.e., "lets celebrate diversity!" instead of
> facing up to racism and other oppression.

One participant who selected the statement: "I feel that my knowledge and skills

regarding racism and prejudice are adequate," also commented:

> I feel Smith gave me a good foundation in terms of knowledge/awareness and
> skills, which I continue to grow by virtue of continued living, relating, learning
> and professional practice. I don't feel though that my role is to be an anti-racism
> evangelist. I credit my experience at Smith with helping me to confront racism in
> one-on-one relationships and in my clinical work.

Student Group Involvement

Although 70.6% of the sample did not participate in student groups related to anti-

racism while attending SSW, a few reported being involved in: Unlearning Racism

(n=14; 16.5%), Anti-Racism Consultation Committee (n=1; 1.2%), and the Anti-Racism

Task Force (n=7; 8.2%). Participants who reported being part of an anti-racism related

student group were significantly more likely to select: "I have continued my commitment

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to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker" than were those who do not

report being a part of such a student group.

Table 2

SSW Student Group Involvement

Chosen statement:	Did not participate in anti-racism related student group *(n = 67)*	Did participate in anti-racism related student group *(n =18)*	Level of statistical significance
"I have continued my commitment to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker"	23.8%	66.7%	p = .002

Participants reported conducting their masters' thesis project on topics of race

(n=12), racism (n=9), whiteness (n=9), privilege (n=18), oppression (n=24), and cultural

competence (n=16). Forty-seven participants did not conduct their thesis research on any

of these topics.

Current Level of Commitment and Prior Exposure to Anti-Racism

Those participants who reported their decision to attend SSW was not influenced

by the anti-racism mission were less likely to select: "I have continued my commitment

to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker" than were participants who

reported their decision to attend SSW was influenced "somewhat" or "very much." The

11 participants who reported being unaware of the mission were excluded from this

analysis.

Those who were not influenced (n = 23), and those who were unaware of the

commitment (n = 11), were combined (n = 34) and compared to those who were

influenced "somewhat" or "very much" (n = 49). This comparison found that being

either unaware or uninfluenced by the anti-racism mission was correlated with more frequent selections of the statement: "I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate" than were those who knew of, and were influenced by the anti-racism mission in deciding to attend the SSW. Those unaware or uninfluenced were also significantly less likely to select: "I have continued my commitment to 'doing the work' and strive to be an anti-racism worker" than were those who reported being influenced in choosing SSW for graduate school.

Additionally, the combined group of participants who were either unaware or not influenced by the commitment were significantly more likely to select: "I haven't thought much about my commitment to anti-racism work" than were those who reported being "somewhat" or "very much" influenced in their decision to attend SSW.

Anti-racism Involvement and Current Level of Commitment

The average number of post-graduate anti-racism training hours per year for each participant was analyzed alongside each participant's selected statement indicating attitude towards anti-racism and current level of commitment. For example, participants who selected: "I have continued my commitment to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker" had the highest average hours of anti-racism training or work per year since graduation, with an average of 7.2 hours per year since graduation. Participants who selected: "I feel my commitment to "doing the work" is present but I haven't been able to engage (or take action) as much as I would like to" had the next highest average hours of anti-racism training, with an average of 4.79 hours per year since graduation. The averages for these two groups were not statistically significantly different from one another.

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The next three highest training averages belonged to participants who selected: "I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate," with an average of 1.74 hours per year, "I feel that my level of commitment to anti-racism work has decreased over time," with an average of 1.53 hours per year, and "I haven't thought much about my commitment to anti-racism work," with an average of 1.36 hours per year. There was no significant difference, statistically, between these three groups.

The lowest average of training hours was reported by participants who chose "I have never felt strongly committed to anti-racism work," with an average of 0.58 hours per year, suggesting internal validity between respondents' self-described level of commitment since graduation and the relative number of hours of anti-racism training conducted since graduation. Put another way, participants who chose statements suggesting they perceived themselves as having maintained their commitment to anti-racism work also reported the highest average hours of anti-racism training per year.

Participants attended trainings on racism (n=40), whiteness and privilege (n=26), non-race related oppression (n=39), intersectionality (n=14), anti-racism (n=8), formal intergroup dialogues (n=9), informal intergroup dialogues (n=26), and unlearning racism groups (n=11). Roles of organizer and facilitator were identified for trainings or conferences on racism (n=8), whiteness and privilege (n=6), non-race related oppression (n=13), intersectionality (n=5), anti-racism (n=6), formal intergroup dialogue (n=4), informal intergroup dialogue (n=8), and unlearning racism group (n=1). Participants were presenters at trainings and conferences on racism (n=3), whiteness and privilege (n=3), non-race related oppression (n=10), intersectionality (n=2), formal intergroup dialogue (n=1) and informal intergroup dialogue (n=1).

Clear differences on ongoing commitment levels exist between participants who participated in post-graduate training related to anti-racism and those who reported no ongoing training.

Table 3

Post-Graduate Anti-Racism Training

Chosen statement:	Did not participate in post-graduate anti-racism training (n = 21)	Did participate in post-graduate anti-racism training (n =64)	Level of statistical significance
"I haven't thought much about my commitment to anti-racism work"	10.0%	1.6%	p = .083
"I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate"	25.0%	12.5%	p = .0002
"I feel that my level of commitment to anti-racism work has decreased over time"	15.0%	4.7%	p = .013
"I have continued my commitment to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker"	15.0%	39.1%	p = .032

Participants that engaged in trainings, conferences or groups related to anti-racism were statistically significantly less likely to report "I haven't thought much about my commitment to anti-racism work" than were those who had not. Those engaging in trainings were also less likely to select the statement "I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate" than were those who had not. Regardless of the role participants played in post-graduate trainings related to anti-racism were statistically significantly less likely to select the statement: "I feel that my level of commitment to anti-racism work has decreased over time" than were those who had not. Participants in the ongoing training group were also more likely to select the statement: "I

have continued my commitment to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism

worker" than were those who had not.

Graduate Year and Current Level of Commitment

For the purpose of running statistical tests between two relatively similar groups

the sample was divided into two subgroups determined by graduation year: those who

graduated between 1994 and 2004 (n=36) and those who graduated between 2005 and

2009 (n=49). The statement "I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and

prejudice are adequate" was selected by 6.25% of the group of participants who

graduated in 2005 – 2009. Of the 1994 – 2004 group, 27.8% selected this statement.

Earlier graduates (1994 – 2004) are statistically significantly less likely to select the

statement: "I feel my commitment to "doing the work" is present, but I haven't been able

to engage (or take action) as much as I would like to" than are more recent graduates

from 2005 – 2009. (This statement was selected by 25% of earlier graduates while

45.8% of the 2005 – 2009 group selected it). The 2005 – 2009 group reported

significantly higher post-graduate training per year (6.4 hours of training per year) than

did those in the 1994 – 2004 group (2.4 hours of training per year). P< .01 (p = .002).

Table 4

Commitment Level and Year of Graduation

Chosen statement:	Graduated between 1994 and 2004	Graduated between 2005 and 2009	Level of statistical significance
	(n = 36)	*(n =48)*	
"I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate"	27.8%	6.3%	p = .012
"I feel my commitment to "doing the work" is present, but I haven't been able to engage (or take action) as much as I would like to"	25.0%	45.8%	p = .056

Employment Decisions and Current Level of Commitment

Statistical significance was found when comparing anti-racism influence on employment decisions and amount of post-graduate training. Those participants who reported that the anti-racism experience influenced their employment decisions (n=54) had an annual average of 5.8 hours of anti-racism training. The group that was not influenced by the anti-racism experience in employment decisions reported an average of 2.6 hours of post-graduate training. $P < .01$ ($p = .007$).

Emotional Experiences in "Racism in the U.S." Course

Participants were asked to report which section of the "Racism in the U.S." course they were enrolled in. Thirty-one participants were in the "Dominant Perspective" section; 35 participants took the "Multiple Perspectives" section and one participant took the "Clinicians of Color" section. Nine participants indicated this question was not applicable, due to the fact that in certain years, there were no separate sections of the course. Another nine participants selected "don't recall."

Participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they experienced a given set of internal experiences, both emotions and incidence of self-reflection during the "Racism in the U.S." course. In comparing the means for internal experiences within the racism course, there were some significant differences found between means. Of the seven internal, affective experiences the most often experienced was self-reflection (83.8% experienced this "often"). Self-reflection received the highest mean of 2.84 and was the only internal experience that did not receive any ratings of "never." Enthusiasm had the next highest mean at 2.27, followed by hope (mean=2.15) and guilt (mean=2.17). Three items did not reach the 2.00 measurement of "sometimes," indicating these were

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experienced infrequently. "Shame" had a mean of 1.96; "hopelessness" had a mean of 1.80; disbelief had the lowest mean of 1.74.

Influence of Anti-Racism Experience

In rating the level of influence the anti-racism experience had on participants' professional identity as social workers, 30 participants (35.3%) found it "vitally" influential and three participants (3.5%) reported it has had no influence. Racial identity was "vitally" influenced for 26 participants (30.6%) and not influenced for seven participants (8.2%). Participants' clinical skills were "vitally" influenced (n=27; 31.8%) and not influenced (n=1; 1.2%). In regard to effective practice with racially and ethnically diverse clients, the anti-racism experience was reported to be "vitally" influential for 34 participants (40%) and not influential by one participant (1.2%). In regard to participants' ability to be self-reflective, the anti-racism experience was "vitally" influential for 35 participants (41.2%). Three participants reported there was no influence on their self-reflection (3.5%).   Alternatively, mean scores were calculated to compare overall scores for each area, where a score of "1" is considered least important or least influential. Participants rated the level of influence that the anti-racism mission had on professional social work identity (mean=2.67), racial identity development (mean = 2.82), clinical skills (mean= 3.02), effective practice with diverse clients (mean=3.13), and ability to be self-reflective (mean = 3.18).

These findings show that participants rated the area of self-reflective ability to be most influenced by the anti-racism experience, followed by effective clinical practice with racially and ethnically diverse clients. Participants experienced the least amount of

influence in the area of their professional social work identity; however the difference is not statistically significant.

Participants were asked to rank six items, considered unique elements of the SSW Masters' program. Forced ranking ensured participants would assign a different value to each item and the anti-racism commitment could be examined in relation to other program components. These components and the percentage of participants who ranked it as "1=most influential" are: Intensive Fieldwork Training (48.29%), Psychodynamic Foundation (27.1%), Personal Relationships Developed at SSW (11.8%), Expertise of Faculty/Staff (7.1%), and Intensive Academic Summer Terms (3.5%). "Commitment to Anti-Racism" was selected by only 2.4% of participants as "1= most influential." Another 7.1% of participants ranked it as being the second most important SSW component. Furthermore, 55.2% of participants placed the anti-racism commitment in the last two ranking positions, indicating a low level of overall influence on professional social work identity, when compared with other key elements of the academic institution.

When comparing the mean score for each component, which takes into account the value assigned by every participant who answered this question, with "1= most influential" and "6= least influential" the components are ranked in this order: Intensive Fieldwork Training (mean=2.15), Psychodynamic Foundation (mean=2.86), Expertise of Faculty/Staff (mean=3.67), Intensive Academic Summer Terms (mean=3.81), Personal Relationships Developed at SSW (mean=4.11), and Commitment to Anti-Racism (mean=4.4).

Selected Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data was collected from four open-ended questions intended to gather rich, narrative data and to explore participants' subjective experiences recalled from SSW, and to obtain recommendations about the program and curriculum. Findings from each of the four questions will be provided.

Salient Teaching Methods

Participants were asked to recall and describe a specific element of the SSW experience related to the anti-racism commitment. There were 74 responses to this question from which seven categories were identified: courses (n=26), professors (n=23), lectures and symposiums (n=17), curricular elements (n=42), dialogue and process groups (n=10), field experiences (n=10), and affective experiences (n=19). The most significant finding here is that participants did not appear to coalesce along any thematic line.

Twenty-one participants listed a course in their response to this item. Twelve courses were identified within these responses. The most frequently referenced courses mentioned were Dismantling Institutional Racism (n=7) and Racism in the U.S. (n=5). Four participants recalled taking the course Sociocultural Concepts (n=4), one of whom stated, "This course was particularly powerful for increasing my self-awareness of privilege, race and gender…I worked through a personal process of understanding/self-examining that I do not believe would have happened in such a profound way had I not taken the class." Fifteen participants identified professors found to be integral to their experience at SSW. Eight participants noted the professor dyad for the "Racism in the U.S." course as providing important modeling of mutual understanding and respect.

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Eleven participants recalled a guest speaker, lectures on topics of race and racism as being influential or salient. Visiting scholars referenced by name included Tim Wise, Barbara Love, Melanie Suchet, Kimberlyn Leary, and Kenneth Hardy. Six participants reported the Anti-Racism Symposium was salient and memorable.

Four participants mentioned experiences in their field placements, in regards to client populations and supervisory relationships as sites for discussing race and racism. Six participants noted the Anti-Racism Project, a second-year requirement that requires students to conduct anti-racism work within their field placement. Participants' recalled salient experiences that were specific to curriculum design and pedagogical framework. Thirteen participants recalled being affected by films shown in class, including "The Color of Fear" (n=6) and "The House We Live In" (n=4). Of the thirteen participants who cited specific textbooks or required readings, four referenced "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" by Peggy McIntosh.

Some participants listed general knowledge acquisition or initial contact with material as being particularly salient. Nine participants cited learning about race and racism in general. Other curricular topics included institutional racism (n=4), white identity and privilege (n=3), and anti-racism in clinical practice (n=2). Seven participants cited class exercises that occurred in the courses "Racism in the U.S." and "Dismantling Institutional Racism." All course exercises or assignments which participants made note of were identified as experiential, dialogic, or self-reflective approaches. One participant wrote,

> In the Dismantling Institutionalized Racism course, (a somewhat mixed perspectives course) one of the students of color led us in a 'sculpting' activity where dyads were sculpted to represent different forms of oppression. The white

students were to be in the role of the oppressed and the students of color in the role/position of oppressor. The feelings and reactions from the participating students - the tears and the rage - will stay with me.

Participants' affective experiences (n=19) were not significantly analogous. Eight participants recalled emotional responses of peers and four participants commented on their own emotional responses. Self-reflection was listed within four responses. Three participants referenced the overall emotional experience at SSW, which is described by this participant:

I don't recall many specifics. I recall an atmosphere. I remember race and difference being emphasized in every one of my classes without fail -- some professors being better able to handle the material than others, more comfortable, etc…I remember us getting into a muddle about race and issues of difference, predictably ever summer, with drama and hurt feelings, but I felt we moved past this to greater understanding and acceptance of each other. I felt the learning and the relationships endured, and that meant a lot to me.

While some participants identified singular emotional responses within themselves or identified in others, including shame, guilt and sadness. A few participants provided evidence of both an emotional experience and the internal shift, or lesson they attached to this affective experience. This is well illustrated by this participant, who wrote,

The anti-racism symposium with Kenneth Hardy was particularly influential, largely because it was a reminder to me of the tendency I have to want to be a "good white person" and react with anger towards other white people who deny the presence of racism or do not acknowledge their own racism and micro-aggressions. It was a reminder to me that when I react with anger and scorn in situations like that, I am often trying to deny my own racism and trying to create a dichotomy between good and bad white people, so as to assure myself that I am safely on the good side.

Salient Experiences in the Racism in the U.S. Course

Seventy participants responded to the question designed to gather data on critical learning moments in the "Racism in the U.S." course. Responses included a variant array

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of factors and no single theme was identified. Responses fell within four broad categories: acquiring new knowledge, affective experiences, pedagogical influences, and relational observations.

Course content was described as salient for becoming aware of white privilege (n=10), institutional racism (n=5), and recognizing their own racist beliefs or assumptions (n=3). Shame and guilt were thematically central to ten participants' affective experiences in the course. Participants who expressed dissatisfaction with the course, classroom dynamics, or instructors, used "anger," "disappointment," "frustration," to describe their emotional reaction to the course.

Nineteen instances of "relational observations" were noted, in which participants recalled witnessing emotion in another person, or, having an emotional response to another person. Nine of these observations were of one or more white students. Witnessing resistance in other white students appeared to be salient for participants, who experienced both surprise and anger in response, such as this participant who recalled that, "A white male colleague suggested that African-American students could be racist and women could be sexist…it was infuriating and he was immovable in his position." Another participant shared an observation of resistance and the result of causing a shift within the classroom,

> There was a discussion about white privilege and the idea that whites may have to cede some power to fight racism, and a white woman stated bluntly that she didn't want to give up anything, that she had worked hard for what she had. I felt the air had been sucked out of the room… the Latino professor seemed visibly shaken. But it opened up a productive discussion exploring what responsibilities to white have to further the cause of fighting racism in the US.

Seven participants made relational observations that included a student, or students, of color. In these responses, there were indications that learning processes were positively affected by interactions or knowledge obtained from students of color,

> We had lots of conversations on "safety" and whether it is reasonable to expect safety when talking about racism…I particularly remember a student of color saying that it is never safe to be of color so white students should not be waiting for safety before they start looking at privilege.

Another five participants commented specifically on the racial composition of the course, all of which included concern about the low numbers of students of color, both for fear of unbalanced collective experience and expressing concern for the one or two students of color in the classroom, as this participant described,

> I often recall the uncomfortable look on the face our one student of color in the "mixed perspectives" class. As a group, we were sensitive enough to avoid calling upon her to be the voice of people for color, but the avoidance was inevitably conspicuous. She said very little.

When participants' identification of another student included their own emotional response to this experience, emotions were either coded as neutral or negative. Although participants expressed a wide range of opinions about course instructor effectiveness and ability, the only instances of responses being coded as "enlightened" or "inspired" were within comments on instructors, not with students. Phrases such as "deeply moved," "inspired," or "encouragement," were used in regards to a relational experience with professors. White professors and those of color were referenced with equal frequency. The salience of a positive experience with course instruction is best seen in this response,

> The passion of [the professor of color] was meaningful to me during each of my class sessions. The course was supposed to be "mixed" and was predominantly white/dominant culture. She…let us all know her feelings about the course, the subject and her personal struggles in doing the work. She was gracious in that

way but still pressed us to own our own shadows when it came to race and oppression.

Resistance, anger, and defensiveness were noted in comments on class status or financial mobility. One participant recalled, "being really angry about generalizations made about rich people." Another participant expressed feeling defensive of another white student when the class discussion followed a video on racism within housing policies in the U.S.

> The white instructor showed a video about an upper middle class town in the southern U.S. and used it to create a discussion about white privilege. One of the students broke down and began sobbing about the shame and guilt she felt because, according to the instructor, she was white, and therefore privileged. I became very aware of the teachers expectation that all the white students admit their privilege... I felt awful for the young woman who was sobbing...because I knew that she had grown up in a very poor family and was struggling with all the student loans she had to take out... I pointed out to the instructor that there are more poor white people in the U.S. than black and surely all white people could not be privileged? What about black privilege? Or Hispanic or Asian privilege? Honestly, it was exhausting - it just seemed so one-sided.

Other participants felt that certain social identities went unnoticed by the course and wished for a more intersectional approach. Those participants who noted sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and religion did not share the same affective responses of anger or resentment that were noted in comments on class status.

Alternatively, participants commented on sexual, gender or religious identities expressed feeling uncomfortable, disregarded and removed, which are emotional states commonly associated with the experience of oppression. This is seen in this participant's response, "I was surprised and disappointed by the lack of acknowledgment for other identities and sources of discrimination, including LGBTQ and religion, I was often left feeling uncomfortable and unseen." Commenting on a collective sense of being

"removed," this participant recalled "Difficult conversations, not well-facilitated, acknowledging that almost half of our class identified as Jewish and felt somewhat removed from the historical arguments around white identity development."

Challenges for White Students

Participants were asked to share an experience during their time at SSW when they felt challenged because of their racial identity, whiteness or privilege. This question obtained 62 responses that were grouped into three categories: group processes, individual processes, and affective experiences.

Fifty-nine participants shared experiences in which individual, or internal processes were identified. Examination of privilege (n=14), relationships with people of color (n=8), racial identity (n=11), other identities including age, religion, country of origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender (n=13), family background or class status (n=4), and internal racist beliefs and stereotypes (n=6) were all areas which participants listed as sites where individual learning, introspection, and evaluation took place. Twelve participants listed self-reflection as a practice or tool, which helped them to challenge their own racial identity, racism, and whiteness.

> Every day, every time I spoke, every paper I wrote. This feeling of challenge only increased as the program went on for me because I committed to staying aware and not ignoring my privilege. There were many private moments of deep sadness as I came to further acknowledge my ignorance and privilege.

Many of the responses in this category included implications for ongoing work, or indicated a process that extended beyond SSW.

> What was most challenging was spending my time trying to identify how I was moving in the world based on my whiteness and my privilege. It was and continues to be a challenge to maintain the lens through my whiteness, without

feeling like I truly get what I'm looking through. I've gained some consciousness about the issue(s), but it still feels very new and fresh.

Twenty-eight participants recalled group processes that were important to their SSW experience, or that challenged them as white SSW students. Responses varied widely in how the participant perceived the experience as positive or negative. One commonality found in responses that included both individual and group processes was the participants' experience of having regret for not having "done more" or wishing that one had acted differently. This is well illustrated in this response,

> There are still white people from [that] class who will not talk to me because they have stated that they feel that I called them a racist. In general there were many times in class when I felt uncomfortable for being white and many times I wanted to speak up in relation to issues/dynamics of race both in and outside of the classroom, but silenced myself and sat as a bystander.

Another participant commented on the paradox of the social and geographical location of the anti-racism institution itself, which is representative of the collective experience of white students at SSW found within the responses on group process,

> Sometimes it felt weird talking about and analyzing race privilege in the environment that we were in - in a small, white, New England town, at a private mostly white school. On the one hand, there was plenty to analyze and criticize, but on the other, everyone was in it and benefitting from various types of privilege. I wish the school would do a better job of recruiting students of color so that those students wouldn't feel so isolated, particularly when the school pushes the antiracism mission in the curriculum and school events.

Twenty-three participants identified moments in which they experienced a clear emotional response or described a transformational moment in which an affective shift is noted, such as this response:

> During the discussion section after the anti-racism seminar, I felt absolutely frozen and unable to speak when I desperately wanted to – I felt paralyzed by my shame and my fear of saying something that would make things worse. I also felt the weight of the importance of my speaking as a white person; the responsibility

to speak up for race -related issues should not fall on the shoulders of people of color. My inability to speak created deeper feelings of shame.

Participants described a variety of emotions and affective responses including shame and guilt (n=8), deep sadness and pain (n=5), being misunderstood (n=4), fear (n=3), and angry or frustrated (n=4). While some responses reflect a tendency for the emotional change to lead to "shutting down," some participants also noted how a difficult affective experience could lead to future action or reflection:

> After the anti-racism symposium my first summer, I recall meeting with other White students who were also struggling with the School's anti-racism mission and discussing how shamed we felt. We were essentially angry and resisting the process. In taking the Racism in the U.S. course, I finally let down my defenses and really opened myself up to understanding racism and its many implications.

Participant Recommendations

The final question asked participants to reflect on their experiences and make recommendations regarding the SSW approach to teaching its white students about racism and white privilege. Sixty-four participants responded to this item with a multiplicity of responses. Eleven participants noted their overall positive experience of the anti-racism commitment and made no recommendations. The remaining 53 responses contained recommendations that fall within six pedagogical areas: curriculum content, program structure, practical application, instruction, general approach, and ongoing engagement of graduates.

Twenty participants commented on content. Seven participants called for more content on how this learning is applied to clinical social work. Seven participants stated a need for more material on intersectionality of various forms of oppression. One participant noted,

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> Classism, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and sexism have more in common than not. I think there's a way to both differentiate important distinctions between different types of oppression and still have a big picture/integrated view of how these systems of oppression intersect and interact to support one another. In real life, there are not little boxes, but people who cross multiple boundaries in terms of the groups they belong to.

Five participants specified a need for course content on "how to talk" about race and racism, with reference to intergroup dialogue and classroom discussions.

Program structure was addressed in 29 responses. Six participants stated a need for more efforts to recruit and ensure retention of students of color. Four participants suggested that incoming students would be more prepared to engage in such learning if they were better informed of the mission itself, "Smith should prepare its incoming white students by explaining that anti-racism is not just a part of Smith, but the core of Smith." This sentiment is echoed by this participant, "I would encourage the program to advertise more about the mission as part of their solicitation of graduate students in the first place-- so that MSW students know what they're signing up for." Four participants stated that the program should address varying levels of exposure to anti-racism. Four participants cited a need for material on racism to be better infused and integrated across the curriculum, as mentioned here,

> I do recall feeling that not all faculty members were adept at making the issue part of their class in a really integrated way. Sometimes it was just a topic on the syllabus for one day and then the requirement was met and it was not talked about again. Racism is insidious and it needs to be part of all of the courses at Smith in a real way because it is so easy in the work world, as a white person, to let it go and not make it a conscious issue.

Eight participants suggested that white students be provided with, and mandated to attend process and dialogue groups where they can, as one participant wrote, "work on their stuff" without doing damage to the students of color. Similarly, this participant shared,

I think the groups for white students, such as "unlearning racism" are important in terms of providing spaces in which students of color are not pressured to "help" white students work through their own racial development and understanding.

Practical application of the material for clinical social workers was addressed in seven responses and included suggestions for approaches that are relational (n=2), founded on Buddhist principles of mindfulness and lovingkindness (n=2), and emphasize more self-reflection (n=3).

Recommendations for improving instructor effectiveness were provided by 13 participants. Five participants recommended better training for professors teaching content on race and racism. Three participants recommended that instructors should be better equipped to handle difficult classroom dynamics. Two participants requested that anti-racism training be provided to field supervisors.

The general approach of SSW in engaging students in anti-racism was cited as needing adjustment, according to 11 participants. Five participants commented on the overall feeling of the approach, requesting "gentler and safer" ways to teach this material that are "less aggressive," and "less confrontational." Three participants commented on the intensity of the approach and recommended "the school slow down." Three participants recommended that SSW find ways to make the mission "less divisive and polarizing."

Finally, participants made recommendations for ways SSW could engage its alumni for ongoing anti-racism work. Two participants requested that the school disseminate its information on anti-racism changes and progress to alumni. Six participants suggested ways that SSW might provide its graduates with training and opportunity for engagement among clinicians.

To conclude, the findings for this study are illustrative of the general consensus across participant responses from open-ended questions, when examined in total. White SSW graduates promote and support the anti-racism commitment but have extremely different experiences, and memories of these experiences in general. These findings and the voices of participants themselves, call for a more elaborate and collective evaluation of the program and its outcomes. The need for assessment within the institution itself, assessment by its graduates, and inclusion of other activists and professionals was noted in both literature and findings of this study. The following response summarizes this idea of constant change,

> I feel as the school continues "becoming" and anti-racism institution, the natural process of having students (even faculty) come in and out of the program will bring forth ideas about different approaches. I wish there were more lectures from anti-racism activists from around the country...perhaps even a symposium weekend where lecturers were invited to come to campus and have workshops and presentations. In some ways, I wish there were more activists in general who could be invited to come and give knowledge to the SSW community.

Now that both quantitative and qualitative data from this study has been reviewed, the next chapter will expand upon this study's findings, its limitations and implications for future scholarship in this area.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

> Whatever changes are initially envisioned will, in all probability, take on unforeseen shapes and sizes. This is not well-charted territory. A commitment to antiracism work raises expectations that may not be realized for a long time to come. Organizations that make the commitment become accountable for actions that challenge racism. At various points along the way, the discrepancy between hopes and reality may produce disappointment and anger. And yet this important work is essential and can be transformative (Donner & Miller, 2005, p. 123).

This study posited that salient experiences identified in narrative data might capture the specificity of critical learning moments that might engage white students towards future anti-racism work, or deter them from it. In fact, the subjective experiences shared by the 85 participants of this study represent the plethora of multidimensional elements involved in learning (and, unlearning) whiteness and racism. Although significant differences and relationships were found in the quantitative data, no succinct thematic line divided those who are impacted from those who were not. Findings indicate that while no participant left the program unchanged, the qualities and triggers of that change were extremely personal.

Generally, this study found that components of the anti-racism commitment of Smith College School for Social Work (SSW) vary greatly in their influence and salience to white students. This is aligned with the notion that anti-racism is as complex as racism itself; the antidote to this type of disease may not be clearly or quantitatively determined. Donner and Miller (2005) best illustrate this concept with a precautionary warning to those considering becoming anti-racism institutions, "Different readings and interpretations occur within many aspects of antiracism work. One size never fits all" (p. 122). In other words, collective change is experienced by white SSW graduates, but the

intricate subjective experiences of each person is so individual that this complexity

cannot be measured.

Change and Transformation as a Consequence of Anti-Racism Pedagogy

The existing literature on white students learning about racism has been relatively

consistent with producing findings that indicate general change and transformation

among white students' behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, self-awareness and

language are all affected in some way by contact and engagement with material on race

and racism. Empirical evidence for this change has been reported in literature (Bronstein

& Gibson, 1998; Garcia & Van Soest, 1997; Nagda et. al., 1999; Spears, 2004). The

level of change reported by empirical studies varies widely, as it did in this study.

Whereas previous studies focused on outcomes for a single course or workshop,

this study focuses on participants of an anti-racism institution, so that a student will

engage or be exposed to this material more frequently and with greater intensity

throughout the 27-month MSW degree program. One difficulty in comparing this study's

findings to previous research is that SSW has a curriculum infused with anti-racism; it is

in fact, part of the "culture" of SSW, as reflected by the participant who reported

experiencing awareness and challenges around race, "every single day…it was in the

air…"

Affective Change as a Consequence of Anti-Racism Pedagogy

Shame and guilt are the emotions most frequently mentioned in research on anti-

racism pedagogy. Findings from this study reflect these two affective responses,

consistent with previous research by Tatum (1992, 1994) who reports that feelings of

pain and guilt are generated as awareness of the realities of racism become known to

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white students. Within Helms' (1990) developmental model of white racial identity, guilt

and shame are most frequently experienced at the Disintegration stage. Tatum (1992)

adds,

> At this stage, the bliss of ignorance or lack of awareness is replaced by the
> discomfort of guilt, shame, and sometimes anger at the recognition of one's own
> advantage because of being White and the acknowledgement that of the role of
> Whites in the maintenance of a racist system. Attempts to reduce discomfort may
> include denial (convincing oneself that racism doesn't really exist, or if it does, it
> is the fault of its victims) (p. 13).

While taking the "Racism in the U.S." course, 51.2% of participants experienced

shame "sometimes" and 22.6% experienced it "often." Guilt was experienced

"sometimes" by 56.6% of participants and experienced "often" by 30.1% of participants.

Shame and guilt were noted in 28 narrative responses. These strong emotional reactions

are frequently identified as possible barriers for white students in learning about race and

racism, but can also act as catalysts for internal change (Miller, Hyde & Ruth, 2004).

Further analysis of other variables reported by individuals who identified shame and guilt

in the course, also reported more frequently, other emotional or affective components of

their salient experiences. There was no direct relationship found between the presence or

absence of certain emotions with ongoing involvement in anti-racism trainings, or

reported statement of commitment towards anti-racism. This is further support of the

complexity with which white students internalize content and experiences related to

racism.

Of note is that in comparison to responses from other open-ended questions, the

item asking participants about their experience in the "Racism in the U.S." course elicited

a much higher frequency of participants' using the words white, whiteness and privilege,

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even when compared to the question that specifically named whiteness. This is suggestive that the experience of taking this course, whether recalled as positive or negative, is related to a deeper cognizance of whiteness. Put another way, by interacting with racism, white students seem to also be interacting with their own whiteness.

Critical Roles of Professors in Anti-Racism Pedagogy

Findings from this study are consistent with previous research on the crucial role that the teacher has in overall pedagogical outcomes, especially for white students (Davis, 1992; Garcia & Van Soest, 1999; Miller, Hyde & Ruth, 2004). Anti-racism literature consistently stresses the importance of the teacher, leader, or instructor, as being a vital part to white peoples' transformation. Tatum (1994) emphasizes the importance of introducing historical and living white role models that are essentially omitted from American history books along with honest histories of slavery and racism. Tatum points out that white students' guilt and shame can be transformed, if they are made aware of white antiracist activists who are allies to people of color. These important others assist white students in internalizing a model for what it means to be anti-racist, with whom they have probably had no previous contact. Wise (2008) also stresses the importance of white antiracist activists, arguing that if whites working towards achieving this identity have no experience with white anti-racists, they are less likely to think that they can embody the same characteristics.

Recognized most notably within the qualitative responses was the polarity with which participants framed experiences with professors. In other words, participants who had a positive experience, or who named a teacher as an important other in their salient experiences, these individuals were painted with highly positive language. Instead of one

word to describe a professor's positive impact on the participant, three or four were given. Those professors found to be ineffective were referenced with more "neutral" language. In some responses regarding a poor instructor experience, no language was used by the participant to indicate adverse feelings about the experience. An example of this is seen here, in response to the question about salient experiences in the Racism in the U.S. course: "I remember when our professor fell asleep in class." The content of this response is interpreted as negative and behavior that is obviously unsupported by literature, but note there is no language in this response that can be coded as negative or undesirable - this was a consistent finding across narrative responses that included professors.

Furthermore, when participants identified a professor as being ineffective or highly volatile, names were never given. This is interestingly the one absolutely consistent finding of qualitative data. Additionally, when guest speakers or lecturers were referenced as influential or salient, these were only linked with positive qualities. No participant reported a guest speaker or lecturer in a negative light. The same went for courses other than the "Racism in the U.S." course, readings, films, and anti-racism symposiums. When the experience, event, object or context was being portrayed as negative or upsetting, the "thing" itself was never named.

While this could be due to the design of the instrument itself, or symbolic of an empathic, protective reflex of helping professionals in general, it does draw attention to the larger question of reporter reliability and efficacy of studies such as this one which seek to obtain valid results on a prohibited subject. It also begs the question: Do white students of anti-racism pedagogy more readily recall positive content; have they blocked

out the painful experiences? These ideas draw attention to the observation that even while reporting autobiographical memories around a difficult topic, white individuals are more likely to report positive material which doesn't require the defensive mechanisms that protect the psyche from strong feelings of pain, guilt, and shame.

Limitations

Several methodological limitations must be applied to interpretation of findings. Participation in this study was limited to white graduates of SSW in the years since the anti-racism mission was adopted. Due to professional mandates for social workers, the depth and content of trainings which participants' reported to have engaged in since graduation cannot be known. Certain limitations of the survey instrument are also noted, including the relative generalization of certain measurements the survey was designed to capture. One limitation is that inherently, a single statement of commitment cannot wholly capture any one participants' commitment to anti-racism work.

At the time this study began recruitment efforts, the desired sample size was at least 200 participants. Despite the fact the survey instrument was developed to measure general outcomes in behaviors and attitudes among white SSW graduates, the sample size was too small for appreciable responses to make meaningful comparisons. While diversity was not a goal of this study, future research on anti-racism pedagogy in social work education would, of course, be interested in attitudes and behaviors of all students, and so future studies of this nature might be interested in comparing outcomes for white graduates and graduates of color. Due to limits of time and scope of this study, a control group was not used. However, in future studies of this nature, a control group of SSW graduates who graduated prior to 1994 might be useful in comparing outcomes before

and after the school elected to become an anti-racism institution. A control group of graduates from M.S.W. programs comparable to SSW, but without an explicit anti-racism mission, could be valuable for both SSW and for the broader field of graduate social work education.

As noted in literature and as suggested by this study's findings, an individual's capacity for internal and behavioral engagement with anti-racism is affected by a complex intersection of social identities and experiences. This intersection shapes an individuals' capacity to tolerate the internalization of profound material and painful processes, such as understanding that racism exists, undoubtedly, within every white self. This study failed to gather data on participants' multiple social identities, including sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, family background and geographical location.

In focusing exclusively on the experience of white graduates, these important variables, which could have lent greater depth to the study, were left out. Admittedly, this study is aligned with the position that an explicit goal towards anti-racism more fully realizes the values and ethics of social workers in the United States, versus a more generalized stance of anti-oppression (as outlined in the final section of the literature review).

Regrettably, the researcher did not include an item for measuring participants' experiences addressing racism in their clinical work with white clients. This omission suggests that opportunities to address race and racism exist only in clinical work with people of color or who identify in any socially constructed way that is different from the clinician; this suggestion is erroneous in many ways. The inclusion of an item on effective practice with "racially and ethnically diverse clients" may be a repetition of

previous studies and paradigms, which focus on the *other* and necessarily remove whites

from racialized positions, which is, of course, inaccurate. It also speaks to the complexity

of working with sameness in the clinical encounter, especially when issues of race and

racism can be colluded upon more readily between two white individuals. This is best

described by a participants' narrative response to the item requesting recommendations

for making the anti-racism commitment stronger. The participant recommended, as did

others, that the school consider ways for graduates to stay connected for the purpose of

sharing experiences, resources and trainings for continuing anti-racism work. The

participant shared,

> I have been in practice in a very white, heterosexual, religious, rural area. In four
> years all but two of my clients have been white. I have all white colleagues and
> support staff who have no knowledge of privilege and are unable to support me in
> anti-racism work. It has been very hard and lonely for me to work with many
> clients who are very racist and to have no support to process this. My SSW
> training provided me with much but it did not prepare me for… this.

Implications for Social Work Education

A participant who reported a commitment to anti-racism work commented,

"Doing the work looks very different outside the Smith ivory tower." Indeed, the

"doing" of anti-racism in the United States, especially in the field of social work, is a

lifelong process that will always be challenged by dominant "normative" culture. White

social workers who adopt an anti-racist identity must be conscientious of the multiple

sites where dismantling racism can occur. These sites exist internally in self-reflective

practice and understanding countertransference as being informed by whiteness. These

sites exist on the periphery, in every aspect of American life. Practicing anti-racism in

social work includes addressing dynamics of difference and sameness in clinical

encounters, seeking out trainings, caucus groups and continuing education. Anti-racism means exploring racial material in supervision and consultation, naming inequitable policies in agencies and systems, and taking on the responsibilities that come with being an ally for people of color. For a graduate school of social work to practice anti-racism, the collective contribution is greater and the effects of such practice are more widely felt.

This study suggests that SSW administrators, faculty, and the student community all make suggestions and have intentional dialogue on a regular basis to prevent internal evaluation from becoming insular. Other social work programs would benefit from the same. The wider dissemination of progress reports on the anti-racism commitment has proved useful and still, is requested by many participants of this study. This study also suggests that white students and graduates of SSW engage more readily and wholly in opportunities beyond the required components of the anti-racism program, to more fully allow for their own transformation. This study suggests participation in white caucus groups and intentional process groups in which whites can process their difficult feelings and hopes for becoming allies to people of color. The SSW student group, Unlearning Racism has this purpose:

> To engage in an anti-racism commitment through personal responsibility. The group provides a supportive environment where we can explore and question our roles in the perpetuation of racism. Among other things, we examine white privilege from which we have benefited and try to understand how we can become allies to our colleagues of color. We acknowledge that we are responsible for how we respond to racism in our daily lives, in our work with clients, and on the systemic level. We know that our choices and actions make a difference. http://moodle.smith.edu/course/view.php?id=6190#Race

Of participants who relayed having a sense of regret about not doing as much since graduation as they would have liked, the overall message was that by participating

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in this study, they had taken one small step towards becoming reengaged in the work. In the final question of the survey, which was not included in selected findings, some participants comment on this: "I wish I had done more over the past several years to continue my anti-racism work in my personal and professional development." Another participant shared:

> I've reflected often on how difficult the anti-racism work was at Smith and how painful it appeared to be for both white students and students of color. I am grateful for the process, but often question if some of the pain was necessary. I'm particularly thinking of some of the difficult experiences I saw happen to some of my colleagues of color. I feel saddened that I have moved away from that kind of self-exploration around race.

This reflection might be shaped, in part, by the experience of participating in the study and retrieving salient experiences in vivo, as the participant completed the survey instrument. This is indicative of another crucial aspect to ongoing self-reflection in anti-racism work, as well as for the ongoing self-evaluation of the institution. Simply by participating in this study, many participants shared feelings and thoughts that implied the act of participating was itself a reminder of the graduates' once strong commitment towards anti-racism ideology, such as this participant:

> Anti-racism work has been very important to me, and if it were not for the Smith SSW, I'm not exactly sure when or how I would have gotten to this point. At the same time, I do not feel like I have enough of a base to navigate conversations about race in a professional setting where there are intersecting concerns about gender, power dynamics, anti-Semitism etc., particularly as a newly practicing clinician.

While this study found that white recipients of an explicit anti-racism commitment experienced and recalled a multiplicity of instrumental, or salient moments and likewise, reported a range of attitudes towards anti-racism work, the overarching findings of this study is the mission, with all of its pitfalls and holes, does indeed

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effectuate change in white social workers. To use participants' voices as illustration, the program was said to have "planted the seed" and "laid the foundation."

Here, the participants were speaking to the importance of an anti-racism mission, commitment, and curriculum infused with content on race, racism, and oppression. These statements are shared by this discussion to note the convergence of participants' relatively positive commentary, as well as the recommendations for the school. For example, some participants expressed gratitude for the anti-racism commitment and others indicate there are ways they feel unprepared however there are many indications that colleagues from other institutions are not as adequately prepared in this area, and this itself can be interpreted as a recommendation of this study, to address the gap that exists between institutions of social work education.

> Nearly ten years out, I continue to feel that the education that I gained at Smith, inclusive of it's Anti-racism commitment, has left me better prepared than many of my peers from other schools to meet the challenges I face daily in my clinical work.

> I appreciate that the school tackles these difficult topics head on and that they do not allow students to graduate without being part of very important conversations. As a supervisor to students from other settings, I have seen that racism is not an integral part of all social work graduate programs and students are able to graduate and work in the field without having had to look at their own privilege and/or the role of racism in the work we do. That is a shame. I think Smith has the right idea.

> I don't believe any program is ever perfect- it seems to me that Smith is itself inherently limited in who can attend and that is a barrier, but in other ways there are efforts I just don't see in the average mainstream institutions that have impacted my ability to serve as an ally.

> I am glad that Smith has the anti-racism teachings as a part of the curriculum. It is an extremely important area to be addressed, especially in the social work field and I do not feel I would be as well rounded in the work I do, if I had not been exposed to these topics.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations of this study include further and more comprehensive evaluation of the SSW program and of all graduate schools of social work. Further evaluation between institutions could inform larger scale efforts that might eventually lead to more united efforts by the field of social work to combat, dismantle, and undo the racism, oppression, and injustice which keeps the field in business. Systematic evaluation from naturalistic and emic perspectives from within the institution are critical.

Conclusion

Participants reported a preponderance of salient events and experiences found to be correlated with post-graduate anti-racism behaviors and attitudes. There was a general theme of transformation noted which indicates that behavioral, emotional, and attitudinal change is a standard outcome of being educated within an institution with an anti-racism curriculum. However, the qualities of this change exist in such a complex and varied way, that this study was not able to capture.

In conclusion, this study and its findings indicate that the process of committing to, or transforming one's attitudes and practices consistent with anti-racism can be understood in the same way the institution understands it own commitment as an unremitting process. This was eloquently reiterated by Newdom (2010) in an address to incoming students at the SSW Anti-Racism Orientation:

> We don't and can't commit to *being* an anti-racist institution, but we do commit toward *becoming* one. For the reality is that in a racist society it just isn't possible to get there. Becoming an anti-racism institution – as with becoming anything – is a constant work in progress. And we call on you to join us in the difficult and exhilarating and worthy work of becoming what we aspire to be (Newdom, 2010, p. 9).

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

[DATE]

Dear Potential Research Participant:

My name is Charlotte Curtis. I am conducting a research study to explore the experiences of white graduates of the Smith College School for Social Work, which has an explicit anti-racism mission. This research study for my thesis is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work and possible future presentations and publications.

Your participation is requested because you are a Smith College School for Social Work graduate. To be included in the study, you must have received your M.S.W. from Smith between 1994-2009. You must identify as working in the field of social work and this may include roles such as: caseworker, therapist, psychoanalyst, educator, researcher, etc. Due to this study's purpose of examining the experiences of white social workers, you must racially identify as "white" or "Caucasian." You will be excluded from the study if you did not complete the M.S.W. program or if you graduated before 1994. You will be excluded from the study if you do not identify as a professional social worker. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an anonymous, online survey about your experiences and personal reflections on your Smith experience. I will ask you to provide demographic information about yourself and about your current practice in social work. The surveys will be administered online and will take between 30-45 minutes to complete. Surveys will be numerically coded and any identifying information will be removed or disguised if used in any publication or presentation, to ensure strict confidentiality. After three years have passed, all data will be destroyed as per Federal regulations. Anyone who assists me with analyzing the data for this study will sign a confidentiality pledge.

You will receive no financial benefit for your participation in this study. However, you may benefit from knowing that you have contributed to the understanding of anti-racism education in social work programs. It is my hope that this study will help developers and facilitators of anti-racism curriculum in social work education better understand the subjective experiences that impact white clinicians. You may also benefit from receiving the opportunity to share your experiences and gaining a new perspective on your Smith experience. There is minimal risk anticipated from participating in the study. You may become minimally uncomfortable recalling and reflecting on your education and by discussing privilege, race and racism.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained, as consistent with federal regulations and the mandates of the social work profession. Your identity will be protected, as names and identifying information will be changed in the reporting of the data. Please refrain from using names or identifying information when discussing experiences (both from

SSW and in current clinical practice). Your confidentiality will be protected by the numerical coding of surveys and storing the data in a locked file for a minimum of three years. After three years all data will be destroyed unless I continue to need it for academic or professional purposes, in which case it will be kept secured.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, you may refuse to answer or skip any question. You may exit the survey at any time. Your identity will remain anonymous throughout the study. Withdrawing from this study, after you have submitted the survey, is impossible because I will not be able to identify completed surveys by name. If you have additional questions about the study, please feel free to contact me using my contact information below. If you have any concerns about your rights or about any aspect of the study, I encourage you to contact me, or the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Charlotte Curtis

[Contact Information]

BY CLICKING "YES", YOU INDICATE THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Appendix B

Human Subjects Review Approval Letter

December 13, 2009

Charlotte Curtis

Dear Charlotte,

Your corrected materials have been reviewed and all is now in order. We are happy to give our final approval to this excellent submission. We hope you will be able to get permission to approach all of the Alums through the SSW. If you are able to do that, please send us a copy of a letter to that effect from the SSW administration. Just send it to Laurie so that she can deposit it in your permanent HSR file.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your interesting and useful project.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Shella Dennery, Research Advisor

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear SCSSW Alumni,

I am currently a graduate student at the Smith School for Social Work, and I am contacting you with permission from the Alumni Affairs Office. I am conducting a study to explore the personal and professional impact of an explicit anti-racism mission on white SSW graduates.

I am seeking participants who identify as "white" or "Caucasian" and who completed the M.S.W. program between 1994-2009. Participants must also be practicing social work, however, this encompasses a multitude of roles ranging from psychotherapist to researcher. I am gathering data for this research through an online survey, which should take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete. Participation is confidential and anonymous. <u>The survey will be open until April 10, 2010.</u>

You may find participating in the study to be beneficial for a number of reasons:

1) The Smith Community may benefit from your feedback in evaluating and assessing the School's anti-racism mission and related curricular components.

2) You may find it useful to reflect on your Smith experiences, which could inform your own personal and professional growth.

3) Ultimately, you will be contributing to a body of knowledge on anti-racism work and providing useful feedback that may inform ongoing anti-racism efforts at the graduate level of social work education.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/antiracismstudy and follow the directions. Please review the Informed Consent for this study, which is attached to this email and is also provided within the online survey.

Please feel free to forward this email onto any other SSW Alumni you know that may be interested in participating. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Charlotte C. Curtis
SCSSW, Class of 2010
[Contact Information]

Appendix D

Alumni Newsletter Announcement

<u>Seeking alumni participation for a thesis project on Anti-Racism at Smith College</u>

SCSSW has graduated over 1500 MSWs since 1994, when the anti-racism mission was adopted. Today, over a century later, we continue to stand alone as the only school for Social Work with an explicit commitment to being an anti-racism institution.

If you graduated between 1994-2009 and identify as white, you may be eligible to participate in a research study that explores how the anti-racism mission has been experienced over the years. Participants will have the chance to reflect on their Smith experience and make recommendations. In addition to fulfilling the thesis requirement, this study hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge on antiracism pedagogy at the School and within social work education.

Participation is anonymous, confidential and involves completing an online survey, which should take 30-45 minutes to complete. The survey will be open until February 15, 2010. You can go directly to the survey through the link http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/antiracismstudy. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact me at [Contact Information].

Thank you,
Charlotte Curtis
MSW Candidate, SCSSW

Appendix E

Survey Instrument: The Smith Anti-Racism Experience

<u>Demographics</u>

1. What is your age?
   21-75

2. What is your gender?
   Female, Male, Transgender, Other

3. What year did you graduate from SSW?
   1994-2009

4. Since graduating, how long have you been practicing social work?
   Less than 1 year
   1-5 years
   6-10 years
   More than 10 years

5. What is your licensure status for practicing social work?
   I am currently licensed
   I am not licensed
   I am working towards licensure
   I am not currently licensed (but have been in the past)

<u>Current Social Work Practice</u>

6. What is your primary professional role in the field of social work?
   Clinical practitioner
   Supervisor
   Administrator
   Consultant
   Researcher
   Academician
   Other_____

7. How many hours do you work per week in the field of social work?
   1-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70

8. Please describe your current work setting (check all that apply)
   Private practice
   Community mental health

Medical
Federal/Government agency
Social Services
School (K-12)
College/University mental health
Military or VA
Outpatient clinic
Substance Abuse program
Prison/Jail
Higher Education/Academia
Other_____

9. If applicable, what percentage of your work occurs in a private practice setting?
        Less than 25%
        25%
        50%
        75%
        100%
        Not applicable

10. Please describe the population with whom you currently work (check all that apply)
        Adults
        Aging/Elderly
        Adolescents
        Children
        Infants
        Families
        Couples
        Not applicable
        Other_____

11. If applicable, list characteristics unique to the population with whom you work. (i.e., LGBTQ, foster care, homeless, military families, incarcerated, etc.)
        [Short answer box]

12. If applicable, please describe your primary theoretical orientation or preferred clinical approach? (Select no more than 3)
        Cognitive-Behavioral
        Eclectic
        Existential
        Feminist
        Humanistic
        Mind-Body/Somatic
        Psychoanalytic

Psychodynamic
Relational
Systems
Not Applicable
Other_____

<u>Reflections on the Anti-Racism Experience</u>

13. Prior to entering SSW, what level of exposure did you have to anti-racism courses or trainings?
        No exposure
        Some exposure
        Much exposure
        Briefly specify if applicable: [short answer box]

14. To what degree did the School's anti-racism mission influence your decision to attend SSW?
        None
        Somewhat
        Very Much
        I was unaware of the mission during application

15. Were any of the following topics central to your SSW thesis? (check all that apply)
        Race
        Racism
        Whiteness
        Privilege
        Oppression
        Cultural Competence
        None of these

16. Were you involved in any of the following activities or student groups related to anti-racism? (check all that apply)
        Unlearning Racism group
        Anti-Racism Consultation Committee (previously, "Monitoring Committee")
        Anti-Racism Task Force
        None of these
        Other (related to the Mission) _____

17. Which section of the "Racism in the United States" or "Racism in America" course were you enrolled in, if applicable?
        Dominant "white" Perspective
        Multiple/Mixed Perspectives

Clinicians of Color Perspective
Not applicable – there were no separate sections at that time
Don't remember

18. Recalling your experience in the "Racism in the U.S." course, how often did you experience the following?
[Each item is rated 0= never, 1=sometimes, 2=often]
Hopelessness
Enthusiasm
Guilt
Hope
Disbelief
Shame
Self-Reflection
Other (please specify)_____

19. Please describe any course, exercise, specific reading, professor, lecture, activity or event (related to race or racism) that you recall as being particularly influential or salient?
[Short answer box]

20. Try to recall (and briefly describe) a particularly salient moment or experience from the "Racism in the U.S." course, which may have "stuck with you" since graduating.
[Short answer box]

21. If applicable, try to recall an experience (at SSW) during which you might have felt challenged because of your racial identity, whiteness or privilege.
[Short answer box]

Implications and Recommendations

22. In the following areas, how have you been influenced by the anti-racism experience?
[Items are rated: Not at all, somewhat, very much, vitally, N/A]
Professional Social Work Identity
Racial Identity Development
Clinical Skills
Effective practice with racially & ethnically diverse clients
Ability to be self-reflective

23. Approximately how many hours of trainings, conferences, groups or activities related to anti-racism work have you participated in since graduating SSW?
0-10 hours
11-20 hours
21-30 hours

31-40 hours
41-50 hours
51-60 hours
61-70 hours
71-80 hours
81-90 hours
91-100 hours
Over 100 hours

24. Since graduating from SSW, have you had experiences with courses, trainings, lectures or conferences in the following areas? (check all that apply)
[Items have the selections: Attendee, Organizer, Facilitator, Presenter]
Racism
Whiteness or privilege
Oppression (not race-related)
Intersectionality
Unlearning/Undoing racism group
Antiracism group
Formal intergroup dialogue
Informal intergroup dialogue
Other (please specify) _____

25. Since graduating from SSW, which of the following statements is most true for you? [Only one item can be selected]
I feel that my knowledge and skills regarding racism and prejudice are adequate.
I haven't thought much about my commitment to anti-racism work.
I have continued my commitment to "doing the work" and strive to be an anti-racism worker.
I feel my commitment to "doing the work" is present, but I haven't been able to engage (or take action) as much as I would like to.
I feel that my level of commitment to anti-racism work has decreased over time.
I have never felt strongly committed to anti-racism work.
None of these are true for me.
Comment box: _____

26. How influential were the following aspects of the SSW program to your professional development as a social worker? Please rank items in order – from 1 (most influential) to 6 (least influential).
Psychodynamic foundation
Faculty/Staff expertise
Personal relationships developed at Smith
Commitment to anti-racism
Intensive academic summer terms

Intensive field work training

27. To what degree has the anti-racism experience influenced your decisions in post-graduate employment (roles, settings, client/consumer populations)?
   None
   Somewhat
   Vitally
   Comment Box: _____

28. After reflecting on your experiences, what recommendations do you have regarding the School's approach to teaching its white students about racism and privilege? What would you change, add, extend, remove, etc?
   Comment Box: _____

29. Is there anything else you would like to say or add to this topic?
   Comment Box: _____

Appendix F

Screening Questions

- Did you receive a Masters in Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work (SSW)?

- Did you graduate from SSW between 1994 and 2009?

- Do you identify your race as white or Caucasian?

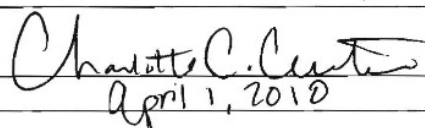- Are you currently working in the field of social work?

Appendix G

Confidentiality Agreement

Assurance of Research Confidentiality

This thesis project is firmly committed to the principle that research confidentiality must be protected and to all of the ethics, values, and practical requirements for participant protection laid down by federal guidelines and by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee. In the service of this commitment:

• All professional transcribers for this project shall sign this assurance of confidentiality.

• A professional transcriber should be aware that the identity of participants in research studies is confidential information, as are identifying information about participants and individual responses to questions. The organizations participating in the study, the geographical location of the study, the method of participant recruitment, the subject matter of the study, and the hypotheses being tested are also be confidential information. Specific research findings and conclusions are also usually confidential until they have been published or presented in public.

• The researcher for this project, Charlotte Curtis, shall be responsible for ensuring that all professional transcribers handling data are instructed on procedures for keeping the data secure and maintaining all of the information in and about the study in confidence, and that that they have signed this pledge. At the end of the project, all materials shall be returned to the investigator for secure storage in accordance with federal guidelines.

PLEDGE I hereby certify that I will maintain the confidentiality of all of the information from all studies with which I have involvement. I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to such information, except directly to the researcher, Charlotte Curtis, for this project. I understand that violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, including termination of professional services with the project, and may make me subject to criminal or civil penalties. I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

_____Signature
_____4.1.10_____Date
_____Charlotte Curtis
April 1, 2010_____Date