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Enroue Halfkenny
Together or Separate:
Implications for Expressing
Progressive Social Justice
Work and Spiritual Practices

ABSTRACT

What happens when people have both a spiritual practice and are engaged in progressive social justice work? How does expressing or engaging in them separately or together affect themselves and the work that they do? This relational, fixed methods research looks at those who have both a spiritual practice and are engaged in progressive social justice work and at how expressing them together or separately effects their perception of themselves and the work that they do (both spiritually and as an activist).

A survey, containing 40 statements using a Likert-type scale, eight questions collecting demographic information and several open ended questions, was created by this author. Data showing significant differences among 187 respondents depending on how they express their spiritual practice and social justice work was found and compared. The findings show that those who express their spiritual practices and social justice work together report significant benefits in their progressive social justice work, their spiritual practice and their self-perception due to expressing their justice work together with their spiritual practice.

Those who express their justice work and spiritual practices separately have the strongest reactions to negative statements about keeping their justice work and spiritual practices separate. However, they tend to agree with those who express theirs together that expressing them together has greater benefits, fewer negatives and that there are few positive consequences to expressing their justice work and spiritual practice separately.

Implications for individuals, communities and organizations who are integrating their spiritual practices and progressive social justice work are also discussed.

TOGETHER OR SEPARATE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR EXPRESSING PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK
AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

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

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2008

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Gandhi, Malcolm X, Cesar Chavez, Thich Nhat Hanh and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. were and are people who explicitly express their social justice work and spiritual practice together. They were/are able to speak to those parts of people yearning for connection to others and notions of the sacred. These leaders were and are consummate organizers and strategists who have complex analysis of society and social systems. These qualities were internally integrated and externally expressed together in ways that inspired thousands and created movements that effected progressive change within individuals, institutions and society, sometimes transforming adversaries into allies. While these names and figures have been able to explicitly express the integration of their justice work and spiritual practice under the watchful and critical gaze of the public, there are countless others who have been able to express the integration of these elements without fanfare or praise.

Though this expressed integration of spiritual practices and progressive social justice work is quite ancient, there is currently more fragmentation and resistance to such expression among progressive social justice people. For many people, integrating religion and politics harkens to fundamentalism and remembered persecution by organized religions. In this country, the Religious Right has dominated the discourse on the integration of spiritual practices and social justice work. This further ostracizes those in

the progressive social justice community who are already leery of including spiritual practices in their work.

However, there is simultaneously a growing movement to explicitly express and integrate progressive social justice work with spiritual practices. As more people attempt to express this integration, the question of whether it matters also comes up. Is there a difference between those who keep their practices separate and those who express them together? Do these two populations feel differently about larger issues? Do they vary due to age, gender identification or types of spiritual and social justice practices? Are they a part of a community? Are the pressures that they feel more internal or external? Do those who express them together find a greater net benefit? Do those who express them separately feel clearer about the work that they do? Is their activism more effective? Is their spiritual practice deeper? Can they determine where one begins and one ends?

There has been previous research that shows the benefits of having a spiritual practice (Lester, 2006). There has also been separate research that shows the benefits of engaging in social justice work (Perry and Rolland, 1999). Additionally, there are qualitative studies that investigate possible reasons for, and benefits of, having a spiritual practice and also being engaged in social justice work (Duerr, 2002). Despite this, quantitative research that shows the impact on the individual of both their spiritual practice and social justice work, whether they express them together or separately, is lacking.

The following study will show some of these benefits and challenges to expressing progressive social justice work and spiritual practices together. It also seeks

to uncover advantages and disadvantages of keeping these aspects distinct from each other. By better understanding the effects of how we express our spiritual practices and progressive social justice work, we can make informed choices about how they lead to the internal and external, sacred and secular, spiritual and societal changes that we desire.

People in varied cultures have had spiritual practices while engaged in progressive social justice for generations. Some express them together, having either communities that support this visible integration or an understanding that they are seamless qualities that inform each other. Others express them separately, keeping their spiritual practices distinct from their social justice work for varied and complex reasons: from worrying what others will think of them, to feeling doubt about ways that they intersect or not.

There are individuals who are able to express their progressive social justice work and their spiritual practice together. This is done explicitly in ways that are recognizable by others as well as in ways that are known only to the practitioner/activist. Some struggle bit by bit to allow two perceived disparate elements of their personae to be expressed simultaneously. Others are able to do so with an ease and seamlessness that illuminates a holism to be modeled in this day and age.

The following research attempts to illuminate the differences (and similarities) between those who express their spiritual practices and progressive social justice work separately and those who express theirs together. I predict that those who are able to express them together will have greater perceived benefits related to both their social justice work and spiritual practice. Conversely, there are individuals who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately who will have greater negative outcomes as

a result when compared to those who express theirs together. If this is true, there are profound implications for those who express them separately and supporting data for organizations and individuals who are encouraging an explicit integration of one's social justice work with one's spiritual practice.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In pursuing and creating an understanding of the relationship between spirituality and progressive social justice work, it is important to explore the nature of that relationship. How do they manifest in individuals, institutions and communities? Do religious and spiritual practices and institutions lead to engaging in progressive social justice work? Does engaging in progressive social justice work inspire people to embrace a religion or spiritual practice? Do they co-arise? How are they expressed together and how and why are they kept separate? Is there a difference between an external, explicit expression of their integration and an internal implicit expression? These questions will be addressed by looking to the available literature and will help to provide a foundation for the following research.

Notions of Spirituality and Progressive Social Justice Activism

Spirituality is a term that has multiple and fluid definitions. Some consider it basic to human nature and the way that people develop a relationship to something perceived as sacred (Walsh, 1999). Others define it as the way that people connect to something larger than themselves that gives meaning to life. People have argued that spirituality is both the foundation of religion, yet is also distinct from religion (Krieglstein, 2006). Religion is seen as the codification and ritualization of a community's understanding and relationship to their notions of the Divine. Though still others define religion as "...a set of beliefs, practices, and traditions experienced within a

specific social institution over time” (Sheridan, 2002, p. 586). This is an interesting definition, that is glaring in its absence of any notions of the Divine or the sacred. Some see religion as too reliant on dogma to provide the personal interaction or relationship with the mystery of life that spirituality seems to offer (Lerner, 2000).

There are also those who would state that being spiritual or having a spiritual practice has nothing to do with religion (Tisdell, 2002), notions of a divine or transcendent force, or anything but an understanding or experience of the deepest notions of what it means to be human (Kriegelstein, 2006). One study uses the term “contemplative practice” in place of spirituality by defining it as “...a practice designed to quiet the mind in the midst of the stress and distraction of everyday life in order to cultivate a personal capacity for deep concentration and insight” (Duerr, 2002, p. 22).

All of this is to say that definitions abound when trying to pin down something as personal and ephemeral as spirituality. Even what would appear as concrete as religion, is as elusive and confounding as “proving” the existence of love using the tools and logic of the “rational” mind. Unfortunately, I have no choice but to add to this long list of definitions and descriptors for the sake of my thesis and my survey. In fact, it is because there are so many definitions that the term spirituality itself cannot stand alone without some qualifiers.

In my experience as a priest of the traditional religion of the Yoruba people, I have listened to people of many faiths and practices describe the personal connection and the intimacy of their seeking a relationship to the creative force of life. Some people are clear in this questing and some are groping about trying to find meaning. Either way, they would consider themselves spiritual, or as having a spiritual practice that connects them

to that which they are searching for. They may not be able to say what “It” is, or they might, but they are listening with an internal quality, allowing the truth of their lived experience to guide them towards something larger.

Consequently, I must provide a framework to recognize that experience, yet I do not want to be the judge of that experience. I cannot be. I am focusing on spiritual practices to look at a concrete manifestation of something that is difficult to define. Looking at the fact the people actively do something to cultivate qualities, experiences and relationships with the Divine, the Absolute, God(s), Goddess(es), Creator, Spirit, Orisa, Ancestors, etc.

In my research, it is not important how, what, to whom, or why people have their particular spiritual practices. What is important is how it effects the quality of their lives, how it helps or hinders their relationships with others, and how it intersects or doesn't with their progressive social justice work? How does having a spiritual practice effect who they are, what they are able to do and why they do what they do?

People who have some form of spiritual or religious practice have thought about its place in their lives and about its expression or lack of expression. I will be asking them to decide for themselves if they have some kind of practice. The particulars of their spiritual, religious or ethical practices are not as important as how and where they manifest. I trust that individuals are aware enough of their own beliefs without feeling that they need to meet some outside criteria to justify their own practices. Those who do not feel confident will not fill out the survey. This particular fear of judgment often prevents the type of integration that can be witnessed and experienced by others. Though I will be providing a working definition of a spiritual practice to provide criteria for

participants of this survey, having a practice is important, not what the particular practice is.

I will also provide a definition for what I am considering progressive social justice work. My interest lies with those who are doing social justice work as identified on the “left” side of the political spectrum. Many have looked at notions of justice and religion as expressed by fundamentalists, those on the “religious right”, and those who use religion as ways of justifying violence and control (Lerner, 2000; Wilmore, 1973; Deloria, 1994; Martin, 2005). This relationship between fundamentalists and evangelical practices of religion and violence are some of the reasons that progressive people do not want to integrate between religious and spiritual traditions and practices with social justice work (Lerner, 2000). Consequently, notions of spirituality become reflexively paired with coercive forces and not with those that are respectful and tolerant of differences. As noted by Lerner (2000) this can lead progressives to marginalize and dismiss any kind of spirituality regardless of the “politics” of those who are practicing.

In opposition to this notion are communities and movements that are labeling the general integration of progressive social justice work and spiritual practices as Emancipatory Spirituality, Spiritual Activism, Restorative Justice and Liberation Spirituality (Lerner, 2000; Greenwood, 2001; Horwitz et al., 2005). These promote diversity, pluralism, respect for all people, social and economic justice and respect and protections for the environment.

*Spiritual/Religious Practices Inspiring Social Justice Activism and Social Justice
Activism Leading to Spiritual and Religious Practice*

There are theological foundations of spiritual and religious practices that speak of an integration of notions of social justice with God/Ultimate Reality. Many people express that their notions of being involved in some form of social justice activism is a direct result of their spiritual practices and religious traditions (Tisdell, 2002; Wilmore, 1973). For example, there are many Christians who would state that their tradition dictates such involvement and it is by “being Christ-like,” in all that they do, including engaging in progressive social justice work, that they are expressing, living and fulfilling their religious and spiritual duty.

There is considerable literature on the ways that individuals’ spiritual and religious practices lead to their involvement in social justice work (Martin, 2003; Williams, 1990; Sivaraksa, 2002). This could be that the tenets of their faith proscribe certain actions or involvements on behalf of those in need. It could be a consequence of working to build a “beloved community”, as described by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (Williams, 1990), that naturally brings the individual into a transformative relationship with those perpetuating the suffering. Williams (1990) points out that the theological foundation of spiritual practices transform the individual, leading to their own personal liberation and is then used to critique the health and functionality of the State or society that the individual is within. The society is anthropomorphized as having the same bad character traits as a misguided individual. Consequently, the individual can assess the health of its cultural and societal institutions to create a strategy for systemic change. The individual, who previously used the tools of their practice for individual liberation,

transitions to using the tools of their practice for the liberation of all (Martin, 2003; Williams, 1990; Sivaraksa, 2002).

One could assume that having any religious or spiritual practice or involvement at all, would naturally lead to progressive social justice work and the enlightenment and liberation of all. As one develops compassion, a desire to serve others, and notions of right and wrong within their particular traditions, these notions might inspire or even dictate involvement in social justice movements and the working towards a just and engaged egalitarian society. While there are studies that show this trend, there are also studies that show the reverse (Perkins, 1992). In fact, here is conflicting evidence that there is causality between religious involvement and engagement with progressive views of any kind. Perkins (1992) found that among individuals who possess great faith, there was an increase in their notions of justice for all people and less overall prejudice. However, in individuals who had less faith but a greater need for conformity in their practice (i.e. those who attend church, synagogue, etc. regularly but who do so to fit in) there was increased prejudice towards those “not like us”.

It would seem that it is not simply the religion or institution that leads to or encourages progressive action, but the person’s connection to notions of a greater vision of humanity, its liberation, and his or her own experience of their Creator(s) that has a greater impact. It is not the religion or practice, per se, that leads to progressive social justice activism, but a person’s ability to recognize the need for justice in their lived experience. While there is no inherent revolutionary character of religion, in relation to social justice (Martin, 2003), it can certainly be a catalyst for change, and provide support and guidance for individuals and communities under certain historical conditions.

However, it can also be used to maintain the status quo and perpetuate some of the worst atrocities and to create some of the most repressive societies that have ever existed (Martin, 2005).

This is not to say that those who are engaged in social justice work are lacking in purpose, hope or meaning in their lives. It is clear that those are the very elements that inspire people into service on behalf of others. Activism itself has clear therapeutic benefits that include empowerment, hope, healing of fractured relationships, compassion and empathy (Perry and Rolland, 1999). However, many get so embroiled in fighting against whatever systems, individuals and forces that are the perceived oppressor, that the energy to maintain the positive vision that originally inspired them gets harder to access. When burnout, exhaustion and cynicism replaces the vision of connection and community, something more than fighting for what is “right” needs to be involved. For many, this “something more” comes from a religious or spiritual practice. (Duerr, 2002)

Those involved in progressive social justice work and activism are tuned in to the inequities of social systems and individuals: poverty, environmental destruction, the effects of institutional racism/white supremacy, gender bias, ageism, heterosexism, classism, the list goes on and on. Most of these issues are discussed within a secular arena where issues of spirituality and religion are implicitly and explicitly kept out. These individuals work with some of the most marginalized, oppressed and violent situations and conditions. While there is much joy and hope there is also much stress and despair. For those living in these situations, matters of the spirit keep people going in the face of such negative forces. This happens through community, explicit religious or

spiritual practices or by having a greater, more liberating view than the material conditions present.

Aponte (1999) notes that poverty, in addition to the “regular” trials of life, can lead to a “...1) loss in a sense of identity and self worth, 2) diminished power over everyday living and their future destiny, and 3) separateness from the larger society, and a loss of stable relationship in their personal loves and communities (p. 77).” Spirituality can address these losses by helping people explore their own inherent worth, empower them to act upon those things that they can change and evaluate the relationships from the most personal and intimate to the larger community and society that they are living within. Lester (2006) also discusses the “...primacy of the encounter with the mystery which is God, which should transform even the most mundane aspects of one’s life (p.305).”

In the place of our mundane lives, the infusion of spirit elevates, transforms, and awakens us to the inherent mysteries that always exist in that same mundane life. A spiritual practice becomes the constant reminder of that awakening which can give hope to those who despair, whether they are victims, perpetrators, witnesses or those who try and help.

In a study exploring the intersections of progressive justice work and contemplative practices, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society describes an archetypal 3-stage journey that individuals travel through, from social justice activism into a relationship with a contemplative practice and “finally” to an integrative approach that is both internalized and expressed within a larger community. This begins with a

“call to contemplation and internal search”, a “call to compassion and outreach”, and finally a “call to unity” (p35).

Crisis is the impetus for a search for renewed meaning. Burnout, exhaustion, and dysfunction in one’s life cause a withdrawal to seek respite, renewed meaning and cleared vision. During this time there is an experience with a contemplative practice that helps the individual to be rejuvenated and returned to a place of internal peace or acceptance. It is also inspiring and leads the individual to the second stage where the individual seeks to integrate this new understanding and experience into their justice work. “After this period of separation and reflection (sometimes taken in the form of a sabbatical), the individual feels called to return to his work and carry this vision with him, thus bringing to life the phrase “compassion in action.” This may be a time of exploration of new careers, or finding a different way to do one’s current work.” (Duerr, 2002, p35)

The last phase of this journey is the “call for unity”, where further integration of one’s religious or spiritual practice into one’s justice work occurs. A desire for deeper and more fundamental societal change that reflects the individual’s own internal integration and external expression of their social justice and religious or spiritual practice is sought. Individuals also seek to create communities and institutions where such integration and expression can be encouraged and promoted.

The initial crisis is seen as an opportunity to look deeply into what the individual is ultimately trying to accomplish. Looking to religious or spiritual practices and traditions help to take to the quality of life that the individual is cultivating. Is the activist perpetuating qualities of oppression, perhaps in their interpersonal relationships, that she

is ultimately trying to overcome at a systems level? The religious, spiritual, or contemplative practice actually helps the individual develop and cultivate a more intimate relationship with the most progressive parts of what started them on the journey for social justice and change in the first place: compassion, service, a desire for liberation, human solidarity, etc (Sivaraksa, 2002).

For an individual coming from the background of social justice work, the interest of having a religious or spiritual practice and experience stems from a search for meaning (Lester, 2006). It is also a way to balance a seemingly external expression, justice work and action, with a seemingly internal one, spirituality. In this search for a system of practice that can support one's social justice work, the revolutionary nature of religious or spiritual practices is illuminated (Martin, 2003). As previously stated, it is not the nature of the religion or spiritual practice to be a revolutionary tool for social change. Religion and spirituality have also been the inspiration and tools for repression. However, as people see the structures of oppression and understand the forces that maintain that structure, religious or spiritual practices, tenets, and institutions can be put into service for macro level changes (Sivaraksa, 2002; Lerner, 2000; Walsh, 1999).

Separation and Fragmentation of Spirituality and Social Justice Activism

Social work itself has a long tradition of marginalizing notions of religion and spirituality. It is just beginning to see the value of integrating spirituality within a theoretical and practical framework (Krieglstein, 2006). This has mirrored a larger fracturing within Western culture of the mind, body, and spirit. Among progressive movements, many of whom have been inspired by Marxist Leninist theories, religion was often seen as an "opiate of the masses" used by oppressive forces to maintain the status

quo and the systems and institutions of exploitation (Martin, 2003). Many progressives have had negative experiences with organized religions whose policies and practices have also further marginalized, oppressed and terrorized many (Deloria, 1994; Lerner, 2000; Lester, 2000; Martin, 2005). Others believe that something as divisive as religion should be kept out of organizations that are already small enough and difficult to keep people involved in. These issues have kept many progressives leery of either getting involved in religious or spiritual practices and communities in the first place, or from admitting to others that they have such practices themselves.

In the early 20th century, the mental health profession in general, and the profession of social work in particular, rejected the importance of religious or spiritual beliefs and practices in the name of science and scientific inquiry (Wilber, 2000; Krieglstein, 2006; Lerner, 2000). Rational thought was seen as the only path to some objective truth and the experiential, personal and subjective reality of those who had some form of religious or spiritual practice was dismissed. The field of social work began with, in effect, Christian missionaries. However, the desire for professional legitimacy and the primacy given to “the mind” eventually caused all things related to religion or spirituality to be ejected from social work (Krieglstein, 2006); throwing the baby being thrown out with the bathwater.

It is only recently that its importance is being recognized within the mental health professions as an important element of the human experience. Using a biopsychosocial lens as a tool to treat clients as holistically as possible is a skill crafted by the field of social work. Including and even encouraging an individual's spiritual practice is necessary to more fully appreciate the complexity of our collective strengths and

challenges, and to help individuals toward better health (Walsh, 1999; Aponte, 1999; Falicov, 1999; Wolin, 1999; Barrett, 1999; Boyd-Franklin, 1999).

It was during the Enlightenment period that the scientific method became the foundation for all quests for knowledge. Those arenas that could not pass the tests created by the tools of this method were dismissed as unreal and imaginary notions and experiences. Since the experience of God could not be “captured” using measuring systems tuned into the experiences of our five senses, God could not be proved to exist: i.e. God was not real. While the scientific method is very good at testing certain types of information and experiences, it is only as good as its tools. If there is not an accurate assessment of the problem, or topic of inquiry or devices to measure what is being analyzed, it is difficult to have results that are accurate representations of reality. (Wilber, 2000) However, this is exactly what science tries to do with the topic of spirituality and religion. God cannot be measured or identified using the tools of science, thus he/she/it cannot be proved to exist. This develops further into questions of faith, and needing to prove or needing to disprove the existence of the Creator.

This was the beginning of the cultural split of the body/mind/spirit connection that, though challenged and changing, continues up until today. While there were positive outcomes to the split, such as the ability to explore the nature of reality outside of church approved doctrine, a very real problem of this outcome was the evolution of the primacy of things that could be measured over the lived experience of people and the importance of the impact of the realms of the mind and spirit on the realm of the body. In other words, what was marginalized was the organic, ephemeral, qualitative side of life

and human experience in favor of that which could be measured and quantified (Wilber, 2000; Lerner, 2000; Astin, 2004).

As in the mental health professions, there is a slow change in the physical health fields as well. Interventions, such as mindfulness, acupuncture, chiropractic, naturopathic and other forms of holistic medicine are not only more popular but are being legitimized by “traditional” science. Studies are finally showing the physical and mental benefits of spirituality in an individuals and communities life (Astin & Forsys, 2004). A double-edged sword is created. Just as the pressure for evidenced based interventions in the mental health field shapes clinician’s practices, scientific legitimacy shapes the validity and practices of holistic interventions.

Because Western society is based on differentiation and compartmentalization, it is likely that those having a spiritual practice will not express it outside of that particular community. During the civil rights era there was an obvious connection between social justice and spirituality. Many progressive justice movements were led by and organized with people explicit about their spiritual practice (Ingram, 2003; Wilmore, 1973). Much from that time has actively and passively withered away. The notion that progressive justice movements can and should be paired with religious or spiritual movements and practices has also withered away. Recently, the religious right has cultivated the notion that they are the sole purveyors of the integration of spirituality and social justice (Lerner, 2000; Sivaraksa, 2002; Lester, 2006). This has resulted in many people aligning themselves with the right who would not normally do so (Lerner, 2000).

Because there are those who have had negative experiences with religious institutions, have had their spiritual practices dismissed by other progressives, have been

raised in a society that teaches compartmentalization and not integration, and for other reasons that this research will seek to uncover, progressive activists do not share their religious or spiritual practices with other progressives.

Those who are exclusively doing progressive social justice work or have a spiritual practice often marginalize those who are able to integrate the two together. (Lerner, 2000; Duerr, 2002; Horwitz et al., 2005). There is little research as to specifically how and why this occurs. Some feel that mixing the two creates smaller communities and is more divisive. We are told by dominant culture, that religion and politics should not be a part of polite conversation. However, these topics strike to the heart of who we are and how we see the world. If we hope to live as more integrated human beings, it is time we stop listening to that voice (Pulido, 1998; Duerr, 2002; Horwitz et al., 2005; Wilber, 2000; Lerner, 2000).

Integration of Spiritual/Religious Practice and Social Justice Activism

Gandhi is one of the most well know people to explicitly combine his progressive social justice work for liberation and his spiritual practices of love and compassion. These are expressed most clearly in his development of Satyagraha; “Truth (satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement Satyagraha, that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence” (Gandhi, 1926). Many subsequent individuals and movements throughout history were inspired by and internalized this technique and philosophy: Dr. Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama, Cesar Chavez, Desmond Tutu, Joanna Macy, Thich Naht Hahn, and many others (Ingram, 2003). While his method for non-violence as the means to transform the heart of the oppressor is

remarkable, there were many others who combined their notions of justice with their religious or spiritual practices using different tactics: Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X, John Brown, Leonard Peltier, Mother Theresa, and many others known and unknown.

People point to Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and Buddha as figures who inspired and acted to liberate those who were suffering (Lerner, 2000; Martin, 2005; Wilmore, 1973). In the name of these individuals and others, people fought for liberation and justice. Sometimes it was using tactics of non-violence and sometimes it wasn't. People of faith were often active participants in the struggle to liberate African people from the institution of slavery: Quakers, Methodists, Evangelical Christians, and the Seminole Nation to name but a few. African healers, priests and medicine people who maintained their traditions and practices, provided an alternate worldview that reflected the inherent self worth of those enslaved. They helped people to endure the hardships of enforced bondage and to strike back when they could (Wilmore, 1973). This tradition continued to develop and evolve, moving underground to survive in African based religions practiced today, through the "conversions" to Christianity and the development of a Black Church, through the radicalization during the civil rights movement and the creation of various organizations that continued to pair social justice with spiritual practices (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Nation of Islam, and others) (Wilmore, 1973).

Indigenous cultures are one example of people for whom the conscious integration of all aspects of an individual's life is the norm. The fracturing of one's spiritual beliefs and expression with one's expression of justice does not exist in such cultures (Smith, 2006). The Western dialectic prioritizes a certain linear thought process

and logical discourse that perpetuates this psychic fracturing of human beings. Smith (2006) and Stewart (2006) discuss the inherent problems within dominant culture's religious institutions and norms that perpetuate not only structures that maintain oppression upon indigenous peoples around the world, but on the psyches of its own citizens as well.

It is often an act of resistance simply to express one's spirituality as an indigenous person. In this one act there is the expression of "two" things: one's inherent self worth as a human being and the particular expression of spirituality. Part of the difficulty within the existing literature and discourse is that there is emphasis on academic theory and theology as opposed to lived experience. This immediately biases the discussion towards a certain dialectic and bestows supreme legitimacy of specific on types of expression of reality. By framing the discussion itself as an either/or expression, I am in fact participating in the fragmentation and compartmentalization that I am critiquing and studying. Unfortunately, in order to study and ultimately encourage this integration I must participate in and illuminate such a dyad.

Among activists who are involved in the environmental justice movements, ecofeminism, indigenous rights and other "earth friendly" movements, it seems that the integration between activism and earth-centered spirituality and religion is also seamless (Pulido, 1998) LaDuke, 1999). The organization "Stone Circles" conducts retreats and workshops for activists in which participants learn spiritual and contemplative practices to help balance their lives. This is to provide practices that can help them sustain their social justice work and to give them tools to offset burnout, cynicism, despair, and rage. Transforming these states with ritual, ceremony, meditation and spiritual practices can

help people sustain and even enhance their social justice work. Liberating and transforming the self within the context of community is seen as crucial for fuller growth and sustainable relationships. This can lead to social and economic change (Horwitz et al., 2005).

The instances where religious or spiritual organizations, institutions and individuals expressed their social justice work are too numerous to mention: Quakers, Unitarian Universalists, engaged Buddhists in Myanmar, Jews for Justice, and many, many others. There are also many activist organizations, individuals and communities that also express their spiritual beliefs within a political context: Sojourner Truth, White Earth Land Recovery Project, Stone Circles, Movement Strategy Center, Spirit in Action, and others.

What is missing in the literature is not why or if people integrate their spiritual practices and progressive social justice work in general, but if there is a difference between those who internally integrate them yet express them separately, and those who are able to externally and explicitly express their integration for others to witness, thus expressing them together. Those who are inspiring examples of doing both, (MLK, Mother Theresa, Gandhi) are placed in that position because they are/were visible, vocal and able to externally explicitly expressing their integration of their justice and spiritual work (as well as being consummate strategists, compassionate organizers and charismatic leaders).

Many people internalize the tenets and beliefs of their spiritual practice and in turn strive to have their actions come from this place. They see these seemingly disconnected spheres as intertwined, enmeshed, and inseparable. This integration is basic

to who we are as human beings. I do not dispute the validity of this as an expression of integration. I feel that there is a qualitative difference between someone who has internalized their integration yet does not externally and explicitly express them together and someone that does.

Expressing Them Together or Separately

If we take a view that human beings are whole and not a sum of parts to be compartmentalized and fragmented, then those who have a spiritual practice and are also engaged in progressive social justice work have them integrated by default. It is not a process of integration for they are already within the individual. This integration may or may not be so intertwined that the individual cannot differentiate where one starts and the other ends. Each aspect informs, inspires and refers to the other. Spirituality and spiritual practices cultivate compassion which inspires justice work which fosters a connection to other people which deepens their relationship to Life which... In this way it is not important to discuss which is more influential or had led to the other. However, I would argue that a slightly different process occurs when an individual develops the skills to explicitly express this integration to others.

Some examples of an expressing spiritual practices and social justice work together would be: a group of Buddhists at a demonstration, in their regalia, doing a walking meditation; a meeting of people studying Torah and discussing the tragedy in Darfur and its implications; people in the Wiccan community conducting a ritual during an anti-nuclear proliferation demonstration (Starhawk, 1988); an inter-denominational meeting to discuss community environmental concerns that begins with and integrates prayer (Staral, 2000).

However, if a group of Christian people met to have the same discussion about Darfur, without doing anything that explicitly expressed their Christianity, I would not consider it in the same light, even if conducted within a church. The reason I would see this sort of event as distinct is that, if were it not for the building itself, no one would know that they were Christians and the act of being in a church does not define one as being Christian. They are not explicitly expressing their religious or spiritual tradition or practices. If that same group were placed in a park, a passerby would not know that they were expressing their religious beliefs at all. If this same Christian discussion group began their meeting with a prayer then it would be considered as explicitly integrating and expressing the two.

This is not to judge what constitutes a valid expression of religion or social justice work. Nor is it to validate one person's identity over another. It is to explore the differences within people, traditions, and communities that promote an external, explicit, integrated expression and those that, for one reason or another, do not.

As regards to this differentiation of expressing separately or together ones spiritual practice with ones social justice work, there is little research. For those engaged in a holistic integration of spirit and justice work, whether it is expressed separately or together may be a very important distinction. Those who have been the most effective in their justice work and most "developed" in their religious or spiritual practices have been able to be explicit in this integration, expressing them together. Through this research, I hope to show the importance of expressing progressive social justice work and spiritual practices together. Since there are myriad physical, mental and emotional benefits from spirituality (Kelly, 2004) and justice work (Aponte, 1999) separately, I would expect

there to be a greater benefit from their integration. For those who can explicitly, or externally, express these elements, there may be an even greater net benefit compared to those who do not.

This thesis, and the data that I hope to collect, will examine some of the issues that help or hinder the integration and expression of an individual's progressive social justice work and their religious or spiritual practice. Does the specific nature of their spiritual practice influence this expression? Does their type of progressive social justice work? Is income/class a factor? Do certain people think the same way about issues of life and death, perceived control of their lives, or a connection to their ancestors? Are people themselves clear about whether their expression is explicit or "simply" and internal process. These questions will help illuminate something that may lead to ways for people to be more fulfilled in their lives and more effective in the social justice work.

Summary

There is substantial literature showing the intersection of a person's spiritual and religious practice with his/her social justice activism. In fact, some state that one's spiritual and religious development are intertwined with a need to serve, and support movements striving for social justice. The reverse process is also stated to occur: A person who is committed to social justice, compassion and ethical notions will find a natural entry point into spiritual and religious traditions. However, there is virtually no research concerning the reasons why the integration of this phenomenon is so difficult to express in this culture. There is also a gap in speaking about possible benefits derived by expressing them simultaneously. Initially, it seems that the fragmentation of the Western psyche, interpersonal and organizational biases, fears and notions of the importance of

compartmentalization, keep people from explicitly integrating and expressing the fullness of their selves. Such a culture of fragmentation and compartmentalization, results in difficulties expressing the complex reality of integrating one's spiritual practice with one's social justice work.

As the field of social work incorporates the importance of a person's biology, psychology and social situatedness in assessment and understanding of important aspects of a human being's self, I would include a person's religion or spirituality as well (creating a bio-psycho-social-spiritual model). The fields of social work and psychology are just acknowledging the importance of the recognition of the individual's religio/spiritual experience and outlook. This speaks to the reintegration of the psyche/soul into the field of mental health. While some would rather speak to notions of humanism instead of using the term spirituality, I would argue that for this research, if such a person could explicitly express that notion and has a practice that informs and supports that, then we are talking about the same thing. I believe the practice of these skills and approaches lead to transformation and sustained action. I hope that by looking at the ways that people succeed at expressing this integration, and investigating any potential benefits, others can be encouraged to find communities and practices that meet their deeper needs. By exploring the ways that people can explicitly express this integration, others may draw strength to be agents of transformation and liberation: to "be the change that they desire." This research will hopefully begin the process of exploring these questions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to study the differences between those who express their spiritual/religious practice together with their progressive social justice work and those who separate the expression of their identities as a spiritual/religious person and as a social justice activist. It is my hypothesis that those who express their social justice work and spiritual practices together perceive greater benefits and fewer negative consequences from this expression than those who express them separately. This is gathered using a relational, fixed methods research design using Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, to create a survey to acquire data about these two groups.

Relational research methods are designed to "examine the relationship among or between variables as they occur in everyday life."(Anastas 1999, p. 148) How does one's race or ethnicity relate to expressing spirituality and justice work together? Do people who feel connected to a community of practitioners (whether spiritual or activist) report more negative results in being seen expressing their justice work and spirituality? What is the correlation between seeing the integrated expression as a positive element in others and the respondent's ability to express their own integration? What is experienced as helping that expression and what is experienced as hindering?

This type of research method was chosen for the fact that it can help in exploring these correlations and relationships. However, there is not a causal relationship between the variables in this study (Anastas, 1999). While variables in this data can be seen to

fluctuate in relationship to each other, it cannot be stated that one is causing the changes in another. While there are strengths to this research design this is one of the weaknesses.

The survey includes two item formats: The majority of the statements use a Likert-like scale in a fixed methods design to obtain data concerning respondents' thoughts, feelings and interpretations about the expression of their spiritual practices and social justice work. The survey concludes with several open-ended questions to obtain a more detailed, personal picture of the participants. This offered the participants the opportunity to add their own stories to the data set, to further describe why they express their integration together or separately, or to include anything that they felt was not addressed in the survey. Excerpts from these last questions are used in the discussion section of this thesis. A study of this nature provides me with a greater number of subjects with a potential for a broad range of responses.

Sample

This survey was sent to those who self identify as having a spiritual/religious practice as well as being involved in some kind of progressive social justice activism. This survey was disseminated using a snowball sampling to organizers, activists, spiritual leaders, individuals and communities that I have come across in the literature, in my experiences, and through friends and colleagues.

In general, there is a bias in the literature towards spiritual and religious traditions from a Judeo-Christian perspective. However, there is growing literature on Buddhist traditions, as mindfulness practices have gained in popularity with those in the mental health field. I hoped to address this bias by including “non-Judeo-Christian” spiritual and religious systems. These include indigenous First Nation/Native American, Wiccan,

African and African Diasporic, and other earth-based, experiential, mystic and indigenous traditions. My intention is to get a broad enough set, with a high number of respondents, to see if there are correlations between types of spiritual and religious practices, areas of activism and an individual's feelings of their ability to express their identity together. My hypothesis that in traditions that are from cultures that have more holistic and integrative concepts of being, there is a higher incidence of those who express their spiritual/religious practice and social justice activism together.

In this research, the terms "spiritual practice" and "progressive social justice work" are used. The definitions of these terms are as follows. Spiritual practices include, but are not limited to, practices that help people connect with: notions of a greater self, ways of being mindful, compassionate actions, that which is sacred, their creative expression or process, God(s)/Goddess(es)/Gaia/the Absolute/Allah/Buddha/the Creator/Orisa/Ancestors/etc.. This may be expressed through: prayer, ritual, meditation and other contemplative practices, trance, singing, dance, ceremony, spirit possession, and/or artistic expression (writing, sculpture, playing music, etc.).

Progressive social justice work promotes diversity, pluralism, respect for all people, social and economic justice and/or respect or protections for the environment. Social justice work includes, but is not limited to, participation in: letter writing campaigns, community organizing, fundraising for progressive social justice organizations, demonstrations, rallies, educational programs, consciousness raising groups, advocacy, policy development and implementation, direct action, discussion groups, et al. Participants need to be at least 18 years old, identify themselves as having a spiritual or religious practice and are involved in progressive social justice work. If they

were younger than the age of 18, have a spiritual practice but are not engaged in progressive social justice work, are engaged in progressive social justice work but do not have a spiritual practice, or have neither, they were excluded from participation in this research.

The survey was sent to organizations, communities and individuals who promote integrating spiritual practices and social justice work. It was also sent to those organizations that explicitly organize around either social justice work or spiritual issues but not both. The former type of organization would more likely have members and affiliates who express their spiritual and activist identities together. The latter group was included since it was likely that their members and affiliates would express these aspects separately.

This survey was further disbursed using a snowball method, as well as being distributed using existing databases from organizations that serve populations meeting selection criteria. Overall, these methods were chosen for the ease of distribution and use of this survey to yield a large and data set.

Ethics and Safeguards

Confidentiality was protected through the use of Survey Monkey, an encrypted online survey tool. There was no identifying information that was transmitted to me, my advisor or other researchers unless directly provided by the participants. This included computer IP addresses, names, geographic locations, or organizations and their affiliates.

Some respondents may have experienced some benefit from completing this survey. Having the opportunity to reflect on intimate and personal elements of one's identity can often be inspiring and lead to a better appreciation for the choices that they

have made. Many people define themselves by their spiritual practice and/or their progressive social justice work. Having to formulate their responses in a survey form may be the first time that respondents have given conscious thought to these aspects of themselves.

However, there are also some risks to taking part in this research. Some respondents may have experienced discomfort or stress by thinking about the ways that they do or do not get support in expressing these deep and significant parts of themselves. Subjects may also experience distress by revealing parts of themselves that have not been consciously addressed before. If subjects did experience unusual and /or disturbing amounts of distress during or after completing this survey, resources were provided within the content of the Letter of Informed Consent (See appendix A).

As per federal requirements, data will be kept and securely stored for three years and then destroyed or, if they are needed beyond that time frame, I will ensure their secure storage until they are no longer required. All of the data collected by Survey Monkey was protected by passwords and access codes known only to myself. The depersonalized data was sent to the Smith College School for Social Work's data analyst via email. Files of the data are stored by me on two external hard drives protected by security measures that include firewalls, passwords and encryption safeguards. Once my account with survey Monkey is closed the only copies of the data will reside with the data analyst and me. Once the thesis was accepted, the results were disseminated to the SSW community as well as to those organizations and individuals who requested copies of this document.

Data Collection

I sent out the link to my survey imbedded in a Letter of Introduction (see Appendix B) through email. Selecting the link opened the survey in an internet browser's window. The survey starts with a Letter of Consent (Appendix A) and if the continue button is selected, the survey proper begins. The survey is divided into seven sections: Demographics, World View, Spiritual Practice, Social Justice Work, Separation of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice, Expressed Integration of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice, and Additional Information. It is also separated by the types of data collected within each section. The Demographic section has nominal values for the variables, the remaining sections up until the Additional Information section is scored using a five point Likert scale including an N/A (not applicable) choice. The last section has a single nominal variable question with four open ended questions. These open-ended questions are to gather qualitative data that could not be obtained within the context of a quantitative survey.

The Demographic and World View Section provides a foundation of beliefs and traits for comparison of the other sections. Examples of selections within the Demographic section are: "Age:" 18-25, 26-35, 36-50, 51-65, 66-75 and 75+. "Spiritual/Religious/Ethical/Creative Practice (check all that apply):" Buddhism, Protestantism, Islam, Catholicism, Judaism, Indigenous (First Nation, African, Aboriginal, etc.), Pagan/Nature Based, Humanist, Artistic and Eclectic/Other (please specify), and "Progressive Social Justice Work (check all that apply):" Economic Justice, Gender Equality, Feminism, Environmental Justice, Racial Equality, Indigenous Rights,

Policy, Youth Rights, Elder Care, Creative Art Projects, Housing Equality, Food Security, Hunger, Globalization issues, Peace Movement and Other (please specify).

A Likert-like scale was used to achieve a strength-of-response rating for data for most of the survey. Some statements from the “World View” section include: “My life has a purpose”, “I do not worry about what others think of me”, “I am in control of my life, and “I am my ancestors." This section was to inquire about some large general topics centered on meaning, perceived (in)dependence in relation to others, perceived control and relation to one's culture/history/self.

The “Spiritual Practice” section seeks to address the place that an individual's practice plays in their life, how secure in their practice they are, and the primacy of their spiritual practice as the source of societal change through such questions as: "My spiritual practice helps me cope with difficulties in my life", "Being seen expressing my spiritual tradition causes me anxiety", and "Spiritual practices and internal changes are the most effective ways to create lasting societal change."

The section titled “Social Justice Work” explores similar themes about the respondent's justice work as did the previous section did about their spiritual practice. I used similar wording to be able to compare similar emotional states, and perceptions: “My social justice work helps me cope with difficulties in my life”, “Being seen engaging in social justice work is embarrassing”, and “Doing social justice work to change systems, institutions and structures is the most effective approach to creating sustainable change.”

There are two sets of statements within each of the sections titled Separation of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice, and Expressed Integration of Social Justice

Work and Spiritual Practice. The first five statements within the former section are worded such that a response of "strongly agree" corresponds to expressing the two elements separately as a positive factor ("It is important to keep spiritual practices separate from social justice work" -or- separation is good). The second five are worded such that a "strongly agree" response corresponds to the expressing the two elements separately as a negative factor ("I am incomplete when I have to keep my spiritual practice separate from my social justice work"-or- separation is bad). In the latter section, the first five have a positive correspondence to the expressed integration of one's social justice work and their spiritual practice ("The integration of my spiritual practice and social justice work helps me to have more peace in my life" –or- integration is good) and the second five to a negative correspondence to the expressed integration ("Sharing both my spiritual practice and social justice work with others is embarrassing" –or- integration is bad).

In the last section I ask participants to answer whether they express their spiritual practice and social justice work separately or together. This is the last mandatory question to answer and participants could end the survey at this time having provided all of the needed data. However, I also included four open-ended questions and statements for them to answer within a text box. This provides an opportunity for subjects to elaborate on their responses and any thoughts that may have come up while taking the survey: "Why do you express your spiritual practice and progressive social justice work together?", "Why do you express your spiritual practice and progressive social justice work separately?", "If there is any additional information about your spiritual practice, your progressive social justice work, or your life, that you think will be helpful for me to

know, feel free to write it here.”, and “If there is any feedback about the survey itself that you wish to share, please write it here.”

I have self developed the survey based on previous informal interviews with activists and spiritual leaders from New Haven, Connecticut who responded to the question of the perceived overlap and intersection between a person’s spiritual practice and social justice work. I incorporated their concerns and insights, in addition to themes garnered from a study conducted by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society in Northampton, Massachusetts. The Center produced a qualitative study, interviewing 79 individuals to address the intersections, conflicts and benefits of expressing one's contemplative traditions and social justice work.

Using an online survey to disseminate the survey and to collect data has some built in advantages as well as disadvantages. Going through an existing online survey-building site has made the construction of the survey relatively easy. There were available formats to choose from that fit my own design interests. It provided a storage and organizing site that made getting an initial analysis of the data easy with software to download data for more comprehensive analysis possible. It was inexpensive and easy to imbed a link in an email as opposed to mailing out up to a thousand surveys to receive back a large enough n of respondents. It was easier for individuals to either click on the link to complete the survey, delete it if not interested or to forward it to others who might be interested. Consequently, it saved resources that would have been used towards writing and mailing letters of consent and surveys to prospective subjects.

Although many people immediately delete emails from senders that they do not recognize, just as salmon release thousand of eggs with very few living to become adults,

the ease of sending out thousands of initial and reminder emails led to over 200 individuals taking this survey. Additionally, communicating via email allowed for me to quickly address any questions of eligibility that individuals had. Though 210 subjects began the survey only 187 responded to all of the required statements. Consequently, only those who have completed the survey in its entirety are included in the final analysis.

While there were some clear benefits to using Survey Monkey to build, disseminate and collect data for this survey, it also has built in biases and disadvantages. It requires subjects to be English and computer literate. It requires respondents to have access to a computer for the amount of time to complete the survey. Although I asked people to pass it on the others who might be interested, outside of specific individuals and organizations that I had previous contact with or knowledge of, (don't know me) my initial mailings were to people and organizations that had their contact information available on the internet. This resulted in only contacting those who could be easily found or who were linked to large enough organizations that appeared on various search engines. The populations of people who would fit criteria for my survey are typically overworked and very busy. Consequently it was easy to simply delete my request then to take 20 minutes out of their schedule to fill out something from someone that they do not know.

Data Analysis

The analysis used in this relational research involves correlations between and among variables within this sample of 187 subjects. The two main identifiers are those who experienced high strength of agreement with statements promoting benefits of an

expressed integration of one's spiritual practice and social justice work. This includes those with a high strength of disagreement with statements that promote the benefits of the separation of one's spiritual practice and social justice work. This is identified as a group that experiences benefits and preference of expressed integration. The other group is identified by a strong strength of agreement with statements that promote expressing one's spiritual practice and social justice work separately. This group includes those identifying with a strong disagreement with statements that promote expressing one's spiritual practice and social justice work together.

These two groups were correlated with variables within Demographics and the World View, Spiritual Practice, and Social Justice Work sections. By correlating variables within these subjects I hope to develop theories as to the factors that promote or discourage the expressed integration of an individual's spiritual practice and social justice work.

Descriptive statistics enables the analysis of variables to derive meaning from the numerical sample at hand (Anastas, 1999). Analyzing the data from the demographics section using descriptive statistics helped to organize and present the findings using SPSS.

Inferential statistics provide the ability to correlate the variables between the groups generally identified as those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together and those who express them separately. These statistics will enable me to compare variables and interpret their relationships between and amongst other variables. Using the hypothesis of association drawn from the inferential statistics will allow these comparisons between variables within my overall sample. In general, analyzing the data

using overall frequencies, percentages, and a non-parametric test yielded the results that best apply to testing my hypothesis.

Discussion

While I have tried to create research that minimizes methodological bias, it is unavoidable that some should occur. In fact, without acknowledging bias, conclusions drawn from such research are not reliable. To create a survey that seeks to quantify such ephemeral aspects of our human condition is difficult, to say that least. Asking subjects to choose from six options when responding to such thought provoking statements will be certain to provide simplified data. Hopefully by allowing subjects to write comments at the conclusion of the survey will provide more depth to a wide reaching study.

There are some other areas of bias that impact the collection and interpretation of the data. In a survey of this nature, categories are created to seek to define characteristics that are often fluid and dynamic. It is also difficult providing categories that are arguably cultural constructs and are somewhat arbitrary in their very nature. Within the Demographics section under both Gender and Sexual Orientation there were enough responses in the "Other" category listing. Queer as a response that says that it should have been a choice. For many within the LGBT community, Queer is a better term describing their sexual orientation or gender identity than Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Trans, or Intersex.

By not allowing people to check off more than one box in the race/ethnicity section I forced people to have to choose other to be able to give a fuller description of their identity. Ideally I wanted to be able to have subjects choose one category and to be able to further elaborate in the "Other" category. Design constraints did not allow me to do this. Or rather I did not figure out how to do this be the time the survey went out. For

these last two situations it resulted in subjects, who are already marginalized, feeling that they were not able to fully represent themselves unless they chose the “other” category. This choice is often the only option for them. This resulted in the perpetuation of a stigmatization that I tried to properly address and give voice to.

I am a priest in the traditional religion of the Yoruba people of West Africa. I am also a practitioner of First Nation ways and attempt to be a follower of the Dharma in Buddhist traditions. I am also a proponent of social change and have been an activist working for the transformation of oppression to liberation for many years. My own biases, perspectives and experiences have surely shaped the development of the survey and the eye with which I will analyze and interpret the data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The questions that this survey hoped to address are: Are there differences between those who state that they express their social justice work and spiritual practice separately and those that state they express them together? Are there differences between these groups based on certain demographic categories? Are there differences between these two groups based on certain world views, feelings about their spiritual practices or types of social justice work that they are engaged in?

This survey is divided into seven different sections: Demographics, World View, Spiritual Practice, Social Justice Work, Separation of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice, Expressed Integration of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice, and a final statement asking whether their social justice work and spiritual practice are expressed together or separately. The sections titled either Separation or Expressed Integration of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice are each further divided into two more groups. The result is four groups generally structured as such: G1-separation of social justice work and spiritual practice is good ($\alpha=.902$, $n=181$, N of items=5), G2- separation of social justice work and spiritual practice is bad ($\alpha=.947$, $n=156$, N of items=5), G3- integration of social justice work and spiritual practice is good ($\alpha=.899$, $n=180$, N of items=4),, and G4- integration of social justice work and spiritual practice is bad ($\alpha=.811$, $n=184$, N of items=5). The terms: “good” and “bad” refer to whether there are perceived negative aspects or consequences of expressing one’s justice work and

spiritual practice separately or together (i.e. It is important to keep spiritual practices separate from social justice work [G1], My spiritual practice has a deeper affect on me because I can express it together with my social justice work [G3]).

Below I include frequencies of responses from total respondents (N=187). Where illustrative or significant, I compare those who express their social justice work and spiritual practices separately to those who express them together.

Demographics

Age

The ages of the respondents are distributed across all 6 categories with 10.5%(n=22) in the 18-25 group, 24.3%(n=51) in the 26-35 group, 30.5%(n=64) in the 36-50 group, 31%(n=65) in the 51-65 group, 2.9%(n=6) in the 66-75 age group, and 1%(n=2) in the 76+ age group.

There were significant differences between those aged 18-35 and 36-50, depending on whether they expressed their justice work and spiritual practice together or separately (chi square [1,N=180]=9.513, p=.002, continuity corrected). Among those who expressed them together, 73.4% were aged 36-50, and among those who expressed them separately, 51.9% were aged 18-35.

Race/Ethnicity

There are 8 groups listed under this category. 65.7%(n=138) of total subjects identified as White, 10%(n=21) identified as Black, 8.6%(n=18) identified as Other, 6.7%(n=14) identified as Bi/multiracial, 4.8%(n=10) identified as Latino, 1.9%(n=4) identified as Indigenous 1.4%(n=3) identified as South Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1%(n=2) identified as Asian. Due to the structure of the survey, subjects were unable to

choose bi/multiracial and describe the specific racial/ethnic combinations those who chose “other” include: 7 who would fit in the bi/multiracial category, 4 identified as Jewish, 3 who identified as Indigenous European, 2 identified as bicultural Europeans and 1 identified as European.

When comparing those who expressed their spiritual practice and social justice work together or separately the data changes. Of those who express them together, 63.4% identify as White, 9.7% identify as Black, 7.5% as Bi/Multiracial, 4.5% as Latino, 2.2% as Indigenous, 1.5% as Asian, 1.5% as South Asian/Pacific Islander and 9.7% as Other. Of these, 7 of 13 could be identified as Bi/Multiracial as well. Of those who express their social justice work and spiritual practice separately 75.5% identify as White, 7.5% as Black, 1.9% as Bi/Multiracial, 3.8% as Latino, 1.95 as Indigenous, 0% as Asian, 1.9% as South Asian/Pacific Islander, and 7.5% as Other. Of these four subjects, two identified as ethnically White, one as mostly White/enrolled Lakota and one White/Indigenous (from Europe).

There was no significant difference found between those who identify as white compared to those who would be categorized as “people of color”. 68% of those identifying as white and 79% of those identifying as persons of color report expressing their social justice work together.

Gender

65.7% (n=138) of respondents identified as Female, 31%(n=65) as Male, 1.9%(n=4) as Transgender and 1.4%(n=3) as Other. Those in the Other group identified as Gender Queer/Queer Gendered (n=2) and one as Two Spirit/Transgender (n=1). There

were no significant differences whether a subject expressed their social justice work and spiritual practice either together or separately.

Sexual Orientation

The majority of respondents self identified as Heterosexual, 71.9%(n=151). 15.2%(n=32) identified as Lesbian/Gay, 7.1%(n=15) as Bisexual, and 5.7%(n=12) identified as Other. Within the other category: Queer (n=8), Two Spirit/Pansexual (n=1), Omnisexual (n=1), Questioning (n=1), declined to answer (n=1). There were no significant differences whether a subject expressed their social justice work and spiritual practice either together or separately.

Personal Income

14.3%(n=30) of total subjects had personal incomes of \$0-7000. 6.7%(n=14) of respondents had personal incomes of \$7001-15000. 8.6%(n=18) of total subjects had incomes between \$15001-25000. 20.5%(n=43) of respondents had incomes of \$25001-40000. Another 20.5%(n=43) of respondents had incomes from \$41000-60000 also. 14.8%(n=31) of total subjects had incomes of \$60001-80000 and 5.7%(n=12) of respondents had income levels of \$80001-100000. 9%(n=19) of total respondents had incomes above \$100000.

In looking at differences between groups, income levels were divided into four groups: \$0-25000, \$25001-60000, \$60001-100000, and \$100000+. There were significant differences between these groups depending on whether subjects expressed their justice work and spiritual practice together or separately (chi square [3,N=187]=14.258, p=.003). The majority of those who have incomes between \$0-100000 express these aspects together (66.7%, 75.6% and 85%). However, of those who

made over \$100000, 61.1% express their social justice work and spiritual practice separately. Of those who expressed them together only 5.2% made over 100000, while 20.8% of subjects who expressed their justice work and spiritual practice separately made over \$100000.

Spiritual/Religious/Ethical/Creative Practice

Respondents were able to select more than one type of spiritual practice. 33.3%(n=70) chose Eclectic/Other, 23.8%(n=50) chose Buddhism, 20.5%(n=43) said Protestantism, 19%(n=40) said Judaism, 19%(n=40) said Humanist, 16.7%(n=35) chose Pagan/Nature Based, 14.3%(n=30) chose Artistic, 11.9%(n=25) chose Catholicism, 10.5%(n=22) chose Indigenous/First Nation/Aboriginal/etc, 1.9%(n=4) chose Islam. There were some significant numbers within the Eclectic/Other category including Unitarian Universalists (n=12), Various Christian Denominations (n=8), and Yoga (n=7).

More subjects who can express their justice work and spiritual practice together practice Protestantism (21.6% vs. 15.2%), Islam (2.2% vs. 0%) though the total number of respondents is only 2, Judaism (20.9% vs. 17%), Indigenous+ (12.7% vs. 5.7%) and are Humanists (20.1% vs. 11.3%). The only practices that had more participants who expressed their justice work and spiritual practice separately are Pagan/Nature Based practices (20.8% vs. 16.4%) and Eclectic practices (37.7% vs. 32.8%).

Progressive Social Justice Work

Here subjects were also allowed to choose all of the forms of social justice work that applied. The most common identified forms of progressive social justice work are Racial Equality (64.3%[n=135]), with 54.8%(n=115) engaged in Economic Justice work, 47.6%(n=100) engaged in Gender Equality, 38.6%(n=81) are engaged in Feminism,

43.8%(n=92) engaged in Environmental Justice, 23.8%(n=50) engaged in Indigenous Rights, 33.8%(n=71) engaged in Policy issues, 33.8%(n=71) engaged in Youth Rights, 15.7%(n=33) engaged in Elder Care, 26.2%(n=55) engaged in Housing Equality, 23.8%(n=50) engaged in Food Security issues, 24.8%(n=52) engaged in Hunger issues, 30%(n=63) engaged in Globalization Issues, 45.7%(n=96) engaged in the Peace Movement, 25.2%(n=53), 25.2%(n=53) also engaged in Creative Art Projects and 40.5%(n=85) are engaged in Other forms of progressive social justice work. The most prevalent forms of social justice work within the Other category were GLBT Issues (n=17) and Criminal Justice/Prison Reform work (n=8).

Housing Equality is the only area of social justice work that had a greater percentage of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately compared to those who express them together (32.1% vs. 24.6%). The areas of the largest differences between those expressing their justice work and spiritual practice together or separately are those involved in the Peace movement (52.2% vs. 32.1%)(chi square [1,N=187]=5.422, p=.013, continuity corrected), followed by Environmental Justice (50% vs. 35.8%), Globalization Issues (31.3% vs. 18.9%), Elder Care (18.7% vs. 7.5%), Creative Art Projects (27.6% vs. 17%) and Indigenous Rights (27.6% vs. 18.9%).

World View

In this section, subjects responded to 10 statements that sought to uncover their opinions on various general topics. Throughout the rest of the Findings section I have combined responses into those that agree (strongly agree + agree), disagree (strongly disagree + disagree) or report that they do not know. Those who responded Not Applicable (N/A) are not listed since their responses account for less than 4% of the data

per statement. If there is no notable difference between those that express their justice work and spiritual practice together or separately I report the overall percentage response. In the statement “My health and wellbeing impacts my community.”(variable name (v)=healcom) 90.4% of total subjects agree with this statement. “My spiritual practice is the same as my social justice work,” (v=spiritjust) had 80.6% of subjects who express their justice work and spiritual practice together agree with this statement. Of those who practice them separately, 45.1% agree, 37.3% disagree and 17.6% didn’t know (chi square [2, N=185]=22.743, p=.000). “I am in control of my life.”(v=cntrl) 67.2% of total subjects agree and 16.9% disagree.

“I have had an awakening moment that transformed me.”(v=awake) 71.4% of total respondents agree with this statement and 19.8% disagree. “I do not worry about what others think of me.”(v=worry) 58.9% of total respondents disagree and 36.8% agree with this statement. “My life has a purpose.”(v=purp) Of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice 94.8% agree and 5.2% do not know. 83% of those who express theirs separately agree and 15.1% do not know.

“Being a member of my community defines who I am.”(v=comdef) 63.6% of total subjects agreed and 30.7% of subjects disagreed with this statement. “I am my ancestors.”(v=ances) 47.3% of total respondents agreed with this statement and 35.7% disagreed. The statement, “I am afraid to die”(v=af2di) had 25.3% of total respondents agree, 25.3% don’t know and 49.5% disagree. “Seeing others expressing their spirituality and social justice work together inspires me.”(v=inspir) 94% of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice agree with this statement, and 0.7% disagree. Of those who express them separately, 80.8% agree and 13.5% disagree.

Spiritual Practice

This section asks subjects to rate the place that their spiritual practice plays in their life using the same combined scale as above. "My spiritual practice helps me cope with difficulties in my life." (v=spcope) 88% of total subjects agreed with this statement. "Being seen expressing my spiritual tradition causes me anxiety." (v=spanx) 76.3% of subjects who express their social justice work and spiritual practice together disagree and 18.3% agree. Among those who express them separately, 58% disagree and 30% agree with this statement (chi square [2, N=181]=6.31, p=.044).

"While I am doing it, someone could tell that I am engaging in a spiritual practice." (v=spseen) 44.2% of total subjects agreed with this statement, 22.7% disagreed, and 33.1% responded I Don't Know. "Spiritual practices and internal changes are the most effective ways to create lasting societal change." (v=spch) 60.9% of those who express their social justice and spiritual practice together agree, 21.8% do not know and 17.3 disagree. Of those who express them separately, 37.7% disagree, 30.2% don't know and 32.1% agree with this statement (chi square [2, N=186]=13.929, p=.001). "My spiritual practice is a personal and private event that I do not share with others." (v=spcomm) 76.9% of those who express their social justice work and spiritual practice together agree and 19.2% disagree with this statement. For those who express theirs separately, 60% agree and 40% disagree with this statement

Social Justice Work

Among these statements, either chi square could not be run or there were no significant differences between those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together or separately. "My social justice work helps me cope with difficulties in my

life."(v=sjcope) 77.8% of total subjects agreed and 15.7% disagreed with this statement. "Being seen engaging in social justice work is embarrassing."(v=sjemb) 97.8% of total respondents disagreed with this statement. "Doing social justice work to change systems, institutions and structures is the most effective approach to creating sustainable change."(v=sjch) 79.3% of total subjects agreed with this statement and 13.6% responded I Don't Know.

"My social justice work is expressed within a community setting."(v=sjcomm) 92.5% of total respondents agreed with this statement. "My ethical beliefs (not my spiritual practice) inform my social justice activism."(v=sjeth) 73.2% of all respondents agreed with this statement and 16.8% disagreed.

Separation of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice

This section was divided into two parts, G1 and G2. The questions in G1 are focused on the separation of one's spiritual practice and social justice as having positive consequences or by being necessary. To test the internal reliability of this combination of statements, Cronbachs Alpha statistics was run: $\alpha=.902$, $n=181$, N of items=5. The majority of total subjects disagreed with the statements in this section. However, there are significant differences in what I will call the surety of responses as well as "regular" differences in response choices between those who express their social justice work together or separately. For example, for "It is important to keep spiritual practices separate from social justice work"(v=sepimp), 82.3% of total subjects disagreed with this statement. Yet, of those who express their social justice work and spiritual practice together, 91.7% disagree and 6.8% don't know. Of those who express them separately, 58.5% disagree, 28.3% don't know and 13.2% agree. This illustrates a difference of

surety where a majority of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately disagree, a significant responded that they did not know.

For, "Having separate places to express my social justice work and my spiritual practice makes life easier for me"(v=sepez), 70.9% of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice disagree and 21.3% don't know whether they agree or not. Of those who express them separately, 38.8% agree, 28.6% don't know and 32.7% disagree (chi square [2, N=176]=29.875, p=.000).

"Keeping my social justice work and spiritual practice separate keeps me clear and focused about my purpose."(v=sepfoc) 91.4% of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice disagree and 7.8% don't know whether they agree or not. Of those who express them separately, 50% disagree, 18% don't know and 32 % agree. "Keeping my spiritual practice separate from my social justice work keeps me spiritually grounded." (v=sepsbet) Only 3.1% of those who express their social justice work together with their spiritual practice agree with 88.4% disagreeing. Of those who express them separately, 58.8% disagree, 25.5% don't know and 15.7% agree.

"Having my spiritual practice separate from my social justice work makes my social justice work more effective."(v=sepsjef) Only 2.3 % of those who express their social justice work together with their spiritual practice agree with 87.6% disagreeing. Of those who express them separately, 45.1% disagree, 29.4% don't know and 25.5% agree.

G2 focused on the separation of an individual's social justice work and spiritual practice being or having negative consequences. To test the internal reliability of this combination of statements, Cronbachs Alpha statistics was run: alpha=.947, n=156, N of items=5. "Having to keep my social justice work separate from my spiritual practice

negatively affects each of these aspects of myself."(v=sepneg) 62.1% of subjects who express their social justice work together with their spiritual practice agree and 20.7% disagree. Of those who express them separately, 52.1% disagree, 29.2% don't know and 18.8% agree (chi square [2, N=164]=26.428, p= .000). "I don't like keeping my spiritual practice separate from my social justice work." (v=sepntlik) 81.5% of subjects who express their social justice work and spiritual work together agree and 7.6% disagree, while 50% of those who express them separately disagree and 33.3% agree with this statement [2, N=167, 43.802, p= .000).

"I am incomplete when I have to keep my spiritual practice separate from my social justice work."(v=sepincom) 74.4% of subjects who express their social justice work together with their spiritual practice agree and 14.9% disagree. Of those who express them separately, 58% disagree, and 26% agree (chi square [2, N=171]=38.483, p= .000). "It is harder for me to cope with life's difficulties when I keep my social justice work and spiritual practice separate from each other."(v=sepcope) 68.6% of subjects who express their social justice work together with their spiritual practice agree and 16.5% disagree. Of those who express them separately, 62% disagree and 30% agree (chi square [2, N=171]=35.024, p= .000). "Having my social justice work kept separate from the expression of my spiritual practice limits my growth and potential."(v=seplim) 80.5% of subjects who express their social justice work and spiritual work together agree and 13.8% disagree, while 49% of those who express them separately disagree 26.5% don't know and 24.5% agree with this statement (chi square [2, N=172]=48.285, p= .000).

Expressed Integration of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice

This section of the survey was also divided into two parts, G3 and G4. The first part includes questions focusing on the positive or beneficial outcomes of having an expressed integration of one's social justice work and spiritual practice. To test the internal reliability of this combination of statements, Cronbachs Alpha statistics was run: alpha=.899, n=180, N of items=4. The statement coded intclrex was removed in determining Cronbachs because it does not relate to a subject's feelings or interpretations of the integration of their social justice work and spiritual practice. It is, however, listed below to show the results. "I am whole when I can express both my spiritual practice and social justice work simultaneously."(v=intwhl) 87.8% of those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work together agree and 6.9% disagree. Among those who express theirs separately, 42% agree, 26% don't know and 32% disagree (chi square [2, N=181]=40.616, p=.000).

"Being able to express my social justice work and spiritual practice together makes me more effective in the social justice work that I do."(v=intsjbet) 86.5% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice together agree and 3.8% disagree with this statement. 4% of those who express theirs separately agree and 30% disagree with the statement (chi square [2, N=183]=40.744, p=.000), "The integration of my spiritual practice and social justice work helps me to have more peace in my life."(v=intpc) 94% of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice agree, 51% of those who express them separately also agree and 24.5% of them disagree with this statement.

“It would be clear to someone looking at me that I was expressing my spiritual practice and social justice work together.”(v=intclrex) Of those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work together 28.6% agree, 48.9 don’t know and 22.6% disagree with this statement. Among those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work separately, 15.7% agree, 27.5% don’t know and 56.9% disagree (chi square [2, N=184]=19.919, p=.000). " My spiritual practice has a deeper affect on me because I can express it together with my social justice work."(v=intspbet) 87% of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together agree and 2.3% disagree. Among those who express theirs separately, 37.5% agree and 43.8% disagree (chi square [2, N=179]=58.496, p=.000).

The second part of this section, G4, presented statements that interpreted this integration as negative or as having negative consequences. To test the internal reliability of this combination of statements, Cronbachs Alpha statistics was run: alpha=.811, n=184, N of items=5. "It is emotionally straining to express my spiritual practice and social justice work together."(v=intemo) 82% of respondents who express their social justice work and spiritual practice together disagree with this statement and 6.8% don’t know. Among those who express theirs separately, 60% disagree and 14% don’t know. "Sharing both my spiritual practice and social justice work with others is embarrassing."(v=intshem) 92.5% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice disagree with this statement and 4.5% don’t know. However, 74% of those who express theirs separately disagree and 18% don’t know.

"It is a bad strategy to mix my spiritual practice with my social justice work."(v=intbdstr) 95.5% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual

practice disagree with this statement and 3.8% don't know. Among those who express theirs separately, 53.8% disagree and 26.9% don't know if they agree or disagree with this statement. "Allowing myself to be seen expressing both my spiritual practice and my social justice work is difficult to do."(v=intsndiff) 80.2% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice disagree with this statement and 11.5% agree. Among those who express theirs separately, 41.2% disagree and 43.1% agree with this statement (chi square [2, N=182]=28.053, p=.000). "People would not take me seriously if I expressed my social justice work together with my spiritual practice."(v=intntser) 69.2% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice disagree with this statement and 7.5% agree. Among those who express theirs separately, 41.2% disagree and 33.3% agree with this statement (chi square [2, N=184]=21.519, p=.000).

The last statement in this survey that subjects were asked to respond to was to choose "separately" or "together" in response to "I express my spiritual practice and social justice work:" 71.7% of total respondents chose Together and 28.4% chose Separately. There were a total of 23 individuals who did not complete the survey.

Additional Analysis

I calculated the average responses within G1-G4 for those who express their social justice work and spiritual practice together and those who express theirs separately. For G1 (separation is good), of those who express their social justice work and spiritual practice separately, an average of approximately 49.02% disagreed, 25.04% agreed and 25.96% responded that they did not know if keeping theirs separate had positive correlations or consequences. For those who express their social justice work and

spiritual practice together, approximately 86% disagreed, 2.96% agreed and 10.9% answered that they did not know.

Within the statement group G2, (separation is bad) and among those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately, an average of 26.52% agreed, 19.28% did not know and approximately 54.22% disagreed that expressing their practices and justice work separately is not good. 73.42% of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together agreed that keeping them separate is bad, 11.88% did not know and 14.7% disagreed.

Within the statement group G3 (integration is good) and among those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately, 43.13% agree, 24.33% did not know and roughly 32.58% disagreed. Approximately 88.83% of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together agree, 7.2% do not know and 4% disagree with this statement group G3. 54.04% of those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work separately, disagree with the statement group G4 (integration is bad), 20.02% did not know and approximately 25.92% agree that there are negative feelings and/or consequences to expressing this integration. Among those who express theirs together, roughly 83.88% disagree with the statement group G4, 9.36% do not know and 6.82% agree.

I created two additional groups titled “Importance of being seen” and “Importance of community” to further explore specific areas of difference between those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice and those who express them separately. To test the in-group reliability of the first group, "being seen", Cronbachs alpha was run, $\alpha = .561$. If the statements with variables *inspir* and *intclrex* are

removed, the alpha increases to .61. This group was created to illuminate various responses to the occasions where an individual is seen or witnesses others expressing their spiritual practice and social justice work.

The first includes the following statements. “I have had an awakening moment that transformed me” (v=awake, no significant difference, 73.8% agree, 19.8% disagree), Seeing others expressing their spirituality and social justice work together inspires me (v=inspire, 94% of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice agree with this statement, and 0.7% disagree. Of those who express them separately, 80.8% agree and 13.5% disagree). “Being seen expressing my spiritual tradition causes me anxiety.” (v=spanx, significant difference, 76.3% of subjects who express their social justice work and spiritual practice together disagree and 18.3% agree. Among those who express them separately, 58% disagree and 30% agree with this statement (chi square [2, N=181]=6.31, p=.044)).

“While I am doing it, others could tell that I am engaging in a spiritual practice” (v=spseen, no significant difference, 44.2% agree, 22.7% disagree). “Being seen engaging in social justice work is embarrassing” (v= sjemb, no significant difference, 97.8% disagree). “It would be clear to someone looking at me that I was expressing my spiritual practice and social justice work together” (v= intclrex, significant differences, Of those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work together 28.6% agree, 48.9 don’t know and 22.6% disagree with this statement. Among those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work separately, 15.7% agree, 27.5% don’t know and 56.9% disagree (chi square [2, N=184]=19.919, p=.000)).

“Sharing both my spiritual practice and social justice work with others is embarrassing” ($v = \text{intshem}$, no chi square possible, 92.5% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice disagree with this statement and 4.5% don’t know. However, 74% of those who express theirs separately disagree and 18% don’t know). “Allowing myself to be seen expressing both my spiritual practice and social justice work is difficult to do” ($v = \text{intsndiff}$, significant differences, 80.2% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice disagree with this statement and 11.5% agree. Among those who express theirs separately, 41.2% disagree (chi square [2, N=182]=28.053, $p = .000$) and 43.1% agree with this statement). “People would not take me seriously if I expressed my social justice work together with my spiritual practice” ($v = \text{intntser}$, significant differences, 69.2% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice disagree with this statement and 7.5% agree. Among those who express theirs separately, 41.2% disagree (chi square [2, N=184]=21.519, $p = .000$) and 33.3% agree with this statement).

In order to test the internal validity of this grouping of statements, the Cronbach statistic was run for the group “Importance of community” and an alpha value of .31 was obtained. Since these did not have much validity as a group I looked at each question individually to see if there were any trends relating to feelings about one’s location in their community. There were no significant differences in three of the six statements (comdef, ances, and sjcomm) whether subjects express their social justice work and spiritual practices together or separately. The three questions in which there are no significant differences are: “Being a member of my community defines who I am” (90.4% agree), “I am my ancestors” (47.3% agree, 35.7% disagree), and “My social

justice work is expressed within a community setting” (92.5% agree). When analyzing the other three, no chi square tests could be run (healcom, spcomm, and intshem). The other three are: “My health and well being impacts my community” (90.4% of total subjects agree yet 9.4% of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately answered “I don’t know” compared to 1.5% of those who express theirs together), “My spiritual practice is expressed within a community setting” (40% of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately disagree and 60% agree. 19.2% of those who express theirs together disagree and 76.9% agree), “Sharing both my spiritual practice and social justice work with others is embarrassing” (92.5% of those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together disagree and 4.5% responded “I don’t know” compared to 74% of those who express theirs separately who disagreed and 18% who responded “I don’t know”).

When subjects respond to a statement in this survey, the majority either agree or disagree (though they could also choose "I don't know"). Subjects who express their social justice work together answer differently than those who express theirs separately. In 19 of 40 statements, those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice either agreed or disagreed more than 80% of the time. For example, for the statement, "Being able to express my social justice work and spiritual practice together makes me more effective in the social justice work that I do," 86.5% of respondents who express their justice work and spiritual practice together agree and 3.8% disagree.

This is in contrast to those who express their social justice and spiritual practice separately. This population only agreed or disagreed more than 80% of the time for 3 statements. For 17 of 40 statements, this population agreed or disagreed with a given

statement less than 50% of the time. For example, the statement, "Having my spiritual practice separate from my social justice work makes my social justice work more effective," had 45.1% subjects disagree, 29.4% didn't know and 25.5% subjects agree.

For those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together, 3 statements had the majority of subjects whose responses were consistent with each other <50% of the time, 3 which had the majority consistent 50-60%, 7 which had the majority consistent 61-70%, 8 which had the majority consistent 71-80% and 19 of 40 where the majority were answered consistently with each other >80% of the time.

For those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately, 17 statements had the majority of subjects answer consistently with each other <50% of the time, 9 which had the majority consistent 50-60%, 4 which had the majority consistent 61-70%, 4 which had the majority consistent 71-80% and 6 of 40 where the majority answered consistently with each other >80% of the time.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The original intent of this research is to study differences between those who express their spiritual/religious practices together with their progressive social justice work and those who keep separate the expression of their identities as a spiritual/religious person and a progressive social justice advocate/activist. My hypothesis is that there are greater perceived benefits and fewer perceived negative consequences in the lives, progressive social justice work and spiritual practices experienced by those who express their progressive social justice work and spiritual practices together than that experienced by those who express theirs separately. The data from this research confirms my hypothesis that there are significant differences between members of these populations. It also shows the areas that are not different between these two groups. It reveals information that is relevant to individuals, communities, and organizations concerning the effects of expressing progressive social justice work and spiritual practices either together or separately.

In creating the structure and the nature of the statements for this study I tried to be as unbiased as possible. I was successful, in that many subjects, regardless of how they answered, thought I skewed the statements in favor of one side or the other (I was “accused” of both), weighing the statements towards preferring those who express their integration separately or towards those who express their integration together. There

were also people who appreciated the survey, its statements, and the topics that were implicitly and explicitly addressed.

Some of the data confirmed that there were in fact two different populations that had distinct responses. However, there were trends that were surprising and that point to possible reasons for the differences. I will look at each section separately and then look at an overall picture of ways that this data can be understood.

Demographics

The data shows that there are significant differences in age, personal income and the degree that someone is involved in the Peace movement between those who separate their expression of their justice work from their spiritual practice and those who express them together. Those who express theirs together tend to be older and more likely to be involved in the Peace Movement. In terms of income, 1 in 5 of those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice make more than \$100,000 compared to 5% of those who express theirs together.

Dominant culture is peopled more by those who compartmentalize than by those who strive for the kind of expressed integration that is described in this research (Wilber, 2000; Krieglstein, 2006 (Lerner, 2000)). Those who make more than \$100,000 are successful in navigating through this. There may be a tendency for such people to have to keep their justice work separate from their spiritual practice in order to continue to navigate more fluidly. There was no literature found that relates the data relating age to how an individual expresses the integration of their progressive social justice work and spiritual practice.

Martin(2003) comments that due to the current historical conditions, those with great faith, a critique of current (militaristic) policies promoted by the State and who have little need for conformity in their spiritual practice, develop greater notions of justice for all people. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are some of the highest profile issues addressed within the social justice arena today. This would relate to the greater involvement in the Peace Movement by those who express their justice work and spiritual practices together.

While there are no significant differences in types of spiritual traditions practiced there are only two groups that had a larger numbers of individuals who express their justice work separately than those who express them together. This was contrary to what the literature did point to; that those being involved in nature based, indigenous and spiritual traditions as being more likely to have a seamless integration of their spiritual practices and social justice work (Pulido, 1998; Smith, 2006).

Not only were there no differences between those who had an indigenous practice compared to others but those who practice some form of Pagan/Nature worship or were Eclectic in their spiritual practice were more likely to keep it/them separate from their social justice work. This makes sense when one realizes that these particular spiritual practices tend to be marginalized and do not carry the weight/legitimacy of more mainstream practices or those that have been practiced for centuries. These individuals are likely to keep this knowledge private so as not to be further ostracized from their social justice networks and communities or to offend others.

“I think some people are scared of my pagan ideas. Also I believe that religion is more often a barrier between people than a way to bring those together for social change. I try to stay neutral in religious discussion due to my tendency to alienate

or offend others.” (Unless otherwise mentioned, all quotes come from the open-ended questions from this survey)

Interestingly enough, among those with a Buddhist practice, the percentage of respondents who express their justice work separately is exactly the same as those who express theirs together.

World View

The only significant difference within this section and between the two populations is in response to the statement of one’s spiritual practice being the same as one’s social justice work. It is no surprise that those who express their spiritual practice together with their social justice work are more likely to say that they were the same. This speaks to a consistency between their internal and expressed external integration of their spiritual practice and social justice work that respondents were conscious of.

Spiritual Practice

There is more anxiety associated with an individual’s spiritual practice among those who express it separately from their justice work. Lerner (2000) and Duerr (2003) illuminate the ways that progressives, who have a spiritual practice, can feel dismissed and marginalized by those within the progressive social justice community. This negative consequence is predicted by my hypothesis as a result of individuals expressing their progressive social justice work and spiritual practices separately. 1 in 4 of those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice is either not sure or disagrees that it can help cope with problems. This is interesting since Wilmore (1973), Lester (2006) and Kelly (2004) would assert that those who have a spiritual practice are able to use it to help cope with myriad difficulties in their lives. They are also more likely than those who express theirs together, to have practices that are private or solitary.

“My spiritual practice is in solitude and my social justice work is usually in community.” “My spiritual practice is so much of a casserole of different teachings -- I find myself a solo practitioner. And separating my social justice allows me to work with a diversity of people and practitioners.”

They do not generally believe that internal and spiritual changes are the most effective ways of making lasting societal change (only 32.1% think that they are).

Those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice are clearer and more direct about the benefits and place that spirituality plays in their lives. It seems to be something that is a source of strength, is shared with others and is viewed as valuable source to create lasting social change. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that those expressing their justice work and spiritual practice together would experience greater benefits of this type of expressed integration compared to those who express theirs separately.

Social Justice Work

The only reportable difference between the two populations is that those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice are more likely to do their justice work within a community. This conflicts with the fears expressed by those who express their justice work and spiritual practices separately. Duerr (2002), Lerner (2000) and Horwitz et al. (2005) speak of the ways that individuals report feeling ostracized when their spiritual practices are evident within social justice communities. While this is a valid internal experience, this data shows that for those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice, there is actually less internal dissonance and more involvement in community. They are able to be in their social justice community and express their spiritual practice.

*Separate Expression of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practices and Expressed
Integration of Social Justice Work and Spiritual Practice*

I have combined these sections because they address the fundamental differences between those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately with those who express theirs together. I will start with those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together because the data is straight forward. The data confirms that this population experiences their expressed integration as a positive and not negative experience and experiences keeping them separate as negative or having negative consequences with no positive component to it.

Those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together responded to statements concerning the positive aspects of keeping them separate (G1-separate is good and G4-together is bad) negatively and those statements concerning positive aspects of expressing them together (G2-separate is bad and G3-together is good) positively. It is to be expected that a given group would see that the way that they do things is positive and that behaving ways contrary to their beliefs isn't desired. One could assume that the converse would be true among those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately; that they would respond to statements concerning the positive aspects of keeping them separate(G1 and G4) positively and statements concerning the positive aspects of keeping them together negatively. However, this is not the case.

Among those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice, the majority of responses actually mirror that of the previous group. In general, those who express theirs separately disagree that expressing theirs separately is positive or has positive consequences and that expressing them together is negative or has

negative consequences. The majority also agrees that expressing them together is positive and has positive effects. This means that although they express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice, they actually see more benefit from expressing them together.

In responding to the statements about the negative aspect of expressing social justice work and spiritual practices separately, these subjects disagreed. They do not feel that expressing theirs separately is a negative thing or that it has negative consequences. This was the only category in which they responded as one might expect.

Additionally, the data shows that those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice are less confident or are less homogenous in their responses than those who express theirs together. The majority of those who express theirs together have rates of “agree” or “disagree” in 34 of 40 statements above 60%. This shows that regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed, the subjects within this group showed a greater consistency or confidence in their responses. This is in contrast to those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately. They only had a consistency of responses above 60% for 14 of 40 of all the statements.

Since there was no literature found describing the characteristics of these two populations based on how they express their social justice work and spiritual practices, that those who express theirs separately would respond in these ways is surprising. It confirms that there are significant differences between these populations and that these differences have a relationship between their views and the ways that they experience their own internal states.

Within each of these sections, 20-25% of respondents among those who express their progressive social justice work and spiritual practices separately responded “I don’t know.” Only 6-12% of those who express theirs together responded this way. Subjects who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice are not as sure in their responses as those who express theirs together. They seem to have more doubt or ambivalence about whether it is a positive or negative thing to express them separately. Those who express them together have clearer views and opinions about the impact that their expressed integration has in and on their lives.

This element of doubt is not found in the literature and its implications are yet to be explored. However, since this is not experienced by those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice (who is also experiencing greater benefits and fewer negative consequences due to their expression), it would seem that this doubt is either preventing some positive effect from occurring or is promoting some negative effect.

Summary

My hypothesis is that those who express their progressive social justice work together with their spiritual practice will report greater personal benefits and improved outcomes in both their justice work and spiritual practice due to this expression. The data show that they are more committed and confident in their views and choices, and are clearer about their benefits. It shows that they report fewer negative consequences of expressing them together, and while all participants felt that social justice work was the most effective route to lasting change, a significant percentage *also* believed in the ability to make lasting change through spiritual channels and internal changes. This mirrors the

ways that people have seen the internal integration of their justice work and spiritual practice lead to their own transformation and inspires them that such transformations are possible for other individuals and societies (Ingram, 2003). These individuals also identify negative effects of expressing their social justice work and spiritual practice separately.

While there were significant differences in the strength of their responses, all subjects were consistent in that they generally feel that a) expressing their justice work and spiritual practice together has positive affects, b) that there are few negatives to expressing them together, and c) that there are few positive benefits from expressing them separately. While these results are expected from those who express their justice work and spiritual practices together it is not expected from those who express theirs separately. It confirms that social justice work has its own benefits that are separate from spiritual practices (Aponte, 1999) and that spiritual practices have their own benefits that are separate from social justice work (Kelly, 2004). This also confirms my hypothesis relative to what Duerr (2003), Horwitz et al. (2005) and Lerner (2000) discuss, that overall benefits are perceived by expressing together, the internal integration that is experienced by such people. All subjects responding in this way evidence this.

If these groups were mutually exclusive and distinct, in terms of how they see the interplay of having a spiritual practice and engaging in social justice work, than those who express theirs separately would have responded consistently. This group would have responded in the opposite direction to a), b) and c) as those who express their justice work and spiritual practice together. Where they differ most significantly in direction of response, is that those that express their justice work and spiritual practice together feel

that there are significant negatives to expressing them separately (which is to be expected), and those who express theirs separately feel that there are few negative consequences related to expressing them separately (also to be expected).

Those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice see the benefits of expressing them together and strongly feel that there are few negatives with expressing them separately. In all instances, those who express them together strongly believe in its benefits, while those who express them separately agree that there are more benefits to expressing them together yet have significant doubt in being able to tell if there are advantages or disadvantages to any particular strategy.

As seen in the data, those who express them separately worry more what others think, feel more anxiety about showing their spiritual practice, and feel that they will not be taken seriously if others see their expression of both their justice work and spiritual practice. Since all participants report almost no negative feelings about being seen engaging in social justice work (97.8%), I would infer that it is due to the concern that others can see their spiritual practice that leads to this fear of not being taken seriously. Despite the amount of anxiety, doubt and worry about others being able to see their spiritual practice, less than half of them are sure that others even can tell that they are doing their spiritual practice. Yet subjects report:

“Embarrassment or anxiety about what "secular" peers think of my particular spiritual practice.” “...it feels odd mixing social justice and "church".” “When I feel that my spiritual tradition is not in line with my social justice work (i.e. the parts of my tradition that do not welcome homosexuality), I divide the two. When one will hamper rather than reinforce the other, I separate them.” “Only if my spirituality might negatively affect the social justice message I'm attempting to spread. Since some forms of (fundamentalist) Christianity is offensive to some people, it may be necessary to sequester my spiritual practices in order to be more effective.” “My spiritual practice is so much of a casserole of different teachings

-- I find myself a solo practitioner. And separating my social justice allows me to work with a diversity of people and practitioners” “I fear that I may alienate others with my spiritual practice or that my message comes from my religious group only and may be discarded or not taken seriously.”

It follows that those who express theirs together have had the experience of expressing them separately and found ways to change and express them together.

Whether they have or not, they currently are able to reap benefits not encountered by those who keep them separate. In fact many of the concerns of those noted by those who express them separately are resolved among those who express them together.

...”because I have been on a healing journey - realizing that separating these parts of my being leads to burnout. and a burnt out activist is not effective. and when I practice and connect with spirit I am more creative, clear and happy. and this also benefits my change work.” “I see them as ultimately an expression of the same thing” “They lend themselves to one another and make both practices more complete.” “What's tricky about these questions for me is that there are important ways that spiritual work/consciousness/practice informs, is connected with, enlivens, calms, gives meaning & purpose to, my social justice work - lots of ways together. The spiritual component helps keep me sane, gentle, loving, compassionate, and hopefully not too self-righteous or divisive in my social justice advocacy, coalition building. The social justice or engagement addition to my spirituality helps me stay engaged in the world, and avoids the spiritual practice becoming isolated, narcissistic, vague.” “Because when I was doing "straight" activism I was surrounded by folks who were not taking care of themselves and were very angry; I too was displaying these qualities. I needed spirituality and creativity to experience the joy empowering me to then deal with the work to be done.”

Individuals report a greater difficulty in bringing their spiritual practice into their justice work and not their justice work into their spiritual practice. They write:

“If I were to yell out loud or begin to cry while meditating at work I would not feel supported in my environment. Even if I practice quiet meditation I would be fearful that someone may walk in my office and this may feel strange (I also share an office with someone)” and “Particularly in the most radical circles in which I travel, like in anti-capitalist circles and in queer rights circles, I find it is difficult to assert my spiritual beliefs...It is interesting to me that being out as a queer feminist in a synagogue feels more safe than being out as a Jew against the occupation of Palestine.”

It seems that the majority of those who express their justice work together with their spiritual practice wrote that their spiritual practice informs, inspires, and/or is the foundation for their social justice work. It is interesting that not many expressed the flip side; that their social justice work informs or inspires their spiritual practice. This illuminates the crux of the differences between those who express theirs separately or together. Social justice work is exceptionally strong in both groups and provides structure, community and agency in the world. However, the spiritual practices of those who express theirs together seem to offer a clarity and support that is missing from those who express theirs separately. Since spiritual practices inform individuals' social justice work, strengthening one's spiritual practice would lead to strengthening one's justice work.

Although there was no evidence found in the literature, this finding disconfirms an element of my hypothesis that, in regards to demographics, there are few differences between those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work separately and those who express theirs together. There is little demographic difference between those who express their social justice work together with their spiritual practice and those who express theirs separately.

The primary difference between those who express their spiritual practice and social justice work together and those who express theirs separately is the role that their spiritual practice plays in their life. Those who express theirs together have strong and clear feelings about the ways that their spiritual practice is a positive factor that impacts many other aspects of their lives. It is also seen as a legitimate way to affect social change. Those who express theirs separately feel it is a private matter and are less sure of

the impact of their spiritual practice on helping them and feel less sure that it can be a source that leads to lasting societal change.

“I was raised with the cultural expectation that one should keep their spiritual beliefs private.” “My focus in my social justice work is to allow those that I work with to have the freedom to fully express who they are, rather than focusing on me fully expressing who I am. I am still exploring how my spiritual practice can be an enormous asset to my work or how it may be detrimental.”

This is interesting since the criteria for participating in this survey is having both a spiritual practice and engaging in social justice work, I would expect more doubt about the internal and external efficacy of spiritual practices among those who don't have one at all. It seems that expressing them separately, for whatever reason, has a greater negative impact on the ways that ones spiritual practice can actually be a benefit (to individuals and society) when compared to those who express them together.

It is as though, as a group, those who express them separately either do so to avoid conflict (internal and/or external) or because they have not found ways to express them together. This can be based on internal obstacles, lack of community support, or that they feel it would be detrimental to their social justice work (which is also their primary avenue for social change). As I mentioned in the Literature Review, there are beliefs held within the progressive, social justice community that feel that it is not only inappropriate but actually detrimental to progressive social justice work to include spirituality or spiritual practices. Such a culture that is antagonistic to spiritual practices can negatively affect those who do have a practice and are involved in such communities. It seems that individuals tend to censor themselves for fear of how it will be perceived.

“...sometimes a public expression of my spiritual practice is not appropriate in my community work, I don't hide who I am but I don't always make it part of what I do in an outward way, it would be off putting or offensive to others .” “If

they aren't as committed to awakening as they are to liberation for all people, I can't really envision being vulnerable to them spiritually.”

Those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately were the most reactive in their responses to statements that paired expressing separately with a negative outcome. It is as though, on one hand, they are defensive about having a spiritual practice stating, “There are no negative consequences or feelings related to it,” yet they did not feel as strongly about claiming positive effects of expressing them separately. It is as though they are particularly sensitive about this (which makes sense if they have internalized the view that spirituality is an opiate of the masses, that they won't be taken seriously, or that it will alienate others) yet do not believe at some level in its inherent efficacy.

However, this research shows that both populations believe in the efficacy of expressing progressive social justice work together with spiritual practices. This follows with Aponte (1999) and Kelly's (2004) notion that there are benefits derived from engaging in progressive social justice work and having a spiritual practice. It further points to greater perceived internal and external benefits and fewer detriments by expressing these two aspects together than by expressing them separately. It also illuminates the internal anxiety experienced by many of those who express them separately. By knowing and facing the things that do not support such explicit integration, individuals can decide if they will listen to that voice that says no, or find ways of saying yes.

Conclusion

The progressive social justice community needs to accept that spiritual practices can be helpful to practitioners and movements in helping to create sustainable individual and societal change. Regardless, individuals and communities need to find the strength and support to explicitly integrate and express their justice work and spiritual practices together. Doing so by strengthening their relationship to their spiritual practice can alleviate the negative results that they perceive and may help them see more benefits to the social justice work that they are doing.

It may not mean doing more, but doing different to change the way their spiritual practice impacts their life. Finding a community of spiritual practitioners, finding activists who are working at integrating their spiritual practice with their social justice work or by sharing it with others (coming out, so to speak) and owning it in a different way, are ways of putting into practice what is productive and transformative. As mentioned previously, there are many organizations that are working at helping activists develop, cultivate and integrate their spiritual practice with their social justice work. Doing so would serve you, your community, your organization and society to create lasting, sustainable and progressive change.

The majority of individuals (almost 2 to 1) who responded to this study identified themselves as expressing their justice work and spiritual practice together. However, I am leery at saying that this is typical of all of those who would fit the criteria of this study. While sending out links to this survey I received several responses from those expressing doubt about their being “spiritual enough” or “involved enough” in social justice work. When I directed them to the survey itself and a description of the requirements they often found that they were eligible to participate in the study.

Looking at this phenomenon after seeing the data and the amount of doubt that those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice experience, I am curious to know how many people listened more to the doubt and the internal voice that said “no, I am not enough”, without reading the criteria and did not take the survey. Doubt seems to be another theme throughout this research that is different depending on one’s form of expressing one’s spiritual practice and social justice work.

An important factor in this study is that while there are relevant differences between those who express their spiritual practices and social justice work separately and those who express theirs together, they mostly occur in differences in the strength or surety of responses and less often in the direction itself. In other words, subjects will vary more often in whether 90% agree compared to 52% agree. In each case the majority agrees, but in the latter there is more doubt evidenced overall. This is important since the majority of subjects responded in the direction of those who express their justice work and spiritual practices together.

Those who express their justice work separately from their spiritual practice experience more doubt as to the efficacy of their spiritual practice. This gets in the way of experiencing the physical, mental and emotional benefits and personal transformations that are derived from a spiritual practice. Without having a spiritual practice that is meaningful to themselves, there is no way for it to effect anything more than cursory aspects of the individual and will certainly not lead to the inner transformations that can effect more significant personal, interpersonal and even societal changes.

It is interesting to note that there are no significant differences between those who express their justice work and spiritual practice separately or together based on

gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity or spiritual/religious practices. I would posit that it is more important what one does than how one self-identifies. While how we self-identify is important and has real world implications and consequences, it does not lead to one having more or less doubt about one's spiritual practice and social justice work and their impact on our selves, communities, organization and societies.

From cultures where there were no conscious divisions between progressive social justice work and spiritual practices, through the Enlightenment period in the "West", where divisions were emphasized and developed separately, through the development of non-violent resistance with Gandhi and figures such as MLK Jr. and currently with Thich Naht Hahn, the notion that ones spiritual practice can and should be expressed together with ones progressive social justice work is again on the rise. This quantitative research supports the current qualitative research and organizing done by such groups as The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, White Earth Land Recovery Project, Stone Circles, Movement Strategy Center, Spirit in Action, Network of Spiritual Progressives, etc. It supports the work that innumerable churches, synagogues, mosques, meetings, temples, formal and informal gatherings and individuals have privately and publicly done.

They are all working in their particular ways to consciously bring together spiritual practices and progressive social justice work in a manner that honors and transforms individuals, institutions and society for the betterment of all beings. I hope that this can be one more voice supporting and contributing to the work that is being done by countless individuals and organizations to bring about progressive and multidimensional change. The profession of Social Work can join this movement in

continuing to re-imagine itself as a place where the integration of the many facets of human existence and experience are valued, promoted and developed. As clinical social workers that will sit with myriad manifestations of the separation of body, mind and spirit, we can, by recognizing, naming and encouraging the need for reconnection, facilitate and bear witness to progressive change.

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Appendix A

Human Subjects Review Application

Investigator name: Enroue Halfkenny
Project Title: Implications for those able to explicitly express their spiritual practice together with their social justice work.

Contact Address:

Contact Phone:

E-mail Address: ehalfken@smith.edu

Project Purpose and Design

This project will look at adults who have both a spiritual or religious practice and are engaged in social justice work. Using a mixed methods design, I will specifically be studying the differences between those whose spiritual practice and social justice work are kept separate and distinct from each other and those whose spiritual practices and social justice work are expressed together. Participants will be asked to fill out a survey consisting of approximately 40 statements using a 5 point Likert type scale which includes several open ended questions at the end.

Significant leaders in social justice movements often have an explicit spiritual practice that is expressed together with social justice work that they are involved in: Mohandas Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, the XIVth Dalai Lama, Harriet Tubman, Fanny Lou Hamer, and others. Consequently, I am interested in the ways that such integration may lead to greater effectiveness in social justice work and/or deeper and stronger spiritual growth and development.

There is some qualitative research that gives voice to the ways that people find benefits from both a spiritual practice and are engaged in social justice work. However, there are no quantitative studies in general and none specifically that investigates the differences between those whose practices are kept separate and those whose practices are explicitly integrated and expressed together.

The findings from this project could show that having a spiritual practice and social justice work that is expressed together has greater a net benefit than having them expressed separately. There could be personal and individual benefits as well as strategic and systemic benefits. Organizations such as Stone Circles, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and Spirit in Motion assist individuals and institutions integrate social justice work and spirituality and are interested in the results of this project as further evidence of the importance of this integration and thus of the work that they are doing. They have provided assistance in formulating the survey and in conceptualizing the issues of integrating progressive social justice work with spiritual practices. Organizations and individuals that I have consulted with concerning this research have expressed an interest in receiving a copy of my completed thesis.

The relevance and benefits of this research could be another example of the importance of spirituality in an individual's life and the continued need for it to be fully integrated into the current biopsychosocial lens (becoming a biopsychosocialspiritual lens) used in the framework of the field of social work. This research explores the benefits of the integration of an individual's spiritual practice and progressive social justice work. The results may offer credence to the growing general trend within the Social Work profession of explicitly acknowledging spirituality as a relevant subject in individual's and communities lives.

This research will be used to fulfill the requirements for my MSW Thesis at Smith College's School for Social Work. The data may also be used by the organizations mentioned earlier for educational and/or funding purposes.

The Characteristics of the Participants

Subjects must be over the age of 18, participate in progressive social justice work and have a spiritual or religious practice as defined below. Participants younger than 18 years of age, those who have a spiritual practice but are not engaged in social justice, those who are engaged in social justice work but do not have a spiritual practice, and those who have neither are excluded from participating in this research. Through the use of Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, I hope to have at least 100 respondents to my research.

Progressive social justice work is defined, for the purposes of this study, as engaging in activities to promote progressive changes in social, economic or environmental issues for the betterment of people and the planet. These activities or organizations must be open to having diverse membership, a respect for all, and openness for cultural, religious and political pluralism. Social justice work includes, but is not limited to, participation in: letter writing campaigns, community organizing, fundraising for social justice organizations, demonstrations, rallies, educational programs, consciousness raising groups, advocacy, policy development and implementation, direct action, discussion groups, etc.

Definitions of spirituality are as numerous as there are expressions of it. For this study, spiritual practices include, but are not limited to, practices that help people connect with: notions of a greater self, ways of being mindful, compassionate actions, that which is sacred, their creative expression or process, God(s)/Goddess(es)/Gaia/the Absolute/Allah/Buddha/the Creator/Orisa/Ancestors/etc.. This may be expressed through: prayer, ritual, meditation and other contemplative practices, trance, singing, dance, ceremony, spirit possession, artistic expression (writing, sculpture, playing music, etc.).

Recruitment Process

I will be sending individuals and organizations an email with a link to the online survey. The targeted organizations are those whose missions or practices work with people who are integrating their social justice work with their spiritual practice. They will be identified by reviewing the current literature and by referral from organizations and individuals that I have already contacted: Stone Circles, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, Spirit in Action, Henry Lowendorf of the New Haven Peace Council, Interfaith Cooperative Ministries and others. Individuals who fit criteria will be identified based on the literature, referrals by organizations, and personal knowledge of their spiritual practices and social justice work. In addition to the initial contact, I will be using a snowball method to increase the number of participants, asking individuals to forward the link to any other individuals or organizations that they feel would fit criteria.

The Nature of Participation

Participants will be asked to open a link to the survey via survey monkey. They will be able to give consent electronically if they fit criteria and want to participate in the research. Participants will then fill out a 41 statement survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. This will consist of 40 statements using a Likert type scale and one open-ended question that participants will use a text box to write their response in.

Risks of Participation

This research asks participants to think and share personal information about their spiritual practices and the social justice work that they are engaged in. Some individuals may have responses that trigger feelings of incompleteness, depressive or other negative feelings concerning their satisfaction with decisions that they have made or are making in expressing who they are.

The statements in the survey are meant to illicit thoughtful responses concerning deep and personal issues. While some may not have issue with the topics that are brought up, a person's spiritual practices, beliefs and social justice work are fundamental elements of the participants identities and there may be deep issues that have not been resolved in their lives. For this reason, I will provide national reference contact information to ensure that participants have resources to help them cope with issues that may arise.

Benefits of Participation

Participating in this research has many benefits. Those completing the survey will gain insight into their own circumstances concerning the integration of their spiritual practice and social justice work. They will also be contributing to growing data, which explores results of having these practices exist together in the individual and which may lead to more effective strategies in social justice work and a deeper felt experience with their spiritual practices.

The data from this research may also be used by organizations active in helping individuals and institutions further deepen their engagement and commitment to social

justice work and are striving to help people develop practices that link their deepest and most profound beliefs in life to positive and progressive actions for social change.

Informed Consent

Informed consent will be obtained by providing a letter of consent at the start of the survey. This letter will be the first page of the electronic survey. By continuing with the survey and answering questions the participant is consenting to their answers being used in the research. They will have the opportunity to end their participation in the survey at any time. If they do so all information will be erased.

Precautions Taken to Safeguard Confidentiality and Identifiable Information

All identifying information will be encrypted by Survey Monkey, the host website, such that individual responses will not be traceable to individual people, organizational affiliations, individual computers or networks. In any case the information will remain confidential and stored as per federal guidelines for three years unless needed.

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Greetings,

Thank you for participating in this survey. My name is Enroue Halfkenny and I am currently a graduate student at the Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a research study that seeks to understand the ways that people do or do not express their spiritual and religious practices and their social justice work together. The data that will be collected in this survey will be used for my Masters in Social Work thesis, and may also be presented in later educational or general media publications.

In this research, the terms "spiritual practice" and "progressive social justice work" are used. The definitions of these terms are as follows. Spiritual practices include, but are not limited to, practices that help people connect with: notions of a greater self, ways of being mindful, compassionate actions, that which is sacred, their creative expression or process, God(s)/Goddess(es)/Gaia/the Absolute/Allah/Buddha/the Creator/Orisa/Ancestors/etc.. This may be expressed through: prayer, ritual, meditation and other contemplative practices, trance, singing, dance, ceremony, spirit possession, and/or artistic expression (writing, sculpture, playing music, etc.).

Progressive social justice work promotes diversity, pluralism, respect for all people, social and economic justice and/or respect or protections for the environment. Social justice work includes, but is not limited to, participation in: letter writing campaigns, community organizing, fundraising for progressive social justice organizations, demonstrations, rallies, educational programs, consciousness raising

groups, advocacy, policy development and implementation, direct action, discussion groups, et al. If you are at least 18 years old, identify yourself as having a spiritual or religious practice and are involved in progressive social justice work, please complete the survey. If you are younger than the age of 18, have a spiritual practice but are not engaged in progressive social justice work, are engaged in progressive social justice work but do not have a spiritual practice, or have neither, you are excluded from participation in this research.

This survey consists of 40 statements that you will rate according to your experiences. At the end of the survey is an opportunity to add additional comments that you feel would be helpful for me to know about your personal story. This survey should take approximately 15 minutes.

By taking part in this survey you may experience discomfort or stress by thinking about the ways that you do or do not get support in expressing yourself. If you find that you are experiencing unusual and disturbing amounts of distress during or after completing this survey and would like to talk to someone please call either of these national suicide hotlines: 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE) or 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK). By participating in this survey, you are contributing to a greater understanding of progressive social justice work and spirituality.

All identifying information will be removed after you complete this survey. The answers to the questions will not be able to be traced to you, your location, your organization, or the computer you used. The individual data will be seen and interpreted by me, my advisor, and the research staff at Smith College. Excerpts from the question at the end of the survey may also be used in the thesis document. All data will be kept in a

secure location for three years, as required by federal law. Should I require the data materials beyond that time, they will remain in a secure location until no longer needed.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. You may simply exit the survey without submitting it, and all information pertaining to you will be erased. You will be required to answer every question to complete the survey, but if you do not submit the survey at the end of the questionnaire your information will not be collected or used in any way. If you have any additional questions concerning your rights or this study, you may contact me at ehafken@email.smith.edu, or the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at 413-585-7974.

BEGINNING THIS SURVEY INDICATES 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.

Thank you for your time.
Blessings,
Enroue Halfkenny
MSW Student
Smith College School for Social Work
ehalfken@smith.edu

Appendix C

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3TXeRLWijTAJYw_2bx4As_2bjg_3d_3d

Greetings,

My name is Enroue Halfkenny and I am currently a graduate student at the Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a research study that seeks to understand the ways that people do or do not express their spiritual and religious practices and their social justice work together. I am interested in the situations and circumstances that either support the integrated expression of these or inhibit them. When do you feel that you can express both and why? And when do you feel that you cannot, and why? The data that will be collected in this survey will be used for my Masters in Social Work thesis, and may also be presented in later educational or general media publications.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3TXeRLWijTAJYw_2bx4As_2bjg_3d_3d

In order to participate in this research you must be an over the age of 18, be involved in some kind of progressive social justice work and have a spiritual practice. If you are interested in participating in this research, please click on the link provided. If you know of anyone who would be interested in this as well, please forward this email to them. At the start of the survey is a consent form that will provide additional details and contact information to each participant. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Blessings,

Enroue Halfkenny
MSW Candidate
Smith College School for Social Work
ehalfken@smith.edu

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3TXeRLWijTAJYw_2bx4As_2bjg_3d_3d

Appendix D

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3TXeRLWijTAJYw_2bx4As_2bjg_3d_3d

Greetings,

My name is Enroue Halfkenny and I am currently a graduate student at the Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a research study that seeks to understand the ways that adults, over the age of 18, do or do not express their spiritual and religious practices and their social justice work together. I am interested in the situations and circumstances that either support the integrated expression of these or inhibit them. When do you feel that you can express both and why? And when do you feel that you cannot, and why? The data that will be collected in this survey will be used for my Masters in Social Work thesis, and may also be presented in later educational or general media publications.

Your organization has come to my attention because the population that you serve would fit the criteria for my study. Confidentiality and anonymity are provided for those who participate in this survey. Data will be de-identified such that a participant's responses are not traceable to individuals, their computers, networks, or their organizations. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to forward the link to this survey to the members of your organization or to others who would be interested in participating, or forward the letter of introduction that I have attached to this email which includes the link to the survey as well. At the start of the survey is a consent form that will provide additional details and contact information to each participant.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3TXeRLWijTAJYw_2bx4As_2bjg_3d_3d

I understand that you may have some reluctance to using your database or listserv for such a survey. If you have any such concerns please contact me so that I could alleviate them or answer any questions that you may have. My email address is ehalfken@smith.edu, and I would be happy to further describe my research and answer additional questions that you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Blessings,

Enroue Halfkenny
MSW Candidate
Smith College School for Social Work
ehalfken@smith.edu

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3TXeRLWijTAJYw_2bx4As_2bjg_3d_3d

Appendix E

November 28, 2007

Enroue Halfkenny

Dear Enroue,

Your revised materials have been reviewed and you have done a fine job. All is now in order and we are happy to give final approval to your interesting study.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain signed consent 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 project. I hope you get lots of participants.

Sincerely,

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

CC: Elaine Kersten, Research Advisor