STUDY ABROAD AND VALUES DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

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Abstract:

This article presents results of a qualitative study of values development in U.S. and Scottish social work students who participated in a study-abroad program. Six themes emerged: opening the mind to new ways of thinking; awareness and insight into one's own values and beliefs; social awareness and challenges to societal values and beliefs; appreciation of difference, cultural sensitivity, and anti-discriminatory practice; social justice; and professional identity development. Implications for social work study-abroad programs and future research are discussed.

Article:

The development of professional values has historically been identified as an important aspect of the evolution of professional identity and socialization for social work students (Towle, 1954; Reamer, 1999). Social work education programs encourage students to examine and understand their own values as well as learn to apply the values and ethics of the profession. Traditionally, social work students have been challenged to examine both personal and professional values within the context of academic course work and field experiences. The purpose of this article is to explore how a study-abroad experience affected students with respect to their personal and professional values. The author describes the findings related to values development from a larger qualitative study of how social work students perceive their study-abroad experience to affect them, both personally and professionally.

Literature Review

Literature in three areas is relevant to this study: social work values, values development in social work, and study abroad.

Social Work Values

The National Association of Social Workers (NAS'W, 1999) Code of Ethics cites six core social work values on which effective and responsible practice is based: Service, Social Justice, Dignity and Worth of the Person, Importance of Human Relationships, Integrity, and Competence. These values are each defined in ethical principles and explicated more fully in the Code of Ethics. The seven ethical principles require social workers to "help people in need and to address social problems; .. . challenge social justice; . . . respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person; . . . recognize the central importance of human relationships; ... behave in a trustworthy manner [integrity], . . . and practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise" (Ethical Principles Section).

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW, 2001) Code of Ethics for Social Work is very similar to the NASW Code. The BASW Code outlines five core values and principles: Human Dignity and Worth, Social Justice, Service to Humanity, Integrity, and Competence. The NASW value of the Importance of Human Relationships has no parallel in the British code.

Pumphrey (1959), who authored a landmark study of social work values that served as the basis for Council on

Social Work Education (CSVVE) curriculum requirements around values and ethics, defined values as "formulations of preferred behaviors held by individuals or social groups. They imply a usual preference for certain means, ends, and conditions of life, often being accompanied by strong feeling" (p. 23). Rokeach (1968) noted that values have motivational, cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. It is the behavioral component of values that is addressed in codes of ethics that guide professional practice. Towle (1954) linked the affective components of values with practice behavior when she emphasized the importance of developing "feelings and attitudes that will make it possible for the student to think and act appropriately" (p. 8). The universal recognition within the profession of the importance of professional values development is evident in the CSVVE (2001) requirement that all social work programs include content on social work values and ethics in their curricula.

Values Development in Social Work Education

Reamer (1999) has asserted that social work values must be at the center of social work education. Noting that personal values have a great influence on how students view clients and the work they do with clients, Reamer emphasized the importance of social work students clarifying their personal values in relation to the values of the profession. An important function of social work education is to facilitate the process of professional values development, which requires students to engage in self-reflection with respect to both their personal and professional values. This process of values development is a part of socialization into the social work profession that begins within the educational context, but which is an ongoing process.

Bargal (1981) proposed a five-stage model of social values development as a part of the socialization process for social work and other human service professions. According to this model, many factors affect values development, both before and after exposure to social work education. Before a student enrolls, antecedent factors such as socioeconomic background, early life experiences, and personality factors, as well as anticipatory socialization that occurs before a student actually enrolls in a social work program, influence values. Once students graduate and begin work, Bargal asserts that work in a bureaucratic organization and crystallization of a professional world view affect values development. During the third stage, the professional training period, this model suggests that social work educators can influence the development of students' values in two ways: "accentuation of values brought by the student" and by helping students acquire "structures and new combinations of values and world views" (p. 48). While Bargal acknowledges that the process of professional values development is ongoing, his model emphasizes the role social work education can play in that process.

Haynes's (1999) model for teaching social work values places great importance on helping students integrate four dimensions of values: personal, social, political, and professional values. There is evidence to suggest that exposure to content on professional values as well as engagement in activities that facilitate student self-awareness and reflection on their personal values in relation to the values of the profession can have a positive effect on the development of professional values (Royse & Riffe, 1999). Social work educators teach values and ethics through a variety of instructional and learning techniques that address the motivational, cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of values. Such strategies include lecture, role-play, discussion, games, case studies, and field experience (Black, Congress, & Strom-Gottfried, 2002; Haynes, 1999; Jordan, Karban, Mansoor, Masson, & O'Byrne, 1993; Koerin, 1977).

The literature suggests that study abroad allows students to examine their own values, world views, and cultures (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990; Carlson & Wi-daman, 1988; Sell, 1983). Therefore, it would seem that a study-abroad experience designed specifically for social work students and aimed at highlighting similarities and differences in culture, values, and world views would be particularly beneficial for both personal and professional values development.

Study Abroad

Study abroad has a long and valued tradition in undergraduate liberal arts education (Bowman, 1987). Carlson, Burn, Useem, and Yachimowicz (1990) report that students who study abroad benefit in many ways, including

increased commitment to peace and international cooperation; greater interest in transnational affairs; greater emphasis on international understanding; greater empathy of the viewpoint of other nations; improvements in their general learning style; a greater degree of intellectuality; an enhanced academic style; improved work habits; and greater persistence. Until recently, however, there has been little interest in study-abroad programs specifically for social work majors or graduate students.

The past 10 years has seen increasing attention to international social work (McMahon, 1994). One of the outgrowths of this interest has been a growing number of baccalaureate social work programs that offer a wide variety of study-abroad opportunities (Johnson, 1996). However, the literature has yet to keep pace with these developments in social work education, and little effort has been made to formally study the impact of such programs on students.

In reflecting on the study-abroad experience of a group of social work students participating in an international seminar in Lapland, Witkin (1999) observed that students "learned a great deal both in and out of class—not just facts, but the reflective and reflexive learning that comes from . . . questioning, in the face of others' lived experience, what they had taken for granted" (p. 414). Witkin noted that students began to realize that social problems such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, and violence "do not stop at the borders of different countries" and that exposure to how other countries are dealing with such issues "stimulates new ideas and visions of what it means to be a social worker" (p. 414). While Witkin's comments are encouraging, they are based on anecdotal observations rather than empirical study.

In an article describing an international internship for BSW students in Mexico City, Krajewski-Jaime, Brown, Sifter, and Kaufman (1996) offered a conceptual framework for understanding how students move through stages of acceptance of a culture other than their own. They also provided an anecdotal assessment of the experience, based on use of the Inter-cultural Sensitivity Scale throughout the 7-week program and review of student reflective logs. However, the small sample size (n =11) and lack of explanation of research methodology were serious limitations of this study.

In the only evaluation of the impact of a social work study-abroad program located, Boyle, Nackerud, and Kilpatrick (1999) reported an increase in cultural competence for two groups of faculty and students who participated in a program in Veracruz, Mexico. Using the Multi-cultural Counseling Awareness Scale (MCAS) as a pre- and post-test, the authors found an increase in participants' knowledge of multicultural issues, skills relating across cultures, and awareness of cultural distinctive-ness. Analysis of qualitative data from reflective journals revealed participants' perceptions of the elements of the experience that had an impact on them, including the social diversity they found, the demands of living in a foreign country, exposure to social work education and practice in Mexico, and being in a society where the basic unit is the family.

The literature cited above suggests that study abroad offers a unique opportunity for students to confront both differences and similarities in many aspects of culture and values, as well as develop specific skills in multicultural competence, which is an important component of ethical social work practice. Yet we have little empirical evidence to support this view.

Comparative Study of Social Policy and Social Work in the United States and Scotland: A Study-Abroad Course

In 1987, two social work departments, one in North Carolina and one in Glasgow, Scotland, began a program that features alternate-year exchanges of faculty and students. One purpose of this program is to enable students to compare social services, policy, and social work practice in the two countries, with a view toward understanding their own system better and learning about alternative approaches to social problems. A second purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to experience a culture different from their own as a way to promote personal growth, enhance their cultural sensitivity, and expand their world views.

The program began with U.S. baccalaureate social work students and Scottish diploma and undergraduate

students, but has since expanded to include U.S. master's-level students. An explanation about social work education in Scotland is in order, as their system differs from that of the United States. Until recently, it was not necessary to have an undergraduate degree to become qualified as a social worker in Scotland. Students who wanted a social work qualification could either attend a social work training program full time for 2 years and receive a diploma or take the 2-year diploma course in conjunction with 1 year of additional education and receive an undergraduate degree in social work. Scottish students enrolled in both types of programs participated in the study abroad course over the years. However, with the increased attention to professionalism in Scotland, in recent years the diploma programs have begun to disappear, and students are enrolled in social work undergraduate degree programs. Beginning in 2004, the required qualification to practice social work in Scot-land was a 4-year honor's degree. In Scotland, the master's degree is a research degree, not a practice degree, and no Scottish master's degree students participated in this course.

The course, which is co-taught by faculty from each social work department, involves a combination of lecture, discussion, and exercises, in addition to agency visits for the foreign students. Course requirements include keeping a weekly journal of their reflections on the learning and experiences that are occurring; a final summative reflective paper; and a group presentation that compares services, policy, and practice in the two countries for a particular problem or vulnerable population. The U.S. students receive a grade for the course, but thus far the Scottish students have not, due to the highly prescribed nature of their curriculum that has little room for elective courses.

When the course is held in the United States, both U.S. and Scottish students participate in a 3-credit-hour class during the summer, and the Scottish students also participate in a program of agency visitation. When the course is held in Scotland, only U.S. students participate because there is no summer social work program at the Scottish university. However, the U.S. students also participate in a program of agency visitation in Scotland, and both groups of students engage in social activities with students and professors from the host country. The class meets for 4 weeks, 4 days a week for 3 hours, leaving the students with long weekends to travel and explore the culture of the country they are visiting. Group visits to local cultural sites are also included early in the program to facilitate group bonding and to help students develop a level of comfort in exploring the host country.

Between 1996 and 2001, 29 U.S. and 16 Scottish students participated in the program. The focus of the course has varied somewhat over the years; however, there has always been an emphasis on at-risk children, youth, and families. In 2001, the course content was expanded to include other at-risk and vulnerable populations including elderly persons and persons with mental illness. Regardless of the specific course focus, there has always been an emphasis on the relationship between cultural values and social policy, issues of diversity and cultural competence, and social work ethics in both countries.

Through readings, lectures, and class discussions, students learn how the values of each culture contribute to differences in social policy, legislation, and social work practice. Field visits to agencies also allow students to identify underlying philosophies and values that contribute to program development and social work intervention. We emphasize the importance of recognizing and working with cultural diversity and examine differences in patterns of ethnicity and culture within each country. While African Americans and Hispanics are large ethnic and cultural minorities in the United States, there is little diversity in Scotland. Approximately 2% of the population are ethnic minorities (General Register Office for Scotland, 2003), and the majority of these people are from the Asian subcontinent (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan). We examine institutional racism and oppression in both cultures and social services systems. We also examine how each country approaches social work practice with diverse populations, comparing and contrasting the philosophies of anti-discriminatory practice in Scotland and multicultural competence in the United States. We also introduce both the NASW and BASW codes of ethics and engage students in case studies around similarities and differences in the two codes.

Research Question and Method
The original research question for this qualitative study was: What is the impact of study abroad on social work

students? The findings presented here are related to one of the major themes that emerged from analysis of student journals and papers: Values Development. Other findings will be presented in subsequent papers.

Beginning in 1996, all students who enrolled in the course were asked to keep weekly journals as a course requirement. Students were given the following instructions for their journals:

> Students will keep an ongoing journal in which they record their reflections on readings, class discussions, interactions with students and faculty from the other country, and presentations. These logs should indicate that the student is keeping up with the readings and should be reflective, showing depth of thinking and/or feeling about the readings and topics under consideration. These logs are not to be summaries, but rather reflections of your ideas and feelings about what we are studying.

In 2000, an additional final reflective paper was added, and students were asked to summarize their learning and reflections after having completed the entire class experience. The data for this study were the weekly journals and final reflective papers of only those students who studied abroad. Therefore, although U.S. students participated in courses taught in the United States alongside Scottish students, the data from those U.S. students were not included in the study because their experience was qualitatively different from that of U.S. students who actually studied in Scotland.

The Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at the U.S. university approved the project. Students were asked for permission to use their work in this research. Participation was completely voluntary, and decisions not to participate had no impact on students' grades. In 1997, most of the Scottish students did not complete the journals because they were not receiving course credit. Course expectations were made clearer in subsequent years, resulting in better compliance with assignments.

Therefore, the data in this study were from 19 BSW and 10 MSW students from the United States and 12 Scottish students, for a total sample size of 41 of the 45 students who participated in the program during these years (91%). The students were predominantly female; only 1 Scottish and 2 U.S. students were male. Stu-dents ranged in age from 20-47 years, with Scottish students generally being somewhat older (M=33.4 years) than the U.S. students (M=26.6 years).

The data were analyzed using a modification of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as analysis was done after data collection was completed rather than being done simultaneously with data collection. There were no a priori hypotheses, and we used open coding to identify themes in relation to the original research question. Open coding involves approaching the data with no existing coding schema or framework, but allowing categories of findings to emerge directly from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1999).

The methodological limitations of this study are typical of most qualitative studies. However, strategies recommended by Krefting (1991) were used to enhance the rigor of the study for applicability, credibility, and dependability/consistency of the findings. These terms parallel the quantitative concepts of generalization or external validity, internal validity, and reliability.

The small sample size, lack of randomization, and lack of control or comparison groups limit the generalizability of the findings. However, within the qualitative paradigm, generalizability is conceptualized as applicability or transferability, that is, the extent to which "findings fit into contexts outside of the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts" (Krefting, 1991, p. 216). It is the researcher's responsibility to provide enough rich, thick description (Geertz, 1973) to enable readers to decide the extent to which findings are transferable to other situations of interest. To enhance the applicability of this study, substantial information about the study-abroad program has been provided.

The issue of internal validity is also generally a concern in qualitative research due to researcher subjectivity and the desire to capture the multiple realities of research participants rather than test a hypothesis. The

qualitative counterpart of validity is credibility, or what Krefting (1991) calls the "truth value" (p. 215) of a study. The credibility of this study was enhanced by the use of multiple coders to minimize researcher subjectivity and maximize the ability to discover multiple realities reflected in the student work. Furthermore, use of extensive direct quotations from the student narratives provides evidence in support of the findings.

Use of multiple coders and code—recode procedures also enhanced the dependability or consistency of the findings. There were two coders for each transcript, one of which was the author. Two MSW students provided the second coding. Both students were trained, and inter-coder agreement was established through consultation among all three coders throughout the data analysis process. All transcripts were subjected to open coding. All transcripts were then subjected to additional rounds of coding to test the categorical schemas that were emerging, until no new categories emerged.

Once major themes were identified, the researcher decided to focus on one of the most predominant themes that emerged: Values Development. A reanalysis of the data, again using multiple coders and code—recode procedures, was done in relation to that theme and its subcategories.

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of study abroad on social work students, as revealed through their personal narratives in journals and a final reflective paper. The open coding and constant comparative analytic process identified three major themes, one of which is presented in this article: Values Development. The other themes, Personal Growth (other than values development) and Knowledge of Specific Social Work Approaches and Interventions will be presented elsewhere.

In relation to Values Development, six categories or subthemes emerged: Opening the Mind to New Ways of Thinking; Awareness and Insight Into One's Own Values and Beliefs; Social Awareness and Challenges to Societal Values and Beliefs; Appreciation of Difference, Cultural Sensitivity, and Anti-Discriminatory Practice; Social Justice; and Professional Identity Development. Following are descriptions of these themes along with illustrative quotations and explanations of how each category relates to the core social work values as outlined in the NASW and BASW codes of ethics.

Opening the Mind to New Ways of Thinking

Students reported becoming more receptive to new perspectives and ways of thinking as a result of living and studying abroad. While both Scottish and U.S. students wrote about how the course helped them expand their thinking about approaches to social work, the U.S. students also spoke about a more general opening of the mind to different ways of thinking, not just in relation to social work. For instance, one U.S. student wrote, "I learned how distorted our ideas and perceptions of a place can be if we do not experience it for ourselves . . . Overall, I feel that this experience has allowed me to grow and become more open-minded." Another U.S. student wrote, "This experience has really opened my eyes to the rest of the world. I feel that it has made me more diverse in my thinking." Yet another wrote, "My trip has made my world bigger, . . . exposed me to diverse people and places. I opened my eyes to new experiences."

One Scottish student echoed the sentiments of many of the U.S. students when she wrote, "Working with the U.S. students has been a really positive experience and a marvelous way to open up your mind and make you really think and challenge your own views and values and see things from other perspectives." In general, however, when the Scots wrote about receptivity to new ideas, it was almost always in relation to learning a different way to deal with a social issue or problem. For instance, Scottish students were intrigued with the idea of family group conferencing, describing it as "brilliant" and "an excellent move in the right direction to enable parents and extended family members to become involved," and they believed this new approach would be useful in Scotland as well. U.S. students were similarly struck by the Scottish approach to dealing with juvenile offenders, which focuses more on children's "needs rather than deeds." Learning about different approaches to social problems helped open the minds of both groups of students to new ways of thinking, yet the Scottish students seemed to be less likely than the U.S. students to entertain new ideas related to issues other than social

work.

With respect to professional values, this opening of the mind seems to facilitate the process through which students examine the relationship between their personal values and those of the other country, as well as those of the profession. The dynamics of this process seem to support a general willingness to entertain new ideas, some of which are related to specific social work values, as indicated below.

Awareness and Insight Into One's Own Values and Belief's
Enhanced self-awareness and insight, both intrinsic to values development, were important outcomes for the U.S. students. In fact, although all students described their learning about social work and different approaches to social problems, the U.S. students tended to find that their most significant learning was about themselves. One student wrote, "Looking back over this time and thinking about all my experiences, the one that speaks most loudly to me is regarding what I have learned about myself." A U.S. undergraduate wrote, "I have a new sense of clarity now, about myself, my needs, and about other people as well. I feel stronger and more confident than I ever have in my life." Another U.S. student found that, "On a personal level, I have learned I have certain limits that are acceptable at this point in my life and how to exercise options for myself in the face of adversity."

For many students, enhanced self-awareness was directly related to examination of their values, as these two students, one U.S. and one Scottish, indicated: "[The trip] has permitted me to gain a better understanding of my values and perspectives," and " [The course] has made me more aware of my personal value base and how I can improve my attitude and practice." One student noted that the process of learning about oneself seemed to occur "mainly through interactions with the other group members, but also by watching how I adapted to being in Scotland as compared to how others in the group adapted to this new environment."

While comments about examining personal values were prevalent among the U.S. students, only two other Scots noted increased self-awareness, both in relation to personal attitudes about a specific course topic:

> I found that many of my views were quite negative about myself growing old in that I didn't want to, and I felt like I had nothing to look forward to . . . it helped me begin to think about how I felt about aging and the risks I would be scared to be at. In fact, I don't think I have thought so much about growing old in my life before.

> [The class] made me think about my subconscious feelings of older people, and I realize that there are issues for me to explore at a personal level to ensure that these do not affect my ability and level of good practice.

As with the first theme, Opening the Mind to New Ways of Thinking, this enhanced self-awareness also seemed to contribute to an overall disposition among students to engage in self-reflection with respect to personal and professional values as well as other issues they confronted. Thus, while this finding is not associated with a particular core professional value, it seems to support the entire process of critical engagement with new ideas and ways of thinking about themselves as individuals as well as the profession of social work.

Social Awareness and Challenges to Societal Values and Beliefs
This theme is related to two core social work values: social justice, as manifested in the concept of social responsibility, and the importance of human relationships. Many of the students had not been abroad before and, thus, had never been directly exposed to the societal values of a country other than their own. Studying abroad gave them the opportunity to experience the values and norms of the host country, in the face of which they were often forced to re-evaluate both their own and their country's values and norms. This was especially true of students from the United States, as they were less likely than the Scottish students to have visited other countries and were unaware of some of the major value differences between the United States and Western European democracies that operate on a more socialistic, less capitalistic approach to government and social services. The U.S. students were particularly struck by two differences in societal values they observed:

individualism versus collectivism and the slower pace of life in Scotland than in the U.S., which they associated with a higher value being placed on human relationships. Noting different ideas about social responsibility in the two countries, two U.S. students wrote,

> Another very striking difference in the cultural and social environments of the United States and Scotland is the reliance on individualism versus collectivism. The United States is known for its highly individualized culture. The "every man for himself" attitude spills over into almost every aspect of American life from education to work to daily exchanges with friends, colleagues, and even strangers. Having grown up and lived in this environment my entire life, the more collective nature of the Scottish culture became apparent to me early on in my stay. In general, people seemed more friendly and willing to help ... Scots seem to be accustomed to helping take care of each other.
>
> [In the U.K.] a person's rights are viewed almost strictly in the context of how they affect others. This concept is almost completely foreign to Americans. We are very focused on our rights as individuals and less concerned with how our actions affect others.

Many U.S. students noted the impact of the Scottish view of social responsibility on social policy, as this student did: "I believe this collective attitude is also reflected in their social policies, including areas such as child welfare, homelessness, health care, and drug addiction." Also recognizing the link between the value of collectivism and social policy, another U.S. student observed,

> Although the individualistic nature of American society has its advantages, I can't help but imagine that we might have something to learn from Scotland in terms of taking care of our people, especially our children. The fact that we are one of the few Western countries not participating in the [United Nations] Convention on the Rights of the Child seems to provide even further evidence that our standards of care are not what they should be.

U.S. students were challenged to examine another dominant U.S. social value as they noted that the slower pace of life in Scotland seemed to place more priority on human relationships than on work or consumerism. For instance, two students observed:

> The slower pace of life in Scotland was also evident in the small number of establishments that are open late at night or around the clock. The United States is filled not only with all-night diners but also with 24-hour shopping of all sorts. The lack of these establishments in Scotland promotes a slower, more family oriented social structure than that which we find in the nonstop consumerism of the United States. Businesses and shops closing early and on the weekends allows for time spent socially with family and friends.
>
> I decided that, although it might not be as convenient to procure services, the Scottish people have a good idea by closing early. I think that the families in Scotland have more time to spend with one another because the stores and businesses are closed. In the U.S. we are all about consumption. We feel that we must have access to all things at all times.

One Scottish value that U.S. students had great difficulty accepting was the extent to which social life was built around drinking. In a comment that was typical, one U.S. student noted,

> It amazes me that people can function in any sort of productive way when so many seem to drink so much. . . . I see the pub as the locus of social activity, and it causes me to wonder how large the fellowship of Alcoholic Anonymous must be here in Scotland.

On the other hand, some students viewed the different norms around alcohol as just that— differences. Conversations with Scots seemed to help these students put the prevalence and acceptance of drinking within a

cultural frame-work that allowed them to be less judgmental. For instance,

> In my opinion, the most important aspect of this difference is the culture created around alcohol consumption in our respective countries. In the United States, drinking is used to excuse unacceptable behavior. Glaswegians, however, do not seem to have created a similar culture around alcohol consumption. They drink on a more regular basis than Americans and do not seem to use drinking as an excuse for anything.

> Socially, what I found most interesting was how much time the people spend at pubs. This is a norm for the Scottish. The people migrate there to relax and socialize.

Another societal value difference that both Scottish and U.S. students noted was the extent to which children are valued and how they are treated in the two countries. As one Scottish student wrote,

> I found it interesting that in Scottish law the children's rights are paramount, but in North Carolina there are no children's rights. America is not part of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this is reflected in their law, whereas in 1991 the UK government agreed to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Students often noted that one way this difference in law is reflected in practice is that Scottish social workers are more likely to listen to children's points of view than are social workers in the United States. For example, one student wrote, "I believe that the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 was a piece of legislation that gave children a voice. I believe that is extremely important because many times children's voices are overlooked by adults." Another U.S. student wrote,

> According to the Children (Scotland) Act, children in Scotland also have a right to be heard in decisions that affect their lives. The Children's Hearing is set up to allow for the children to have their voices heard. In the Hearings that I observed, the panel members asked the child if there was anything they wanted to add. As far as I know, there is no such right for children to have a voice in the United States.

The fact that Scottish law treats children who have committed crimes within the same hearing system that deals with cases of abuse and neglect made a very powerful impact on the U.S. students, as illustrated by this quotation:

> Another major difference between the United States and Scotland is the way in which young offenders are dealt with. If a child within the United States commits a crime, then they go to the juvenile court where they are put up in front of a judge. In Scotland, young offenders are dealt with through the Children's Hearing sys-tem, which consists of three lay members and the Reporter. This system's aim is to support those children who are trouble-some as well as those who are troubled. I feel that this system is more effective in dealing with young offenders as it is all about support and rehabilitation, and although the U.S. system may argue these same principles, I believe that the Hearing system is less threatening than that of the juvenile courts.

Also referring to how juvenile offenders are treated in the United States, one Scot wrote that "U.S. boot camp appears harsh and controlling, and I hope that Scotland can intervene/assist children with severe problems without resorting to such a rigid regime." Another Scot's reaction to visiting a juvenile court in the United States was quite typical of her peers:

> There was one particular thing that did shock me and that was the use of shackles on some juvenile offenders. I appreciate the need for safety in respect of violent, aggressive juveniles; however, I did find it barbaric that youths had to be treated in such an ancient manner. Furthermore, the use of makeshift cages to hold male and female offenders in while awaiting the court's decision of their punishment made

me think of animals in the pound.

Scottish students were less likely than U.S. students to discuss being confronted with challenges to their country's values. Instead, as Scots learned more about certain U.S. values and norms and their impact on social policy, they expressed disagreement with them. Thus, exposure to some U.S. values seemed to reinforce for Scottish students their agreement with the values and norms of their own country. A notable example of this is how Scottish students reacted to what they learned about the health-care system in the United States. Typical reactions were: "I was not aware of how privileged we are in Scotland to have a National Health Service available, regardless of your financial situation," and "Good health should be a right and not a privilege."

Appreciation of Difference, Cultural Sensitivity, and Anti-discriminatory Practice

Both Scottish and U.S. students came to appreciate, at a deeper level, the importance of being open to difference, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence. This finding is related to the professional values of Importance of Dignity and Worth of the Person and of Competence. For example, one Scottish student wrote, "Another topic which is very important is that of cultural sensitivity, religious beliefs, and how important it is for social workers to be aware of cultural differences and how that would affect their approach to any case." Another Scot emphasized how important this learning had been:

> If I had to choose one thing that this course has made me more aware of than any other subjects or issues discussed, it would have to be my own understanding of anti-discriminatory practice. Although it is a significant part of our own training back in Scotland, I never realized just how much attention has to be given to the importance of it in a practice situation.

While Scots generally understood that the United States has a diverse population, U.S. students did not realize the increasing diversity of the Scottish population and the importance of cultural competency in countries other than the United States. One U.S. student wrote:

> My image of Scotland had not previously included such a wide variety of culture and religions. It must also be necessary for social workers in Scotland, as it is in the United States, to be culturally aware and sensitive to many groups of people.

Although they had learned about concepts related to diversity in social work courses and field experiences, most of the Caucasian U.S. students had never actually experienced what it was like to be in an environment where they were not members of the dominant culture. The study-abroad program allowed them to have this experience. As one student wrote of her experience traveling in France, "We were immediately identified as foreign. Foreign, what a strange word for an American."

One result of the experience of being a foreigner seemed to be an enhanced appreciation for the struggles immigrants face in their new countries. Thus, U.S. students became even more aware of the importance of cultural competence in social work practice. One student reported,

> A significant learning experience . . . occurred during my trip to Paris . . . It was very interesting to be in a city where English was not the native language . . . I did get to experience what it must be like for individuals who immigrate to another country. It was an uncomfortable feeling, and we were taken advantage of on a couple of occasions because we were foreign.

This experience of being exposed to different cultural norms and points of view and being an outsider led two students to observe, "I can already tell that my appreciation for cultures other than my own is growing just through exposure;" and "It is still a shock to my ego to realize that Americans are not the center of the universe."

Social Justice

The core value of Social Justice, so integral to social work, addresses the nature and impact of oppression on vulnerable people. Both Scottish and U.S. students became aware of social justice issues that are common to the two countries, primarily racial and ethnic discrimination, as well as issues that are more unique to each country.

Many U.S. students believed that because Scotland is such a homogenous country, racism and discrimination would not be the problems they are in the United States. They were surprised to discover the universality of racism and oppression. After a visit to a museum that depicts the social history of Glasgow, one U.S. student noted:

> One fact that proved to be especially surprising to me was the fact that slavery had also existed in Scotland, as I suppose it did in other parts of Europe. For some reason, I had concluded that the United States was the only country that participated in slavery. I don't think that this fact made me feel better, as though America somehow wasn't the only oppressive country. But rather, it helped me to see a larger picture. I realized that the practice of slavery was widespread and that many more people than I had even imagined had been affected.

Another student, impressed by commonalities regarding racism and oppression in the two countries, wrote, "Although the ethnic makeup of Scotland differs greatly from that of the U.S., with minorities being much smaller in number, disparities in the treatment of people are very similar." Yet another student said,

> I didn't really know anything about racism in the UK, but I do now. I thought they didn't have problems like that, but I guess all countries have racial problems. It is really sad. I thought there might actually be a place out there that looked at a person as a person, not a skin color.

In response to a class session on anti-discriminatory practice conducted in Scotland by a social work professor who was originally from India, one U.S. student wrote,

> (The professor] discussed what he calls the "visibility factor" and how this affects people's lives. This really made me stop and think. I have encountered people of various ethnic backgrounds who were born and raised in Scotland. They consider themselves (and are) Scottish, but may be discriminated against because they have dark hair and skin. On the other hand, I am by no means Scottish, but do not feel as subject to the "visibility factor" because I have blonde hair and blue eyes. I think the "visibility factor" is a universal concept. As future social workers, it is something I think we should be conscious of, especially in regards to how it affects people's lives on a daily basis.

Scottish students also recognized similarities in how the two countries treated minorities:

> Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for minorities to be ignored by the system or to fall through its cracks because of some institutional racism and also a lack of understanding. This is a problem in the United States and in Scotland.

One form of cultural tension and oppression that was surprising to U.S. students is the sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Scotland. Two students wrote:

> Although racism, sexism, and homophobia are cultural and social issues in both countries, sectarianism plays a much greater role in Scotland than in the U.S. Although I had previous knowledge of the problems between Catholics and Protestants in Scotland, I was unaware of the amount of violence and discrimination occurring as a result of these religious differences. This is evident not only in the segregation within the city along Catholic and Protestant lines, but also in the street fighting and rivalry inherent in the city's religiously affiliated football teams.

Although prejudice due to religious affiliation does occur in the United States, it appears to be more prevalent in Scotland and the United Kingdom. Strong differences in religion are sometimes played out through sports, in particular European football . . . A deeper look at Scotland's culture finds very similar prejudice and racism, although in perhaps a different form, as in the United States.

A Scottish student summed up her perspective on oppression and discrimination within the two countries by sharing her observation that "The U.S. students . . . appeared more at ease with different religions than a lot of people I know in Scotland, whereas [the] United States has a bigger 'problem' with racial prejudice than Scotland."

Professional Identity Development

The experience of comparing social work in the two countries helped many of the students more fully understand and identify with the social work profession (core value of Integrity). One student wrote, "The experience stirred new feelings inside about social work and how and where I fit in the profession." Yet another example of how study abroad had a positive impact on students' identification with the social work profession is illustrated by this quotation:

I was not feeling very enthusiastic about social work being my profession before I went on this trip. During this trip I saw ways in which I could enjoy and feel satisfied with my job without running into burnout. I also realized that when I do get out there I will be a part of a community that will support me and understand when I am feeling a little weary.

One thing that surprised students from both countries was how similar the codes of ethics are for the two countries. As she studied the two codes of ethics and applied them to case examples from both countries, one Scottish student noted: "I noticed a similar ethos running through both. They highlight the importance of treating service users as individuals ensuring their dignity and worth." Other similarities students noted included concern for "professionalism," "the importance of confidentiality and culture awareness," "boundaries with services users," and "the precedence ... [given] to a social worker's professional responsibility over their own personal interests."

In one area, however, students found a difference in the two codes of ethics that reflects a difference in the societal norms of the respective countries. Two U.S. students wrote:

The difference in the language in the codes of ethics of the two countries offers further proof of the difference in culture. Where we use "self-determination," the BASW chooses to use "self-realization," which seems to indicate a greater appreciation for the common good rather than the individual.

I also found our comparison of NASW's and BASW's codes of ethics to be very enlightening. One of the differences that really made me think about social work as a profession was NASW's concept of self-determination versus BASW's concept of self-realization. When I stopped and thought about it, I realized that these are very different concepts.

Another important way in which this pro-gram enhanced students' professional development was by helping them see the importance of reflecting on their own practice and being open to the idea of applying some of the best of what the other system has to offer. For instance, several U.S. students who planned to work with children believed that they could incorporate some of the child-centered approaches Scots use, even though in the United States social workers are not bound by law or the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to do so. For instance, one young woman wrote,

I have always felt that children in the social service system are overlooked. So much is done "to them" without them knowing that is going on. . . . As a child protective services investigator, I can ask the children how they feel and what they would like to happen and take what they have to say into

consideration. I can also advocate for change regarding policy on the macro level. This is where I can start using the knowledge I obtained from my experience in Scotland.

A Scottish student wrote, "Having something to compare my own practice with has highlighted both my strengths and weaknesses and given me great opportunity to think about how my own practice can be improved."

Discussion

The findings from this study indicate that study abroad may have an important role in fostering appreciation of and commitment to professional social work values. Living in and observing a society in which there are different concepts of social justice from those of the United States and where the dignity and worth of individuals and human relationships are more highly valued, seemed to help U.S. students develop a deeper sense of appreciation for these values. This experience also seems to enhance students' commitment to the integrity of the profession, as exemplified by their deepened understanding and commitment to the mission, purpose, and ethics of social work, which they come to understand as universal rather than simply a U.S. or U.K. phenomenon.

Gibbs and Gambrill (1999) stress the importance of self-knowledge as a link to values development. The study-abroad experience seems to enhance students' self-awareness, especially with respect to recognizing and, at times, challenging their own values, biases, beliefs, and ways of thinking as well as those of their country. In addition, by being exposed to a different culture, they developed more sensitivity to and appreciation of diversity, which they could directly relate to social work practice. Experiencing their chosen profession in another country helped them identify even more strongly with social work as they came to see themselves as part of a profession that is world-wide and has the capacity to effect change across the globe.

It is interesting to note that the study-abroad experience seemed to be somewhat different for Scottish and U.S. students. Although both groups seemed similarly affected by their learning related to cultural sensitivity and anti-discriminatory practice, oppression, and identification with the social work profession, this was not the case with respect to the other themes that emerged.

The U.S. students' journals reflected much more realization of enhanced self-awareness and a sense of challenging some of their personal values and those of the United States. This was rarely the case with Scottish students, who did not tend to write about increased self-aware-ness and were much less likely to question their own values or those of their country. Similarly, the U.S. students' journals included many more references to a changing world view as a result of having been exposed to a different country, but this theme was not as predominant in the Scots' journals.

While the journals themselves do not shed much light on reasons for these differences, my 9 years of experience with this program and conversations with Scottish colleagues have led me to three possible explanations. First, such differences may be because of differences between the two groups of students by age and previous exposure to other cultures. The Scots were, by and large, older than the U.S. students, and may have been at a different stage of development. Their life experiences may have resulted in a higher level of self-awareness prior to studying abroad. By virtue of having lived longer, they may have already developed a more expansive world view than the U.S. students. Given the historic and current connection between Scotland and the rest of Europe, through both proximity and membership in the European Union, it is likely that the Scottish students were more familiar with cultures other than their own prior to visiting the United States. Television, radio, and newspapers in the United Kingdom regularly cover news on the continent, so Scots are exposed to various cultural, social, and political perspectives. Furthermore, Scottish students were more likely to have traveled abroad prior to the study-abroad program than were the U.S. students. Thus, it is not surprising that the U.S. students' journals reflect more wonder and new awareness of differences between their country's values and those of other countries than do those of the Scots.

A second possible explanation for the differences in the two student groups' tendency to challenge their own and their countries' belief systems may have something to do with the fact that the Scottish collectivist view of social responsibility is more compatible with the mission and values of social work than is the dominant U.S. value of individualism. Both U.S. and Scottish students commented extensively on the differences in the two countries with respect to social responsibility, especially as enacted in social service legislation, policy, and practice. However, the Scots were much less likely to see value in adopting values or practices of the United States than the U.S. students were to appreciate the values and practices of Scotland. The most obvious differences were in the areas of health care, children's rights, and services to troubled children. U.S. students noted that the UK universal health-care system is more congruent with the social work value of equal access to resources than is the U.S. health-care system. Similarly, they noted that the emphasis on children's rights, enshrined in legislation in Scotland, is lacking in the United States. Also, they found the Children's Hearing System to be a much more compassionate and appropriate approach to dealing with troubled and troublesome children than the U.S. child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems. Again, given that Scotland reflects a more socialistic approach to democracy as compared with the more capitalistic approach of the United States, it is not surprising that social work students would find more affinity with the legislation, policy, and services of the former.

Conversations with two Scottish colleagues who have also taught this course have suggested a third possible explanation of the differences in the two student groups with regard to the relative lack of emphasis on self-reflection and enhanced self-awareness in the Scottish students' journals. According to R. McGoldrick (personal communication, May 2003), "there is traditionally much less emphasis on what you as an individual think and feel in Scotland than is my perception of the United States." M. Smith (personal communication, July 2003), agrees with this statement and further notes that social work education in Scotland does not emphasize self-reflection and self-awareness to nearly the extent that social work education in the United States does, perhaps reflecting the cultural difference noted by McGoldrick.

While the two groups of students do appear to have benefited somewhat differentially in relation to their values development as a result of participating in this program, it was apparent that both groups did benefit in significant ways. Students from both countries reported an increased appreciation of cultural differences as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of cultural sensitivity and competence to social work practice. Furthermore, both Scottish and U.S. students reported an enhanced identification with the profession. Both groups wrote extensively about new approaches to social problems that they hoped to incorporate into their practice back at home.

This study provides support for some of the impressions and findings reported by other authors. For instance, the students in this program, like those described by Witkin (1999), became aware of the global nature of social and human problems and developed a deeper and broader understanding of the profession of social work. This study also supports Witkin's perception that the self-reflection involved in study abroad is an important part of the learning experience. Both Krajewski-Jaime et al. (1996) and Boyle et al. (1999) reported enhanced cultural awareness and sensitivity associated with their study-abroad programs, and these same themes are reflected in almost all of the student journals in this project.

Implications for Social Work Education and Future Research
This was an exploratory study with the usual limitations of qualitative research, as described previously. However, the findings provide a beginning understanding of how study abroad can be valuable for enhancing values development among social work students. This educational experience involved a structure, activities, and assignments designed to maximize student learning and reflection. Students' journals indicated that their most valuable learning experiences were visiting agencies, talking to practicing social workers in the host country, and getting to know people there on a personal basis. Classroom lectures and exercises provided them with a framework to learn about the two systems as well as to understand the policy and practices they learned about through the agency visits. The journal assignment helped focus their attention by requiring that they reflect critically on their learning, experiences, and their reactions to the world around them. Classroom time

was also used to help students process what they were experiencing. Based on the experiences of these students, all of these types of in- and out-of-class activities are worthy of being included in study-abroad programs.

This study seems to indicate a very specific benefit for U.S. students who study abroad, as evidenced by the ways in which the experience challenged their dominant belief systems about the United States and its place in the world. In a time when U.S. citizens in general adhere to the notion that U.S. values, customs, and approaches to government are superior to those of other countries and support government policies that aim to impose these on other countries, it is particularly valuable for U.S. social work students to see there are alternative ways of thinking, governing, and meeting the needs of citizens. This type of experience can help reduce the chauvinism that is almost inevitable among U.S. citizens who are not exposed to other cultures and can encourage students to think more critically about U.S. policies and approaches to dealing with important social issues such as child welfare, poverty, and health care.

Future research is needed to further explore the relationship between study abroad and values development as well as other aspects of social work education and professionalization. Such research should clearly outline the nature of the educational experience as well as seek to identify factors that promote values development and other types of learning that may occur in study-abroad experiences. Another fruitful area of study is the possible influence of taking classes with social work students from another country, but in one's own country rather than abroad. For many students who cannot study abroad, it is possible that interaction with students from a different country may, in and of itself, provide valuable learning opportunities for personal and professional development.

Hopefully, as study-abroad programs in social work proliferate, we will see more research in this area, which will, in turn, help social work educators design even more effective study-abroad experiences. The following quotation sums up the impact of study abroad on the values development of social work students in this program:

> Every aspect of [this] experience lends itself to deepening the understanding and development of the values and ethics of the profession. By broadening our horizons and learning about other cultures and social services systems,. .. we are preparing ourselves to be more informed, more flexible, more open-minded, and more tolerant. All of these are characteristics of an effective, committed social worker.

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