

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF
THE INTERSECTIONAL GENDER GAP IN SOCIAL SERVICES
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY STANISLAUS

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By
Lorie A. Webb
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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Dr. Shradha Tibrewal
Professor of Social Work

Date

Dr. John A. Garcia
Professor of Social Work

Date

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful, loving, and generous family Alexandria Webb, Ashley Webb, Jesse Ornelas, and Lucas Carlson, Carolyn Lucatelli, Sarah Talbot, and cousin Ashley Webb, who supported, helped, comforted, listened, and loved me through this program. They were my rock that kept me from washing out with the tide of exhaustion and fear and the sun rising over the horizon giving me hope and faith that I could complete one more day, one more assignment and finish my thesis. I deeply love and honor my family and the sacrifices that they also made so I could successfully complete this program.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the specific dynamics that contribute to the intersectional gender gap as a barrier to equal wages and career advancement for women and to examine and explain how the dynamics that influence the intersectional gender gap may be concealed with the structures of an institution. This study focused on women executives in social service organizations. This research was conducted from a qualitative grounded theory approach and utilized an interview-guided approach with an internet follow up questionnaire based on the themes generated from the first cycle of interviews as well as follow up emails and in person meetings. Ten women were interviewed for the first cycle of this study, while nine participants completed the second cycle questionnaire. The major themes discovered from this research indicate that the dynamics that impact the intersectional gender gap include: factors that contribute to women's success, social identities, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, and, have a greater impact than gender alone. Additionally, the major themes include, sexism, racism, homophobia and discrimination likely exists as hidden and silently intertwined within the institution; and being surrounded by women in the work force forwards a sense of improvement by women that may lead to a false security in the advancement of women in social services; an over-arching theme of power differentials in relationships. Social work would be greatly served by advancing future research on the foundation of power relations as opposed to individual components of power expression.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the not so distant past, Feminism, in its various forms and theories, has been able to create grassroots efforts and galvanize movements. Feminism was intrinsic in the civil rights movement and efforts to address many social justice causes. Some of those causes included the right for women to vote, Title IX protections, and reproductive rights. However, much of those efforts were completed within grand narratives and without inclusion of many non-white and non-dominant voices (Kemp, 2010). Although there have been gains within oppressive structures, laws and institutions, including but not limited to sexism, racism, ageism, ableism and sexual orientation, these issues are just as prevalent today as they have been in the past (Pease, 2011). Feminist theories in social work encompass the principle of equality, which connects the personal with the political (Brickner-Jenkins, 1991; Saulnier, 2000). The concept of “the personal is political” provides the groundwork to continue the fight for social justice against privilege, oppression and power structures in gender relations. In the current neo-liberal social, economic and political environments, feminist theories provide an ideal and necessary, albeit under used, critical component to combat a myriad of oppressive gender power relations within society and social work.

Sexism can be defined as “individuals’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and organizational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative

assessments of individuals based upon their gender or support unequal status of women and men” (Swim & Hyers, 2009, p. 407). Sexism and gender discrimination are used interchangeably within this paper. Women are significantly affected by gender discrimination, which has a deeper detrimental effect when intersected by racism, ableism, ageism, and sexual orientation within society, institutional structures and policies (Savas, 2010; Sewpaul, 2013). Intersectional gender discrimination, which originated from black feminist theory, acknowledges that constructed identity components such as gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation are intertwined (Collins, 2000; Mehrotra, 2010; Parent, Deblaere, & Moradi, 2013). For example, Hooks posited:

As a group, black women are in a unusual position in the society for not only are we collectively at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group...we bear the brunt of sexist, racist, and classist oppression (Hooks, 2000, p. 16).

As such, the oppression of one identity attribute may exacerbate the effect of the other. For instance, many women of color experience simultaneous oppression based on their gender and race (Collins, 1998). Acknowledging that gender is a social construct, power is positional, and realities of intersectionality, many women are unlikely to consider their life options equal to men (Swigonski, 2011).

Women experience gender segregation entrenched societal and cultural attitudes ascribed to women and men regarding talent and abilities, and fewer

opportunities for employment advancement (Tharenou, 2013). Women also experience widespread gender discrimination in employment, sex-based pay discrimination in all occupational categories, are subjected to biased consideration in hiring and promotion, and encounter discriminatory treatment by employers in pregnancy and motherhood (NOW, 2016; Savas, 2010; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011). In half of United States' *families*, women which are the primary or co-breadwinner (Hess, Milli, Hayes, & Hegewisch, 2015). However, vast hierarchies in the labor market are another causal component where most women work in very-low wage jobs with many women of color earning less than the federal minimum wage (Duffy, 2005; Savas, 2010). Compared to white men, the gender wage gap is at 27.6% for white, 36% for African American and 31.9% for Latina women (NOW, 2016). For African American lesbians, the wage gap is 21.4%, lower than heterosexual women, and transgender women are four times more likely to live on less than \$10,000 a year (Shriver, 2009).

Feminization, a term utilized to denote a career field that has or is gaining a significant number of women, has been correlated to the field's subsequent devaluation. The researchers found substantial evidence that, when work was done by women, employers placed a lower value on the work. As England stated, "It's not that women are always picking lesser things in terms of skill and importance...It's just that the employers are deciding to pay it less" (Levanon, England, & Allison, 2010, p. 211). As a direct result then, they found substantial evidence that employers placed a lower value on work done by women and that wages are generally lowered across the

field even affecting men in that field. The research also showed that this trend increased over time. However, the opposite is not true. Men's presence raises the wages and the professionalism of the field they enter (Levanon, et al., 2010).

As a substantial result of inherent gender discrimination, women are underrepresented in leadership roles and legislative processes. In America's biggest Fortune 500 companies, only 23, which equates to 4.2%, of CEO positions, are led by women (Valentina, 2016). Although women make up over 50% of the population in the United States, the representative government is comprised disproportionately of men where women hold an average of 24% of elected and executive government positions (Center for Women and Politics, (CAWP), 2016; Guyot, 2008). According to Bird (2016), women are denied their personhood when they are dehumanized by the political system. The lack of women representatives is especially injurious to women as many policies and laws directly affect them.

Gendered sexism, including intersections of race, class, and socioeconomic status, is a form of oppression and is one of many, although significant, causative factors in stress and psychological maladjustment in women, which have immediate and long-term consequences (Schwartz & Lindley, 2009). Inequality, objectification, discrimination and victimization are some of the immediate negative consequences of gender discrimination. As well, long-term implications for many women include living at or well below the poverty as well as suffering significant physical and mental health problems (Bureau of the Census 2004; Greer, Laseter, & Asiamah, 2009; Klonoff, & Landrine, 1995). Additionally, many societies pressure women to

conform to gendered stereotypes which create an oppressive, restrictive, and limiting environment (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011; Jost & Kay 2005).

Due to gender discrimination, women face sexual harassment in schools, including universities, the workplace and in public spaces (Rosenthal, Smidt, & Freyd, 2016; Raven, 2013). In 2001, over 11,400 sexual harassment complaints were filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (EEOC, 2016). During the working life time, one out of every two women will experience some form of sexually harassing behavior (e.g., Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board [USMSPB], 1981, 1987)

Gender discrimination has been repeatedly researched and documented within the social work institution (Levin, Woodford, Gutierrez, & Luke, 2015; NASW, 1961; NASW 2011; Savas, 2010). These studies indicate that gender discrimination continues to oppress women in wages, employment positions, advancement, and obtaining high level management positions (Gibelman, 2003; Levanon, et al., 2010; Levin, Woodford, Gutierrez, & Luke, 2015; NAWS, National Women's Law Center, 2015; 2011; Savas, 2010; York, Henley, & Gamble, 1987) In 1987, a survey completed in North Carolina evidenced that gender was the best predictor of wages (York, Henley, & Gamble, 1987). Historic inequalities in wages were again documented in research conducted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in 1995 (Gibelman & Schervish, 1995). Another research study in 2004 showed that the majority of almost all women social workers received significantly less annual salary than their male counterpart. (Koeske, & Krowinski, 2004). In 2015,

an extensive review of literature regarding gender discrimination in wages and advancement found enduring trends of women in social work receiving lower wages even when all other mediating items were factored into the study (Lane & Flowers, 2015). Specifically, according to the NASW salary study, men's wages are as much as 14% higher than women's wages and they disproportionately hold higher management and executive positions (2011).

Because of the perceived "feminization" of social work, and to professionalize and raise the wages within the social work institution, men were specifically recruited (McPhail, 2004; Levanon, et al., 2010). While it may be surmised that women's pay rates generally increased, men fared much better as they have historically been paid more, advanced faster and received most of upper level management and administrative positions. Significantly, one of the highest paid sub-fields in social work is in mental health, which is dominated by men (NASW, 2011). The wages in mental health act as a variable of difference in women's and men's wages. It is likely that the wages are higher since the mental health field is dominated by men (Levanon, et al., 2010).

While there has been a plethora of research completed about persistent gender discrimination, it has generally focused on the issue of gender as separate from race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation. As stated above, it may be impossible to separate out the influence that multiple identities have on the inequities in wages and career advancement. Therefore, it is imperative that research regarding a gap in employment pay and position includes the multiple ways in which the intersection of

gender, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation is impacted by various simultaneous oppressions within the social work profession.

Statement of Purpose

Since gender discrimination has been well established within the social services, the purpose of this study was to explore the specific dynamics that contribute to the intersectional gender gap as a barrier to equal wages and career advancement for women. This study focused on women executives in the field of social work, specifically, social service organizations and their lived experiences of how their journey to positions of authority was impacted by their gender as intersected by other social identities. This study was guided by the following questions: What dynamics in the social work institution contribute to the intersectional gender gap. In what ways do these dynamics influence the intersectional gender gap in social services? In what ways are women impacted by their gender as intersected by other identities within the social work institution? This study utilized in depth interviews with social work managers, administrators and directors. Within these interviews, women told their stories including their lived experiences regarding gendered sexism in social work and how the intersection of multiple identities in relationship to discrimination and bias have impacted them as they navigated to positions of authority

Through considering multiple social identities as intersecting, inseparable, and intertwined, researchers are better able to understand what the daily-lived experiences are of women whose intersecting identities may promote barriers or opportunities.

Revealing lived experience as Bell Hooks (2000) states, “Black women...often have a lived experience that directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, racist social structure and its concomitant ideology. This lived experience may shape our consciousness in such a way that our world view differs from those who have a degree of privilege...” (Hooks, 2000, p. 16). The researcher’s goal was to capture the participants’ experiences to have a greater understanding about the interrelatedness of intersectional gender and discrimination so that we could increase our knowledge to change structures and systems that perpetuate inequality for women in attaining employment positions, pay rates, and promotions in the social service. Additionally, the contribution of new knowledge enabled recommendations for specific policies, practices and tools that may advance gender equality.

Women, especially when intersected by race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, are a marginalized group as they have historically experienced oppression and gender discrimination as a result of social hierarchies such as patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism. Moreover, structural barriers are created by this system of power and dominance that control immense resources and political economies and prevents entry into privileged spaces. Although a review of existing literature on gender discrimination reveals the various components of gender discrimination and its impact on women, the literature also evidences the absence of relevant intersecting identities. This research attempted to bridge the gap of knowledge surrounding gender at the stated intersections to uncover if and to what extent they impact gender discrimination. Through social workers’ stories of their lived experiences at the

intersection of social construct, multiple identities and discriminatory practices, patterns and themes emerged that provided insight which may lead to transformative changes such as a collaborative movement to advocate for equality and equity for women and the social work intuitions where they work and lead. These transformative changes may also be able to point to various ways in which barriers within structures, policies and practices may begin to be dismantled thereby enabling and assisting more women to desire, accept and advance into leadership positions while simultaneously increasing wages. As women in leadership roles increase within the social work institution, they give “permission” to other women to advance. Additionally, intersectional women in leadership positions in social work are uniquely situated in that there may be shared experiences with the populations they serve lending them insight into the possibilities of policies and procedures that are best suited and positively impact service recipients who are also predominantly women.

Social justice is an integral aspect of social work. It is written into the NASW mission statement and as social workers, we are not only compelled, but most come into social work, to engage in actions that secure social justice. The NASW Code of Ethics states,

Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

As well the code proactively attends to remediation: Social worker should...promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people. (NASW, 2018).

As Lane and Flowers stated in their “Call to Action” research, “The credibility of social workers in advocating for human rights and social justice is harmed if we are actively allowing discrimination and inequity to persist within our profession and organizations” (Flowers & Lane, 2015, p. 376). Intersectional Feminist’s theories are exceptionally situated to promote social justice as it inherently exposes the structural arrangements which create and perpetuate inequalities in power as well as how those structures discriminate, dispossess and disadvantages people according to their status, and location in society (Gringeri & Roche, 2010). Understanding, reducing and or potentially eliminating intersectional gender discrimination within the social service institution would positively impact other institutions and the broader society increasing equality, equity and the quality of life for women and their families. In 1910, Jane Addams once said, “The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life” (Addams, 1910) and in 1984, the struggle for equality continued as Audre Lorde stated, “I am not free while any women is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own (Lorde, 1984, pp. 132-133.).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Despite common perceptions and long-standing rhetoric that the United States is built on the principles of fairness and equal rights, an intersectional gender gap persists. Research continues to document the historic and ongoing trend of disparities between women and men in their salary earnings and promotion rates, with women lagging significantly behind in both areas. This research was framed by intersectional feminism because of its inclusiveness and by centering on Black Feminist Thought, as a framework which offers depth, breath, and a profound understanding of the impact of intersections of social identities from women of color's own perspective. The intersectional frame was utilized to analyze the way in which power and oppression impact women and perpetuate the intersectional gender gap in social work.

Additionally, intersectionality exposes the different types of disadvantage and discrimination that ensue which are consequences of social identities (Association for Women's Rights in Development (Symington, 2004; Mccall, 2005).

Looking at these research findings through the lens of intersectionality also enables a view of how the intersections of social identities aggregately may impede women of color's opportunity to promote to high levels of management (Knudsen, 2006). Copious amounts of research show that there has been a deeply rooted thread of societal values that contribute to the intersectional gender gap, including

androcentric thinking, patriarchy, sexism and fixed gender role perceptions and expectations. As well, androcentrism safeguards that “men define the prototypical person in most domains (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008, p. 389). Although, there has been considerable agreement that structural and institutional sexism existed, a shift often occurs which alters the focus away from structural solutions, such as the dismantling oppressive institutional policies and deconstructing gender identities, towards independent and individualized solutions for women. The shift from structural to individual largely began as the post feminism and post racism ideologies became mainstream. Multiple ideologies and methods including social-psychological, political, and socioeconomic standpoints are examined to gain a clearer understanding of the depth and scope of the intersectional gender gap. Additionally, this literature review navigates proposed solutions from a historical perspective to the present.

Theoretical Frameworks

Intersectionality

Although Critical Intersectional Feminist theory began to be significantly articulated in the late 1980’s and early 90s, nineteenth- century black women scholars and political activists such as Maria Stewart and Anna Julia Cooper had already acknowledged the combined impact of racism and sexism on women (Alexander-Floyd, 2012). Intersectional Feminism: “intersectional experience” as something “greater than the sum of racism and sexism.” (Crenshaw, 1998) “Simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression (Hooks, 2015, p xii).

In 1982, black feminist members of The Combahee River Collective (1977) stated that gender, race, sexuality and class were all equally important and indivisible. “The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face” (1977, para. 1). Kimberlé Crenshaw provides the classic example for how intersecting identities impact woman (particularly women of color) via a legal court case. *DeGraffenreid v. General Motor* is a legal case where the court, by weighing gender and race separately, would not consider the fact that African-American women, who were not being hired into specific positions, were discriminated against because they employed white women and black men. The court refused to consider the combination of race and gender as a singular discrimination, and dismissed the case (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 142).

Due to the vast co-opting and in some cases distortion of the word and meaning of intersectionality, Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd (2012) defined two distinct aspects. By utilizing both the dimensions of ideographic and ideational, intersectionality is “...the commitment to centering research and analysis on the lived experiences of women of color for the purpose of making visible and addressing their marginalization as well as an ethos of challenging business as usual in mainstream disciplines’ habits of knowledge production” (p. 9). Alexander-Floyd distinguishes two necessary components of intersectionality as ideographic, which encompasses a whole ideological approach, and ideational, which is a nickname for the intersecting

of social identities. Intersectionality, as inclusive of all social identities such as race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class and ableism, is the perspective that multiple intersected identities shape people's experiences and are defined in terms of privilege and sociocultural power (Shields, 2008).

Authentic intersectionality evokes a liberating political framework for social justice and action. The fact that intersectionality reflects women's lived experiences and make visible the ways in which systems of oppression and inequality function in overlapping ways, cannot be overstated and thus enable power matrices available to transformation (Crenshaw, 1995; NASW, 2012). Additionally, intersectionality, by acknowledging the interlocking systems of inequality, spotlights social justice problems and can be utilized as a tool for analysis, advocacy, social activism and policy development (Symington, 2004; Crenshaw, 1992).

Feminisms, Feminist Theories & Feminist Social Work

Bell Hooks, defines feminism as, "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (Hooks, 2015, p. xii). Racism, sexism, and heterosexism are individually rooted in a group's belief that they have a right to dominate others because of their inherent superiority (Lorde, 2007). Feminisms was a direct response to the raised consciousness of women's realizations surrounding the extent to which patriarchy, male domination, and power structures oppressed and restricted women. Within feminist's theories, gender is socially constructed, as de Beauvoir's stated, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 249). Feminist theories assert that the personal is political, analyze the historical conditions of

women's lives and the contributing dynamics that contour and mold women's lives as well as their endeavors to define meaning and transform conditions such as actions to end oppression, domination, and gain access to personal, interpersonal and socioinstitutional power (Ackerly, & True, 2010; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011).

Intersectional feminist theory addresses the ways in which structures generate power and constrain those who are most impacted by the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality (Andersen, 2005). Oppression provides the link between the personal and the political in feminist theory,

“The concept of oppression provides a theoretical integration of personal and social life...persons are oppressed by their membership in a category or group, not because of their personal qualities. Thus, oppression links psychologies and social structural components by identifying personal trouble as shared problems requiring social solutions...Seeking to subvert oppression, feminist practitioners politicize individual services and personalized social structures” (Morrell, 1987, p 148).

The personal is political social and individual change are interdependent in feminist traditions and that dual focus is present in both feminisms and social work. In practice, feminisms promote inclusion and equity to “eradicate the ideology of domination” (Hooks, 1984 p. 26). To validate the lives and histories of subgroups previously marginalized and ignored, intersectional feminists analyze relations

between the subjective experiences, knowledge, and structural power relations (Krumer-Nevo & Komen, 2015).

Feminist research is critical in social work as it is concerned with the principle themes of gender, power relations and social transformation (Andersen, 2005; Hooks, 1984; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Wetzel, 1986). Grounded theory research teams synergistically with feminist theory in that its focuses values the researcher and participant relationships, respects subjective interpretations of social experiences, and acknowledges the contextual and relation nature of knowledge (Wuest, 1995). Additionally, Plummer and Young contend that when combined, “it loosens the androcentric mooring of the empirical process underpinning Grounded Theory, enabling the researchers to design inquiry with greater potential to reveal issues to the lives and experiences of marginalized women” (2010, p. 306).

Historical Context

Intertwined History of Social Work, Feminisms and Intersectional Theory

The social work profession and feminism share a parallel course throughout history, which typically involved white middleclass women focusing their entitlement to gender equality. Whereas women of color were isolated and struggling for women’s rights as well as the advancement of their race also reflected in the eras social work. (Kemp & Brandwein, 2010). By the 1960’s, although the common thread among white women and women of color included a commitment to social change, they theorized and organized separately. During the 1970’s social workers caught up to the women’s movement and began to analyze and write about sexism in the

profession including position of lower status and lower wages (Fanshel, 1976; Scheil, & Feishman, 1973; Schwartz, 1973). As well, feminist social workers began arguing for women centered practice models and helped organize and run women's shelters and counseling programs in neighborhood clinics with their women service users (Kemp & Brandwein, 2010).

In 1980, NASW held the first conference on social work practice entitled, *Social Work Practice in a Sexist Society*, where selected papers were published on multiple oppressions experienced by women of color and lesbianism (Weick & Vandiver, 1982). In 1984, *The Journal of Women and Social Work, Affilia* was published specifically to provide space for women researchers and women's research regarding "bringing insight and knowledge to the task of eliminating discrimination and oppression, especially with respect to gender, but including race, ethnicity, class, age, disability and sexual and affectional preference" (*Affilia Manuscript Submission Guidelines*). However, according to Orme (2003), by the mid 2000's very few social workers were able to articulate theoretical foundation of feminists practice.

Interestingly, during this same time frame social workers began to rely on quantitative research-informed practice whereas, feminist intersectional theory is based on qualitative lived experiences which are vast and unique as to be necessarily quantified and as stated by Collins (2009), becomes suspect when researchers attempt to standardize women's experiences.

Literature Research Findings

Historically, from the beginning of the profession of social work, women have been paid less than men in comparable positions. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) began to conduct social worker salary surveys as early as 1961 and although men represented 32% of social workers they were paid \$1,100.00 more than women annually (Gibelman, 2003; NASW, 1962). Unfortunately, the gender pay gap in social work was not unique, as underpayment for women was and continues to maintain a pay gap in the United States. The President's Commission on the Status of Women published its report, *American Women in 1963*, showed that women were earning only 59 percent of what men were earning. The pay gap trend continued and existed across the board where women only earned a percentage of what men did as follows, 1983 64 percent; 1993 72 percent; 2012 77 (the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) CPS 2012). Even though men earning more than women in similar and comparable positions was the norm, numerically, women dominated the social work field.

By 1963, after being recruited to social work to advance the status of the field to "professional," men constituted 43% of people employed in social work (Scotch, 1971). While the upgrade to "professionalism" did increase women's wages, men moved into community organization and administrative positions,

men are preferred for organizing positions.... Organizers are more likely than practitioners in the other methods to interact with executives, businessmen, professionals, public officials, and other

influential in community affairs... Men fill these roles in American society, and men are usually believed to be more effective in working with other men Brager & Michael, 1969, p. 596).

Twice as many men as women were earning more than \$10,000, according to Stamm's study of NASW members' salaries (Stamm, 1967). Additionally, women were prevented from moving into higher paying positions such as supervisors and administration, "For all occupations in all societies, as one approaches the top, the proportion of men increased, and the portion of women decreases (Epstein, 1970). Causes for the gender gap included that, men published, held more leadership positions in NASW and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as well as "...excellence in social worker practice may depend on...such abilities to evaluate, to plan, and to implement plans. And men, rather than women, may be more likely to possess these and other instrumental qualities" (Rosenblatt, Turner, Patterson & Rolloson, 1970, p. 425). Additionally, women were believed to be ambivalent about their careers and make less efforts than men (Knudson, 1969).

In a 1981 study, the most significant factor between men, women, and people of color and people who identified as Caucasian white, was the concentration in segregated, low wage jobs (National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE), 1987). During this time as well, social work was one of the top 25 most underpaid professions and that three fourths of the salary difference between men and women was attributed to sexual discrimination (NCPE, 1987; York, Henley, & Gambel, 1987, p. 339).

In 2004, Koeske and Krowinski examined the effect of the gender gap in Pennsylvania social workers. Even after controlling for multiple variables, there was still a substantial gender disparity in social worker salaries (Koeske & Krowinski, 2004). A main contributing factor in the gender gap was determined to be the length of experience of men, which inevitably led to advancement which held a higher salary, whereas generally women made 90 cents to the dollar received by men (Koeske & Krowinski, 2004). One could argue that the longer employment length for men would be due to an aggerate advantage of patriarchy and the historical discrimination towards women in the work force. Additionally, in two NASW reports from 2004, 389 men in licensed social work reported an average income of 61,000 whereas 1,744 women reported an average income of only 48,995 (NASW, 2006, p. 28) After controlling for factors such as age, experience, education, there was still a gender gap in wages or 14% (p. 29) A 2007 NASW's workforce study continued to document that across all practice settings the wage gender gap persisted (NASW, 2007). According to the 2007 report, 98% of women received the lowest salaries while men continued to dominate the highest pay rates (NASW, 2007).

Ridgeway and England reported in their book, *Sex discrimination in the workplace*, that the primary causes of sexism are cemented in cultural beliefs about women and subsequent organizational structures, practices and policies that perpetuate the cultural beliefs and impact women disparately (Ridgeway & England, 2007, p. 199). In 2011, NAWS completed another salary survey and corresponding report. Consistent with all previous reports, men continued to make significantly

more money than women and advance faster and higher than women (NASW, 2011). Sayers stated, that women are not supported by society to earn the same as men because the lower wages that they receive assists in maintaining societal gender expectations, hierarchical power structures by keeping men in power and women in subservient positions (Sayers, 2012). Additionally, although the gender gap drastically impacts women's ability to support themselves and their family, a 2011 review by Khoreva revealed that women are not aware of the gender gap in pay (Khoreva, 2011). It is through recognition, acknowledgement and desire that women can begin to effectively close the gender gap. Additionally, McPhail (2004) stated that social work is a "male-dominated female majority profession." As well, labeling social work as a predominantly female field, obscures male dominance and sexism.

Wermeling and Smith found that 92% of social workers who responded to their survey stated that it was important to receive an above average income, especially in retaining social workers (Wermeling & Smith, 2009, p. 386). However, although a 2013 research project found that wages are a considerable indicator of job satisfaction, they cited in other studies that there remains a long-held belief that women social workers hold selfless motives and do not chose the social work profession for "the money" (Schweitzer, Chianello & Kothari, 2013). As women have often been associated with being selfless in the traditional family setting, this research continues to evidence the long-established gender roles associated with the position that women and men are intended to occupy, there by contributing to the gender gap in pay and promotion (Rudman, Glick, Glick, & Ebrary, 2008).

Almost 50 years after the 1963 Equal Pay act, Lane and Flowers performed a comprehensive and systematic review of the research from 1960 to 2000 and confirmed that salary inequity between men and women in social work endures (Lane & Flowers, 2015). Notably, in almost all the research studies regarding the gender gap in pay and promotion in social work, scant attention was paid to if and or how other intersecting identities may have impacted women. However, in 2016, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) projected that black women will have to wait 108 year and Hispanic women 232 years to receive equal wages of men (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016). In 2016, the wage gap was, after controlling for various factors, 79 cents of men's salary for white women. African-American women experienced a much wider gap of 60 cents evidencing that the intersecting social identities of gender and race invoke greater discrimination (Kauffman, 2016).

In 2017, Lewis completed a study entitled, *Diversity, Pay Equity, and Pay in Social Work and Other Professions* (Lewis, 2018). Although he included some previous relevant studies, he did not include the NASW 2011 salary study. Additionally, while this study indicated that it included diversity, the majority of the paper specifically pointed to gender opposed to people of color or minorities. He also cites a study by Barth as an example of social work attracting minorities and people of color because the pay is too low for white and Asian men (Lewis, 2018). Then he cites a study by Leete where they claim that people who enter the social work field value equity over appropriate pay rates thereby perpetuating the belief that people do

not go into the field for “the money.” Additionally, this type of argument also continues to elude to the belief that people of color and minorities do not care about making a comparable wage.

Utilizing Barth again, Lewis writes that the disparity between women and men in social work is less than other occupations which occurs as a downplay of the importance of adequate pay rates. He also calls occupations that tend to have more women numerically, “women’s work,” which in the context of much of the professional world constitutes demeaning and feminization of that field. In his conclusion, Lewis states, “These patterns suggest that success in raising social work pay could have unintended consequences for diversity and, perhaps, pay equity by attracting more white and Asian men into the field” (Lewis, 2018, p. 11). In this section, he is suggesting that white and Asian men may disrupt diversity in social work by taking jobs away from minorities and people of color if the pay rate was comparable to other professions that they typically inhabit. He tends to present his arguments as either or opposed to the idea that minority and people of color in social worker should be paid appropriate and the same wages as other comparable occupations. This would include creating structural changes in the social work institution that prevented white and Asian men from disproportionately being hired, paid more and promoted while assisting people of color and minorities to, at the bare minimum, level the playing field in pay and promotion. And lastly, by using the census for data, white men in management positions may not identify as social workers, which could overstate the diversity and understate the pay gap within this

study. Considering that most of the upper management levels in social work are occupied by white men, this variable likely significantly skewed the research.

Intervention/Prevention Strategies

Since the gender gap has been documented as early as the 1960's, repeating the same actions and expecting a different result, may be highly representative of the attempts of social work to align with social justice through pay and promotion of people of color, minorities and women. Over the course of the gender gap discussion, there have been several types of solutions offered. In 1991, Scotch, in the form of a question, puzzled why women did not protest using the women's liberation movement to fight for the passage of the equal rights amendment and expansion of childcare (Scotch, 1971).

NASW adopted a policy in 1973, to eradicate sexism and sex discrimination in social work and society and to ensure that their leadership positions would reflect the diversity and gender composition of their membership (Sutton, 1982). By 1992, their goals were not met, and they termed the underrepresentation of women in NASW's leadership as a "longstanding problem" (Gibelman, & Schervish, 1995, p. 446).

A solution to the gender gap during the 1980's was to enact pay equity so that workers would be paid the same as which males when they worked in predominantly female or minority populations with equivalent effort, responsibility and skills (Freeman, 1991). Pay equity is the principle that work of comparable worth, as evaluated to require the same degree of effort, amount of skill and level of

responsibility, would be paid the same wages, regardless of their race or sex (Steinberg & Haignere, 1984). Freeman gave a list of items that social workers could do to reduce and eliminate the gender gap. Some actions that Freeman called for were to, create a coalition or national committee, start an action league or join an existing one, advocate for the passage of pay equity legislation, urge senators and representatives to join the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, work for or run for political office.

In 1991, the U.S. DOL, created a pilot program entitled the "Glass Ceiling Initiative" entitled Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (P.L. 102-166) proposed to remove contrived barriers for women and minorities regarding pay and promotion into management decisions (DOL, 1991, p 1). At the time of the program, men advanced higher, advanced faster, made more money and disproportionately held the highest positions in social work than women (Gibelman & Schervish, 1993). Unfortunately, the DOL's commission did not issue a report nor legislation regarding the glass ceiling and the legislation died in the senate in 1992.

Another call to action was forwarded to have NASW investigate and strategize utilizing compliance audits like Executive Order 11246 to ensure that social work agencies were paying equal wages and promoting minorities and women of color (Gibelman & Schervish, 1993). NASW also called for social workers to advocate on behalf of themselves create grass roots organizing and collective action (Gibelman, 2002). Gibelman also advocated for women and minorities to use the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission by filing complaints about wage and

promotion discrimination and the legal system for redress and professional organization for support. (2002). Armstrong specified that it was necessary to reform the “domestic sphere” because that sphere limits the possibility for equal participation in other spheres (Armstrong, 2002). This view generates from the “personal is the political” belief. In 1979, feminist Firestone stated, “Love becomes complicated, corrupted, or obstructed by an unequal balance of power...” (Firestone, 1979, p. 124,127). Thus, the unequal balance of power in relationship becomes political. Armstrong then advocates for a redistribution of power and decision making within the family unit (Armstrong, 2002).

Continuing into the 19th century, researchers were still calling for renewed and ongoing activism (Lips, 2013). In their 2015 comprehensive literature review, Lane and Flowers stated a call to action that included proactive education in social work programs, legislative policy changes, and best practices in organization (2015). In looking to legislative policy they pointed out that in 2014, President Obama signed documents to include equal pay by federal contractors and a memorandum to collect pay information from federal contractors (2015). Unfortunately, as of 2018, the current administration revoked these requirements. They also mentioned the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 84) that would put the burden of proving that pay differences were not due to gender, however, this bill also died in the senate. Another suggestion was that social work organization should conduct salary reviews and correct them with salary adjustments as well as standardize the process for performance review, pay and promotion (Lane & Flowers, 2015). Regarding

education, NASW advanced the idea that the responsibility to educate students about labor laws should be taught in schools of social work and that the schools themselves should model ethical practice by, “identifying internal and external obstacles to parity, challenge internalized restrictive gender-role stereotypes.... hold themselves accountable...and develop mentoring programs for women...” (NASW, 2006).

In their study, *Women Social Workers: A Road Map to Gender Equity*, Mallinger, Starks and Tarter (2017) promote the applied model of care. The first step in their model is to promote resilience by mitigating risks through developing training programs, mentoring and improving access to education designed to enhance women’s administrative skills for advancement into management positions (Mallinger et al., 2017). A main and necessary component of their model was to contend with existing power structures by engaging in conversations about sexism and racism within the institution and engaging social workers in consciences raising specifically regarding gender identities, roles, expectations and internalized oppressions (Mallinger et al., 2017). Other components to the model include advocating at the federal, state and local level for gender equality policies such as the Paycheck Fairness Act especially as federal policies tend to influence organizations culture and climate (Paycheck Fairness Act, 2015). In 2018, Lewis advocated for having standardized educational and employment requirements for social workers. The idea of standardized educational and employment requirements, while on the surface seem possible to minimize disparaging pay and promotion, the requirements would most likely impact women and minorities disproportionately. Historically, however, these

populations have lacked many of the necessary resources to obtain the education and experience that standardization for higher pay and position would likely require, thereby in effect perpetuating discrimination.

Comprehensive Anti-Oppressive Approach

Dean Spade, in his book “Normal Life,” expanded on the social justice transformative model, the Four Pillars (Spade, 2011). The Four Pillars are based on an anti-oppressive participatory ground up theory to effect change that makes a difference and endures. The Four Pillars of Social Justice Infrastructure was developed by the Miami Workers Center and has profound applications for transforming social justice issues such as the intersectional gap. They are based on four tenants that together encompass expansive and long-lasting change. The use of legal strategies such as policy reform and litigation have not worked to eradicate discrimination and to secure freedoms and rights for oppressed and excluded groups (Spade, 2011). For instance, Spade states, “Law reforms in the US, ostensibly enacted to prohibit racism, have proven ineffective because they focus on bad intentions of individuals and fail to comprehend population-level conditions” (Spade, 2014, para, 2). Additionally, most often to appeal to dominate social constructs such as white, heterosexual male, the social movement then tries to fit into the framework of the oppressive structures, which are discriminating against them by attempting to portray marginalized people as “deserving citizens” based on the national norms (Spade, 2011). The people, then who are experiencing intersectional discrimination are not

seen nor heard, this causes the people that are most vulnerable and whom are subjected to dangerous conditions, voiceless and invisible (Spade, 2011).

Centering on the people that are experiencing discrimination produces a distinctive view of the institutions which leads to very different intervention solutions. As well, from this perspective, insidious institutional discriminating systems and practices that purport to grant freedom, such as substantially white women's neoliberal feminist universal call for equality of pay, then further marginalizes women of color who are experiencing distinctive prejudice and inequity due multiple intersecting social identities. The Pillars are not separate, but essentially intertwined. The Four Pillars of Social Justice Infrastructure are: The Pillar of Policy, the Pillar of Consciousness, the Pillar of Service, and the Pillar of Power.

The Four Pillars of Social Justice provide a path for transforming the root conditions that perpetuate the intersectional gender gap. The Pillar of Policy would include changes in policy through legislation such as ensuring that gender and social identities can be both be included in discrimination cases. As well, the Pillar of Policy would work to change institutions using institutional strategies such as establishing policy and procedures to ensure that women with intersecting identities have a path and are encouraged to be in top administrative positions. This may also include policies and practices that include subsidized day care and flex-hours for parents. The Pillar of Consciousness includes education for social service agencies, line workers, supervisors and directors regarding the ways in which oppression of intersectional women limit or prevent them from rising to the top. Also, The Pillar of

Consciousness works to shift the public's consciousness and public opinion involving the intersectional gender gap and the consequences it has on families. It also works to shift entire political paradigms and includes advocacy work through media and public education. The Pillar of Service encompasses work that directly serves social workers that have and are experiencing discrimination. Finally, the Pillar of Power is about building a movement by the social workers affected by discrimination while they develop leaders from within their ranks thereby claiming power. Additionally, this grassroots leadership and the movement would encompass all social work institutions building organizations with members that are able to disrupt existing power relations, influence and effect change. Utilizing The Pillars of Social Justice enables a transformational change from all sides of discriminatory Policies, laws and practices into ascendancy and equitable profession.

Conclusion

While the gender gap has received considerable attention, the research documents that all other factors accounted for, the gap is due to discrimination of women. The field of social work was not an exception. Additionally, although many of the research studies included some mention of race, the impact of the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation was not explored in depth. Even though, many of the solutions listed above had the potential to positively impact the gender gap in, until two distinct aspects, the personal and the political, converge any of these recommended solutions will likely fall short of the intended goal of equity in pay and promotion for minorities and women.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Sexism has been repeatedly researched and documented within the social work institution (Levin, Woodford, Gutierrez, & Luke, 2015; NAWS, 2011; Savas, 2010). These studies indicate that sexism continues to oppress women in employment positions, advancement, obtaining high level management positions and wages (Levanon, et al., 2010). Sexism can be defined as “individuals’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and organizational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative assessments of individuals based upon their gender or support unequal status of women and men” (Swim & Hyers, 2009, p. 23). Women experience gender segregation entrenched societal and cultural attitudes regarding talent and abilities, and fewer opportunities for employment advancement (Tharenou, 2013). Sexism’s impact increases especially when intersected with racism, ableism, ageism, and sexual orientation, within institutional structures and policies (Savas, 2010; Sewpaul, 2013). Since sexism has been well established within the social services, the purpose of this study is to explore the specific dynamics that contribute to the intersectional gender gap as a barrier to equal wages and career advancement for women.

This study examined and explained how the dynamics that influence the intersectional gender gap may be concealed with the structures of an institution. Understanding nuanced or obscured dynamics enables solutions to be formulated and can contribute to increasing intersectional gender equality regarding attainment of

employment positions, pay rates, and promotions in the social service system so that specific policies, practices and tools may be recommended to advance intersectional gender equality.

This study was guided by the following questions: What dynamics in the social work institution contribute to the intersectional gender gap (specifically, in terms of attainment of employment positions, pay rates, and promotions)? In what ways do these dynamics influence the intersectional gender gap in social services? In what ways are women impacted by their gender as intersected by other identities within the social work institution?

Research Design

The research used a qualitative grounded theory approach. Qualitative research is an investigation that seeks answers to questions which typically produce newfound information which often can be generalized to include a broader population, culture or phenomena beyond the immediate boundaries of the study (Denzin, 2000; Denzin, & Lincoln, 2005). Some strengths of qualitative design are that researchers tend to be sensitive to changes that occur during the study that may alter their focus opposed to having a fixed hypothesis to test regardless of new found information (Johnson, and Onwuegbuzie, 2006). As well, qualitative data allows the researcher to explore the why and how that a phenomenon occurs.

Grounded theory research is appropriate when there is a lack of knowledge regarding a specific subject. Grounded theory investigates the actualities in the real world and analyses the data with no preconceived ideas or hypothesis (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory creates a space for theories to be built as a result of the collection of information about people's lived experiences. Opposed to other qualitative research theories, Grounded theory is the process of abstracting a theory based on the data generated and collected by the researcher (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 17). The theory that is developed from a Grounded theory research project generates new knowledge that can explain a phenomenon. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationships of categories of information (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

The strengths of grounded theory are that it is an effective approach to build new theories and understand new phenomena. There is a high quality of the emergent theory. The emergent research design reflects the idiosyncratic nature of the study and the findings and methods are always refined and negotiated. This theory requires detailed and systematic procedures for data collection, analysis and theorizing. The resulting theory and hypotheses help generate future investigation into the phenomenon. This theory also requires the researcher to be open minded, and able to look at the data through many lenses and the data collection occurs over time, and at many levels, helping to ensure meaningful results. The weaknesses of grounded theory are that this research method is time consuming and a painstakingly precise process of data collection and analysis and generates huge volumes of data. Also, there may be much noise and chaos in the data. Additionally, it is not possible to start a research study without some pre-existing theoretical ideas and assumptions and it

requires high levels of experience, patience and acumen on the part of the researcher (Birk & Mills, 2015).

The newly generated theory that emerged from the data was interpreted through an intersectional feminist lens that encompassed the perspective that a person's lived experience of constructed identity components, and include a characteristic such as gender, race and sexual orientation, which are not necessarily separate but viewed as intertwined (Parent, Deblaere, & Moradi, 2013). Also, within their lived experiences, oppression of one identity attribute may exacerbate the effect of the other. For instance, many women of color experience simultaneous oppression based on their gender and race (Collins, 1998). An intersectional lens assists in revealing how multiple identities, may be exposed to multiple types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a result of the combination of identities. Therefore, it is imperative that research regarding a gap in employment pay and position within social services regarding all aspects of employment includes the multiple ways in which the intersection of gender, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation is impacted by various simultaneous oppressions.

Sampling Plan

This study utilized a non-probability snowball sampling plan to recruit the participants for the study. Theoretical sampling is defined by Birks and Mills (2015) "as the process of identifying and pursuing clues that arise during analysis in a grounded theory study" (p. 68). The researcher interviewed the first participant and analyzed the data, which provided direction for the next stage of data collection

which was concurrently analyzed. The first few participants were located by asking people that were known, in the field of social work that met the criteria, to participate in the project. Then additional participants were located by utilizing snowball sampling, which is a technique where after the researcher interviews one member of a specific group, the participant recommends additional members of the target group who also meet the criteria for participation (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2014). The strengths of a non-probability sampling plan include that it is time effective and cost efficient. The weakness may include a reduced ability to generalize the research findings (Faulkner, & Faulkner, 2016). The specific requirements for the participant to complete the study included that they identify as female and hold one of the following positions within social services: manager, division chief and or director. However, one participant was a supervisor II that assisted in policy making decisions. The sample size was ten participants.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized an interview-guide approach with open-ended generative questions. The interview-guide acted as an initial framework for opening the interview conversation. Additionally, this process ensured that the researcher gathered information regarding the same general area of study. Utilizing open-ended questions with the interviewees enabled the researcher to obtain deeper content regarding their intersectional gender experience (Pollack, 2003). The inclusion of open-ended questions allowed for respondents to openly express their experiences, attitudes and opinions without restraint. Generative open-ended questions also

assisted the participants in expressing how they experience events and what meaning they attach to those experiences. Also, generative open-ended questions elicited the frames in which those experiences encompass and the process and kinds of responses that arise from events. Furthermore, open ended questions allowed for participants to share additional experience that may be relevant while allowing flexibility to the researcher to explore concepts held within. As the interviews progressed and a theory was emerging, it became necessary to slightly modify some of the questions (Birks & Mills, 2015). The interview questions assisted in the goal of capturing shared experiences. This research also collected basic demographic information such as, identified gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, marital status, number of people caretake for, educational level, job title, and pay rate. The first, grand tour question that opened the interview was: Please tell me about what you have experienced along your journey toward acquiring your current position within social services. (How did your journey start; what you were thinking and feeling along the way; what the steps where you took) Additional probative interview questions are in appendix A.

Data Collection

The data collection included individual interviews with volunteer participants based on specific requirements. The participants were required to be social workers and be employed in the social service industry. These requirements were necessary since this study is specifically interested in gaining knowledge from and about female employees that have intersected social identities and have navigated social service

agencies promotion process and now hold upper-level and decision-making positions. Additionally, the above listed criteria ensured that the goal of capturing shared experiences was acquired. The researcher collected all data. The researcher collected demographic data such as age, race, sexual orientation, education, income and marital status.

Then, the researcher utilized open-ended generative questions. The researcher took field notes and audiotaped each interview conversation, with the participant's permission. The interviews were transcribed. The first cycle consisted of in person interviews with each participant, which lasted from one to one and a half hours. The second cycle data were collected through a web-based questionnaire. The questions were based on themes that emerged from the first cycle. Follow up emails, phone calls and meetings took place, to clarify information and answer additional questions that arose from the data in the second cycle. The internet-based questionnaire took approximately twenty minutes to complete. All Data were collected after receiving approval from the University IRB. The data collection process took four months from the month of December 2017 through April 2018.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed through the grounded theory approach utilizing concurrent data collection and analysis through codes and categories. Neuman and Kruger's (2003) five step process was congruent with grounded theory by incorporating recursive thinking during coding progression. Neuman and Kruger's (2003) data analysis includes the following steps: 1) Sorting and classifying, 2) Open

coding, 3) Axial coding, 4) Selective coding, and 5) Interpreting and elaborating. Sorting and classifying, named categorization in grounded theory, is the process where items are sorted by the research question(s). Open coding, named initial coding in grounded theory, involved the first pass over the data, coding-based on terms used by participants that were based on the research question(s) and proceeds until categories emerged. The next step, axial coding, was a second pass through the data in where connections were made within and between categories where explanatory and conceptual patterns begin to emerge (Birks & Mills, 2015). Step four, selective coding named theoretical coding in grounded theory, was the last pass over the data where the researcher purposefully examined the data and codes for experiences that illustrated themes based on theories being developed in previous coding. Lastly, step five, concepts that were located within the data were formulated into a working theory that explained the findings (Neuman & Kruger, 2003). The data were coded by the researcher and reviewed by a peer. Establishing a peer review assisted in minimizing researcher bias. The data were presented in the thesis paper by utilizing a combination of narration with paraphrased examples and figures.

Protection of Human Participants

Each participant received a hard copy of an informed consent form, which explained the purpose of the research study and the participants' rights and responsibilities. The consent form also included their right to decline to answer questions, terminate their participation in the research project at any time and stated that there were no foreseeable risks to participating in the research project. To protect

the participants from any potential harm, all identifying information and or characteristics was omitted from the final thesis. Additionally, all data were and continue to be in a locked file and the information collected will remain protected from inappropriate disclosure under the law. Written permission was requested from the participants for the researcher to write field notes and record the interviews. All interviews were conducted after the University Institutional Review Board (UIRB) had granted permission. Participants were informed that all data would be destroyed three years after the completion of the study, anticipated to be January 2021. Consent form is in appendix B.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview of Themes

The purpose of this study was to explore the specific dynamics that contributed to the intersectional gender gap as a barrier to equal wages and career advancement for women. Also, this study endeavored to examine and explain how the dynamics that influence the intersectional gender gap may be concealed within the structures of an institution. The sample for this study included women executives in the field of social work, specifically, social service organizations. The purpose of collecting qualitative data was to attempt to discover the nuances within women's journey that may lead to solutions, which could contribute to increased intersectional gender equality regarding attainment of employment positions, pay rates, and promotions in the social service system.

The significant findings that emerged from the data included opportunities that assisted women in achieving success, the impact of social identities intersected with gender and a sense that intersectional gender inequality may be hidden from view, and a contradiction in participants views about barriers and their lived experiences. The data gathered in this research project is validated by copious research included in chapter two regarding the inequality of pay and promotion. However, the impact of the intersections of gender and social identities that the emerged as a significant factor in acting as a potential barrier to attaining high level

leadership positions and in a timely manner, illuminates the need for further exploration.

This chapter is organized thematically based on the emergent data. Because this research was based on the lived experiences of women in leadership positions, it was critical that they were able to freely tell their stories without incurring any possibly negative consequences. As such the interviews were completed as confidential and with the assurances of anonymity when reporting the findings. Generally, direct quotes would be utilized as validation for a theme. However, in this research paper specific answers were paraphrased or grouped together as a whole. Reliability for this research project was established by member-checking (Creswell, 2012). Member-checking is the process where the participants are asked by the researcher to verify that their experience were captured accurately, that the researcher acquired an accurate depiction of their experience, and that the researcher's descriptions were thorough and genuine (Creswell, 2012). Member checking ensures the participant's perspective were grasped and interpreted accurately. As Maxwell stated (2009),

This [member checking] is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed. (p. 111)

In qualitative research, member checking is used as a reliability tool as it provides an opportunity for participants to respond to the data. See Appendix C for member checking comments.

Sample Overview

This study focused on women executives in the field of social work, specifically, social service organizations and their lived experiences of how their journey to positions of authority was impacted by their gender as intersected by other social identities. Ten women in upper level leadership positions were interviewed for this study. Nine held policy decision making power and one was an upper level supervisor with limited policy power. Nine women identified as heterosexual and one identified as variant sexually oriented. The average age was 41, and the majority identified as married and were caretakers of 2.8 people other than themselves. The majority held a Master of Social Work degree and including benefits, their combined average income was \$126,093.60. Demographically, four women identified as African American, one who identified as Latina and five who identified as Caucasian. Throughout this chapter, the researcher acknowledges that the term gender as relating to female, male, and the terms feminine and masculine as relating to traits, are socially constructed, represent dominate gender and traditional gender role concepts and are not intended to be inclusive or represent all people's expressions and experiences. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges that the term "race" is socially constructed.

The questions that guided this research include, 1), What dynamics in the social work institution contribute to the intersectional gender gap? (specifically, in terms of attainment of employment positions, pay rates, and promotions)? 2), In what ways do these dynamics influence the intersectional gender gap in social services? 3), In what ways are women impacted by their gender as intersected by other identities within the social work institution?

Interview Themes

Five significant findings emerged from the research data. The first finding included factors that contributed to success in promotions; the second finding was how organizational culture of leadership communication, unreceptive peers, and gender expectations impacted the participants; the third finding was that women who identified as social identities intersected with gender were impacted primarily by their social identity and secondarily by their gender; the fourth emergent finding was the contradiction between participants experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and discrimination and their views about the occurrences and the fifth finding was an overarching thread of power differentials that impacted women and minorities.

Success Factors

While the purpose of this research project was specifically to explore dynamics that contributed as barriers to pay and promotion, the first finding that emerged concerned factors that contributed to success in promotions. The factors included having an internal personal drive, mentors and opportunities. Three women stated that they believed that their family and upbringing greatly contributed to their

success. They spoke about how their family values contributed to their success, which included helping others, parents that believed in and uplifted them, parents that encouraged them to join together and work through adversities, and that set an example of achieving their dreams and goals. Some of the paraphrases included, how they were raised was more impactful; journey started with my family; and had a great upbringing. Additionally, nine women declared that their own internal personal motivation and drive was highly important for their success. They specifically talked about how their personal drive included aspects of confidence, perseverance, desire, goal orientation and resilience. They included paraphrases such as, they were very driven; was their personal drive; personal drive and personal confidence.

Another aspect included was how mentorship contributed to the women's success. Eight women stated that having mentors guide them significantly contributed to their success. The participants explained that mentorship had a positive impact on their ability to promote up the ladder. Five participants gave examples of ways mentors aided them in being successful, which included paraphrases such, as often, their direct manager took them under their wings and spent time exposing and teaching them job components outside of their existing scope of work, which helped prepare them to be promoted. Two women suggested that they would not have been promoted to a high-level leadership position without being mentored along their journey. Some of the paraphrases that the participants used were, they had a really was a great mentor, always had a mentor, connected with her as a mentor, and they don't think they would be here today without mentors. One of the suggestions that a

participant gave to other women, was to find a mentor who would be honest with and push them to do things they may find difficult and challenging to stretch their comfort zone and prepare them for the next levels. However, two participants did not have mentors and they still promoted.

Another aspect that afforded women paths to promotions were opportunities. Six participants agreed that having training programs available assisted in their success. One woman discussed that opportunities presented themselves by her being in the right place at the right time. Three participants noted that they consciously looked for existing opportunities by paying attention and or created their own opportunities by such actions as volunteering for committees or projects.

Participant's paraphrases included, they had given me that opportunity, opportunity that they volunteered to do, they had the opportunity to do that, and they had the opportunity to sit in on, giving me opportunities and they learned more, and think there's always opportunity. Another participant stated that she believed that because she had the opportunity to work in multiple areas she became more promotable.

These women considered that the above indicated factors enhanced the likelihood that they would succeed in attaining leadership and management positions in social services.

Organizational Culture and Practices

The second finding was how organizational culture of leadership communication, unreceptive peers, and gender expectations impacted the participants. Within the first finding, participants noted that often they may have been negatively

impacted by upper level management leadership communication. Specifically, poor communication approaches of leaders had a negative impact. Six women experienced shaming comments, four from their upper level managers, often in front of their peers or subordinates, and in some cases at large meetings. Some of the shaming included, angrily confronting them out in meetings, criticizing them, and lying about their actions. Some of the paraphrases that three participants utilized were, someone telling them that they were confronting them, they didn't even know what they were doing, and maybe they should have been promoted later. Two women mentioned that shaming was a practice and noted that some upper level management targeted specific women and shamed them in meetings. As one participant noted, being shamed in front of colleagues not only silenced her but also everyone around her, which was predominantly women.

Participants noted that often they may have been negatively impacted by the actions and communication of unreceptive staff. Three participants specifically noted that their peers were not supportive, and in some cases made negative comments to them when they were promoted. Some of the negative comments were directed at their social identity and included paraphrases such as, that they were promoted because of their culture, ethnicity, race or gender. Participant paraphrases included, if they were a minority, helps to be bilingual, the agency is only promoting women of color, and they needed a black person to fill a quota. Some of the negative comments about gender included the innuendos that women were promoted because of the clothes, shoes and makeup that they wore. One participant noted that peers made

comments which are paraphrased such as, if they wore make-up and heels.

Additionally, five women experienced a backlash from peers that resulted in their peers quitting agencies, initiating formal complaints, or filing law suits in protest of women, specifically women of color attaining promotions. Some of the paraphrases by participants included, that when African American women got hired people left, and people quit, people said they were not qualified, people told them that the agency's trying to put only people of color in management positions now, they had people fighting against them, they were called an awful person, they were told that they picked their side and couldn't be trusted anymore. Three participants stated that they felt pained by negative comments noting that the impact was dispiriting.

Participants were impacted by gender expectations. Three women discussed the need to withhold displaying traditional feminine traits when interacting with men in leadership positions. Some of their paraphrases included that they had to be tough, non-emotional and carefully chose what to say when male leaders were present. One woman eluded that having feminine leadership traits may act as a barrier to be able to effectively communicate with upper level management and to promote. Her paraphrase included, that they cannot be emotional and continue to move up.

When a female, exhibited masculine leadership traits, it may have occurred as a double-edged sword. In two instances, participants noted that if they said or acted in a way that male leaders perceived as masculine, they encountered negative reactions. Their paraphrases included people labeling them as being too direct, or that they were outspoken or that they were a "bitch." Additionally, three women remarked that some

male leaders had a double standard for women and men. Three participants discussed that males did not experience the same negative reactions as women under the same or similar conditions. Some of their paraphrases included, that when men do it, other people say that they are just being assertive and a strong leader. One participant discussed that some women leaders have and utilize the ability to adapt their leadership traits between masculine and feminine traits depending on whether they were engaging with male or female leaders, staff and other situations as necessary. One participant spoke about tending to have masculine oriented leadership traits. Paraphrases included, being direct with their communication, goal orientated, and task driven. One participant viewed leadership traits and non-gendered. However, as one participant stated, when traditional gender expectations and expressions are demanded, it feels like *welcome back to the baby boomer era*.

Intersection of Gender and Other Social Identities

The third finding was at the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, women may be negatively impacted primarily by their social identity and secondarily their expressed gender. Eight of the participants affirmed that gender expressed as female, may in some cases present as an obstacle in promotions. Whereas four of the participants indicated that social identity was more impactful than gender alone. Five participants discussed that as women intersected with social identities, in general and as a given, they had to be better, work harder, and give 110 percent to promote to leadership and upper management positions. Their paraphrases included, that they had to prove themselves, they had to work harder, explain their

views, prove that they were capable, prove that they could do it, be more knowledgeable, prove they were worth it, give 110 percent, be the best communicator, speak perfect English, and that African American women struggle all the time.

Four women, not identifying as a heterosexual Caucasian female, distinguished social identity such as race, ethnicity or variant sexual orientation as primarily impacting them contrary to gender alone. In this research, social identity particularly was identified, because as they stated, social work is demographically pervasively female. Four participants noted that invariably others noticed and reacted to their social identity, before their gender. Their paraphrases included, being Latina more than being a woman, people first see African American, one that was more impactful is lesbian identity, and because they were black, more than a woman. Additionally, and importantly, two women noted that African American women have not been promoted to the highest levels of leadership and management positions although there are a few women in those positions. One participant eloquently expressed that it has never been diverse there.

Contradictions

The fourth emergent finding was the contradiction between participants' experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and discrimination and how they viewed the occurrences. Women leaders and managers work in a predominantly women saturated environment. In state social service agencies, employment standards are guided by state and federal laws. Additionally, the agencies have human

resource departments with formal hiring and promotion policies and procedures. One participant noted that the human resource office was diligent and did a good job of creating policies to prevent discrimination in hiring, pay and promotion. Another participant stated that the wages were standardized so pay rates were equal regardless of gender and social identities. Two participants also noted there were internal processes and procedure, such as hiring panels, to protect staff from favoritism. As such, they commented that the laws and policies prevented discrimination towards women and women intersected with social identities. Some of their paraphrases included, HR department and an office downtown that's pretty diligent about the ways our policies are written to not favor any particular (group),

Additionally, three of the participants discussed that there are alternate reasons for hiring or promoting men over women and people who identify as Caucasian over people who identify with social identity. Some of their paraphrases included, they did not think it was about gender, people are promoted or not promoted because they're women, that gender is not an issue in promoting and hiring, people would not say, that they wanted a white male to take a particular job, it may come down to personalities and preferences, people are not being discriminated against, the best person gets picked for the job, agency really tries to find the best person and looking their potential, and that certain men may interview really well.

Nine of the women stated that they did not believe that their gender was a barrier because social work was predominantly female. Also, three participants stated that they did not encounter or see any discrimination based on gender or social

identities. Some of the paraphrases included, there is a balance of men and women in management, all people have the same opportunities, social services are not male dominated, women are in a lot of leadership and positions, management has been female, so not gender, they don't think that gender was much of a factor, and the culture has shifted, and social services is run by females.

Paradoxically, nine of the women participants also made comments paraphrased as, women at the top levels of management are in a sea of men, only white people obtain those positions, white people are being chosen over people of color, and many minority women do not get hired even if they work hard and are qualified. Additionally, participant, paraphrases included, the top people are all white weather they are male or female, not your CEOs that overlook all of us or the county, that's always been a man. Additionally, those participants noted that, as paraphrased, per capita there are disproportionately more men at the highest-level leadership positions, at certain management levels it is just men, most of top management is white males, the CEO's are all male. One participant also discussed male leadership style that was dominating, and two participants discussed that within the organization and upper management there were still traditional gender beliefs, expectations and standards for women and men. Their paraphrases included, culture of this agency, it's dominated by men, still traditionalist views here, somehow men are better leaders than women and that view goes all the way to the top.

Also, five participants described, that men were promoted over women who had more qualifications paraphrased as, there may be a male preference when

choosing someone to hire or promote, male leaders that intimidate women and are untouchable, and there are more male supervisors and managers. Paraphrases included, not your CEOs that overlook all of us or the county, that's always been a man, there's never been a woman in that position, he was promoted because he was male and they were female, not seeing where male dominated, until you get to the CEO level, higher management, they're all white, never felt like my gender was a barrier, we had gone through several strings of promotions and it had all been to men, promoted probably about five males before a female had been promoted, why are they all male, why do they keep getting promoted. There was also a noticeable absence of “out” variant gender or sexual orientation especially in leadership positions. One participant stated they employed a few “out” supervisors. Their paraphrases included that they did not have a lot of people who identify LGBT, there's a few that maybe you can tell but nobody really talks about it. However, one participants noted that they had several “out” supervisors and one stated that she believed the agency was culturally inclusive.

Three women also noted that there appears to continue to be a ceiling on how high women, and particularly African American women, women of color and who identify as LGBTQA, can promote to within social services. African American women and women of color indicated that most of the top management was white males and they have always held those positions, that African American women have been unable to break that barrier, and that when women reached a certain level there were only men. Their paraphrases included, that it may be an unwritten rule that those

positions have never been diverse, reality of not being able to break that barrier just yet. These participants being unable to break the glass ceiling is congruent with the previous research (Barreto, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2009).

Questionnaire Themes

In grounded theory, the researcher reads the initial findings and groups like items together. Then the researcher rereads the grouped information which generates possible findings. These findings are then the basis which generates the next set of questions for a second interview. The second cycle is an important step which acts to validate, invalidate and or create the need for additional research of the generated themes. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and a somewhat large sample size for a qualitative thesis, the researcher with advice from her thesis chair, chose to create a follow up questionnaire based on the themes generated from the first cycle of interviews. This questionnaire served as the second round of interviews. The questionnaire was internet based and contained context information at the beginning of each section of questions. There were 29 close ended questions and each question contained a comment section where the participants could explain their reasons, answers and or give further details. Nine of the ten participants completed the questionnaire and engaged in follow up emails and in person clarifications regarding their perspectives and approval of specific interview notes.

Success Factors

In the first finding which included factors that contributed to success in promotions, all nine of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that internal

personal motivation and drive significantly contributed to their success. Participants commented, that they had an internal drive to promote into positions that would enable them to make changes. One participant's paraphrase included, personal drive to do the best they can. Sixty seven percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that mentors contributed to their success with only one participant who disagreed. Sixty seven percent (n=9) of the participants agreed that peers contributed to their success while fifty six percent (n=9) strongly agreed and agreed that relevant training contributed to their success. When asked which of these items contributed most to their success five participants stated personal drive was the most important. Participant paraphrases included, internal motivation, my internal drive, and personal drive and motivation. These findings indicate a strong validity of the first cycle of interviews.

Organizational Culture and Practices

In the second finding how organizational culture of leadership communication, unreceptive peers, and gender expectations impacted the participants, generated a significant amount of neither agree nor disagree, ranging from one third to half, for all parts of the organization cultural findings. The context for the answers in this section came from the following statement: I am interested in your thoughts about if and or how, unwritten rules may have acted as a barrier and impacted the timeliness and promotions to positions in leadership and management, including the highest levels, within social services. This section related to women's experiences of encountering shaming events, silence, and lack of collaboration of upper management

on important issues. Thirty four percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that some instances of inadequate upper level management communication and approach, such as shaming, or chaotic, reactive and indecisive decision making, had a negative impact. However, one participant disagreed. Forty five percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that lack of support, and upper level managements poor communication approaches had a negative impact while fifty six percent (n=9) neither agreed or disagreed. Paraphrases that explained this finding in more detail, included, not supported, lack of communication had a very negative impact, and has poor communication. Three participants disagreed that upper level managements poor communication approaches had a negative impact.

Forty five percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that the actions and communication of unreceptive staff had a negative impact, while forty four percent (n=9) disagreed. This section correlated with women of color's experiences with unreceptive staff. Thirty-three percent (n=9) participants agreed that the possible expectation that women adopt masculine leadership traits had a negative impact in the timeliness and promotions to positions in leadership and management, including the highest levels, within social services. One of their paraphrase included, that there is an expectation that men expect women to react emotionally and that women have to overly control of their emotions. However, two disagreed or strongly disagreed and thirty three percent (n=9) neither agreed or disagreed. This section mirrored women's shared experiences from the first interview.

Intersections of Gender and Other Social Identities

The third finding, that women who identified as social identities intersected with gender were impacted primarily by their social identity and secondarily by their gender also generated a significant amount of neither agree nor disagree responses, averaging a little less than half of the participant responses, for many parts of the intersection of social identities finding. The context for the answers in this section came from the following statement: I am interested in your thoughts about, if and how social identities as intersected by gender impacted the timeliness and promotion to the highest levels in leadership and management within social services. Thirty three percent (n=9) of the participants agreed that race, ethnicity, prejudice, and or intolerance and or, biases and or inequity had a negative. Some of the Paraphrases included, they were significantly impacted, while others encountered accusations that women were hired because of their social identity as well paraphrases included, that it is not as bad as it used to be. This section correlated most women's shared experiences in their interview who identified African American and women of color. However, thirty three percent disagreed or strongly disagreed including Paraphrases such as, some agencies are color blind. This section correlated to women's shared experiences who identified as heterosexual and Caucasian. However, variant sexual orientation, generated the opposite response. Fifty-five of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that prejudice, and or intolerance, and or biases and or inequity had a negative impact. Paraphrases included, that they personally had not experienced it, and some agencies do not have issues with gender identity, expression or

orientation. This section correlated to women, who identified as heterosexual, in the shared experiences during their interview.

Forty-five percent (n=9) of the participants agreed that prejudice, and or intolerance, and or biases had a negative impact regarding gender, including Paraphrases about being passed over; however, there were one comment that being female helped promote to higher levels.

Q15 A woman's race, minority status and or variant sexual orientation has a greater negative impact than gender alone

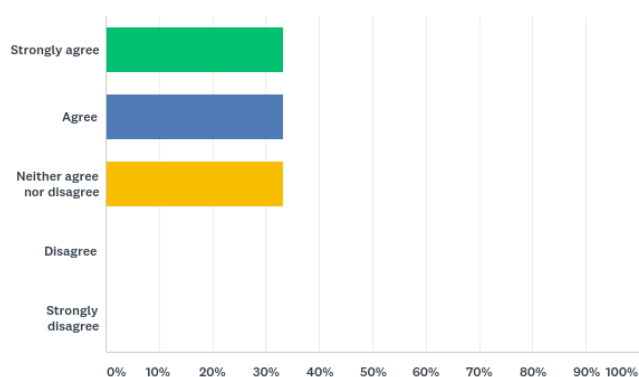


Figure 1. Question 15.

Sixty seven percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that a women's race, minority status and or variant sexual orientation has a greater negative impact than gender alone. This section correlated to most participants experiences shared in the first interview.

Fifty six percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that women and women intersected by other social identities, had to work harder and be better to achieve the same recognition, pay and promotion as women who identify as, in their view, white women or men. Paraphrases included, they had to prove

themselves to a higher degree and that it is still prevalent. One participant recognized that although they had not viewed or experienced that type of discrimination, it may be due to the fact that they identified as Caucasian.

Q16 Women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation have to work harder and be better to achieve the same recognition, pay and promotion as women who identify as Caucasian, heterosexual and or men.

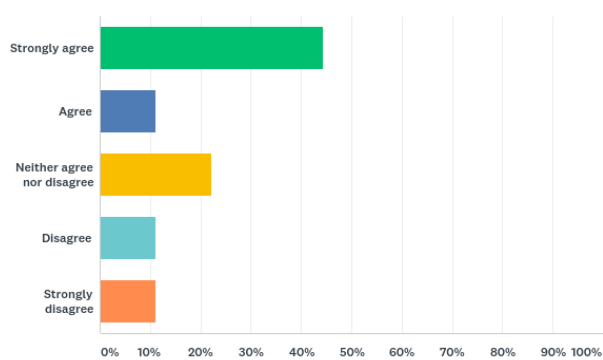


Figure 2. Question 15.

Additionally, Paraphrases included that issues of race and gender are not blatant anymore. Eighty nine percent (n=9) of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they had to be better and work harder than men. Some of the paraphrases included, prove myself to a higher degree and don't think it's changed overall.

Seventy eight percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation have to "fit" into the dominate culture, while 56% (n=9) strongly agreed or agreed that they would hesitate to participate in cultural displays, such as cultural clothing, hair styles, displays of pride and or holidays out of fear of a negative impact and so they will be retained and or achieve the same recognition,

Q18 Women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation have to "fit" into the dominate culture so they will be retained and or achieve the same recognition, pay and promotion.

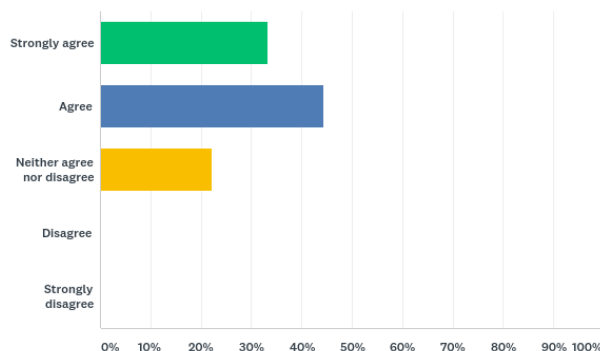


Figure 3. Question 18

pay and promotion as peers located within the dominate culture. Paraphrases included that some women would wear their hair within the dominate cultural norms to minimize a cultural bias and the idea that this is an issue for everyone. This section may be correlated specifically with women's shared experiences in the first interview that identity as African American, woman of color, minority and variant sexual gender and orientation. However, 33% (n=9) disagreed and included a comment about agencies encouraging cultural heritage and expression. This section validated the possible finding that social identities have a greater impact than gender alone.

Contradictions

The fourth emergent finding was the contradiction between participants experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and discrimination and their views about the occurrences. The context for the answers in this section came from the following statement: I am interested in your thoughts concerning a prevalent belief that, because women leaders and managers work in a predominantly women saturated

environment, sexism and discrimination does not currently occur and does not impact women's pay rates and their ability to promote into positions in leadership and management, including the highest levels, with in social services. Eighty eight percent (n=9) of the participants agreed that both racism, sexism, or discrimination and an alternative explanation were the reasons those who identify as Caucasian or men are hired and or promoted over them. One participant stated that she had not experienced this situation. Although during the interviews specific words such as racism, sexism or discrimination were not discussed, this section did correlate with women's shared experience in the first cycle.

Fifty six percent (n=9) of participants strongly agreed or agreed that racism and or discrimination may contribute to people who identify as Caucasian regularly being hired and or chosen over women of color and minorities for employment and promotions. One participant disagreed. Paraphrases included, has not been their experience.

Forty five percent (n=9) of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that homophobia and or discrimination may contribute to people who identify as heterosexual regularly are hired and or chosen over for employment and promotion over people who identify as gender variant and or variant sexual orientation. Conversely 55% (n=9) of participants strongly agreed or agreed that it was safe to be "out" and continue to be hired and or promoted. However, 33% (n=9) disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was safe to be "out." One comment that stood out was,

although the participant did not agree, they acknowledge that they employed mainly employed heterosexual women.

Q25 Homophobia and or discrimination may contribute to people who identify as gender variant and or variant sexual orientation as people who identify as heterosexual regularly are hired and or chosen over for employment and promotions.

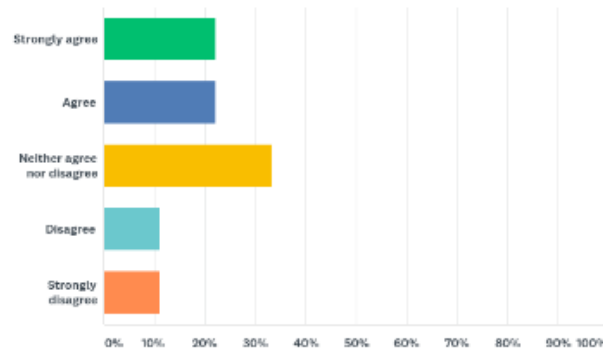


Figure 4. Question 25

Q26 It is safe for people who identify as gender variant and or variant sexual orientation to be "out" and continue to be hired and or promoted.

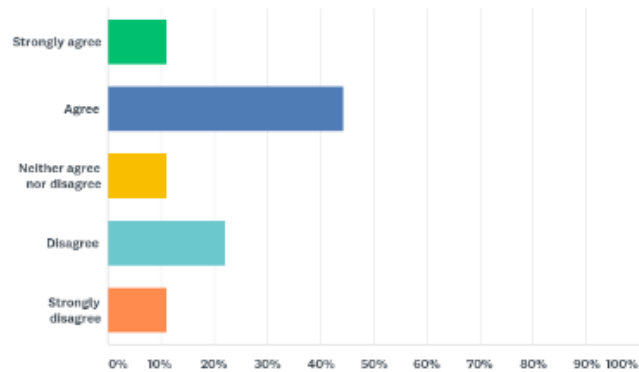


Figure 5. Question 26

Sixty seven percent (n=9) of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that a concept exists that sexism and discrimination are perceived as insignificant and or tolerable because they typically only occur at the highest levels of leadership and

management. Although the participants did not utilize the exact verbiage, this finding was present in their shared experiences specifically as interpreted from the considerable disparaging answers in the first interview.

Summary

The generated themes from this research may indicate that the dynamics that impact the intersectional gender gap are as follows: 1), that the intersection of gender and social identities had a profounder impact over gender alone, 2), that sexism, racism, homophobia and discrimination likely exist hidden and silently intertwined within organizational culture and institution; and 3), that being surrounded by women in the work force forwards a sense of improvement by women that may lead to a false security in the advancement of women in social services.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Overview of Major Findings

This research attempted to answer the research questions, what dynamics in the social work institution contribute to the intersectional gender gap and in what ways do these dynamics influence the intersectional gender gap. It also endeavored to answer in what ways are women impacted by their gender as intersected by other social identities within the social work institution. Five major findings emerged from this study, including, factors that contribute to women's success, that the intersection of gender and social identities had a profounder impact over gender alone, that sexism, racism, and homophobia, likely exist as discrimination hidden and intertwined within the institution, that being surrounded by women in the work force forwards a sense of improvement by women that may lead to a misleading security in the advancement of women in social services, and an overarching theme emerged as power differentials in relationship including power expressions and power over as demonstrated through substantial prejudicial and disrespectful language and actions which negatively impacted women and especially as intersected by other social identities.

First Major Finding- Contributing Factors for Women's Success

The first major finding that emerged from this research highlighted the impact of specific factors on women's success in social services. Women, in this research, were positively impacted by their own internal personal drive, mentorship and

discovering and creating opportunities. Eight of the nine women believed that internal personal drive was the greatest contributor to their success. Additionally, confirming Mallinger, Starks and Tarter's (2017) findings that mentorship through relational and professional support, significantly contributed to women's success in pay and promotions (Buchanan, 2014). As well, actively searching for and creating opportunities, such as volunteering for committees and projects assisted them in and the timelessness of promotions. From this finding, it seems that having an internal drive is important for women to success in promoting. Additionally, external support such as mentoring and access to opportunities is important to succeed in promoting within social service organizations in leadership positions.

Second Major Finding – Intersection of Gender and Other Social Identities

The second major finding in this research was that social identities, such as race, ethnicity and variant sexual orientation, as intersected by gender, may have contributed to multilayered barriers to women's promotion to leadership positions. The participants in this study explicitly shared that they experienced their race, ethnicity and variant sexual orientation primarily over their gender alone. In other words, African American, women of color and variant sexually oriented women specifically stated that their race and sexual orientation was noticed first and had the most substantial impact on their experiences. Many participants experienced some form of a negative impact that likely resulted from racially motivated action by others. Many participants agreed that women were generally reluctant to wear or display cultural clothing, hair or artifacts. Forms of discrimination conscious or

subconscious, individual and or intertwined within policies, procedures and practices of an organization, negatively impact women personally and professionally, as the resulting affect likely influences collective lower pay rates, and ability and timeliness of promotion.

Research has identified that women are often exposed to overt and covert forms of sexism, which when is subtle or hidden, has been termed microaggression (Mallinger, Starks, & Tarter, 2017). Women of color are also exposed to overt and covert racism, prejudice and bias which also may be contained within microaggressions, thus the doubling the impact. Amplifying the impact, women of color who identify as variant sexually oriented may experience multiple layers of discrimination. Whether intentional or not, microaggressions, such as sexual, sexist, racial, homophobic comments, innuendos, jokes, or visual displays operate to devalue and demean individuals and, within these research findings, specifically women in high level positions of power (Mallinger, Starks, & Tarter, 2017). How participants experienced and were impacted, by discrimination was directly related to their social location. Routinely, participants as intersected with other social identities experienced discrimination in the forms of racism, prejudice and sexism, whereas typically, women that were identified within the dominate cultural norms, solely experienced sexism. It is clear from these findings that women, from the start, are essentially disadvantaged, while women with other intersecting social identities face substantially greater disadvantaged in their pursuit of leadership positions.

Third Major Finding - Organizational Culture and Common Practices

In the same vein, the third major finding that emerged was that sexism, racism, prejudice, and homophobia likely exist as hidden and intertwined within the institution in the forms of organizational culture and common practices. These discriminations may then contribute as dynamic barriers to timeliness of and promotions to the highest positions of leadership in social services. Forms of discrimination included, poor communication approaches of leaders, backlash against women of color in protest of them attaining promotion and gender expectations. There are a multitude of laws, policies, procedures and practices that were instituted to protect women and as intersected by other social identities (Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; & The Civil Rights Act of 1991). However, women in social services still experience forms of discrimination. As Baxter (1988) stated, 'Prejudice is the property of all people, but racism can be attributed only to those who have the power to translate their prejudices into action.' (Brathwaite, 2018).

The women that participated in this research held high level positions of power and yet, as was evident in the research findings, many were shamed, yelled at, demeaned, and silenced. Public shaming is demeaning and generally shows a lack of respect and may contribute to how others view and respect women in leadership and private shaming may influence a person's confidence level, both of which may constrain women from further promotions or in a timely manner.

In these research findings, some women believed that they were restricted to communicating and exhibiting masculine leadership traits to be given equal due consideration by men in leadership positions. By conforming to masculine leadership norms, they may have ultimately been unable to express their authentic selves as leaders. Due to gender expectations, some women endured a double standard. Under similar circumstances where men were labeled as assertive and a leader, women were labeled as too direct or a bitch. One participant paraphrased that leadership styles were not gendered although there is abundant research that leadership traits generally fall into either the socially constructed male or female realms and that organizations are also gendered (Acker, 1990) People typically sort others into male or female categories which initiates gender stereotypes which in turn generates gender-based separation (Reskin, Steinberg, Haignere, & Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, 1984; Ridgeway & England, 2007). In this study with these participants and as supported by research, Bakan (1996) termed feminine traits as communal characteristics, which are strongly connected with women, involve qualities like honest, warm, trustworthy, helpful, cooperative, nurturing and kind, sympathetic. Additionally, Flowers and Lane (2015), noted that feminine leadership traits such as relational qualities included being relationship oriented, having the ability to be emotive, be collaborative, and engage others with an open inclusive communication style. Masculine leadership traits, for the purposes of this paper, possess agentic characteristics, which are strongly related to men, and include traits such as independent, ambitious, forceful, efficient, competent, assertive, self-confident,

active, and energetic. (Bakan 1996: Berkery, Morley, & Tiernan, 2013). Because an expressed gender may not be compatible with the stereotyped traits that others believe are needed for specific jobs and as such may create discriminatory practices such as sexism (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, Heilman, & Fowler 1991).

One way to notice this type of bias is the fact that women leaders receive more negative reviews than men as a result of the difference between traditional female traits and leadership characteristics (Bird, 2011). This bias is also evident in these research findings by the double standard of traditional gender expectations. The bias is also evident from the fact that this research revealed that women of color have effectively been excluded from the highest-level positions. In this research study, seven participants noted that their agencies have changed as they are hiring more women and women as intersected by other social identities into higher management and director's positions. However, the highest levels within those same agencies, such as the CEO's and administrators continue to be men. Unfortunately, agencies typically, even when changing policies to encompass gender, racial, cultural and class and uniqueness of other social identities, the changes are layered on top of the existing dominant paradigm. As such the changes then do not generate the shift to an all-inclusive paradigm from which to create policy and operate organizations

Crenshaw (1998) argued that when the focus comes from the dominant group it disparages individuals that identify with multiple social identities. Additionally, she argued that it conceals the consequences that cannot be understood as stemming from

isolated sources of discrimination). Then, according to Basford, Offermann and Behrend, (2014), the motivation to address discrimination of women is decreased because it is minimized, despite the injurious cumulative damages related to subtle sexism (Basford et al., 2014). This researcher would argue based on the research findings that there is also decreased motivation to address most forms of subtle or not so subtle discriminations of women who identified with social identities.

Significantly, within the third major finding, most of the experiences shared directly related to their social location. This research showed that the journey and experience of each of the women participants, was almost exclusively based on social location, in other words, how they identified themselves in gender, sexual orientation, race and culture. Typically, women who identified as heterosexual Caucasian experienced overt and covert forms of sexist discrimination. While women that identified as intersected by other social identities, frequently experienced multiple layers of obvious and obscured forms of discrimination including sexism, racism, prejudice and homophobia. Other contributing factors for discrimination sexism, racism, prejudice, and homophobia are likely inherent bias and prejudices which may then be ingrained within the cultural of an organization and contribute as dynamic barriers based on gender and other social identity stereotypes. (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). This concept rests on the continuum that policy, processes, procedures and practices that appear neutral but produce the patterned outcomes which are discriminatory, in fact perpetuates racism, sexism, prejudice, and homophobia. A distinct example of this concept is the decades long evidence-based outcome that, although women

significantly out-number men in social work, women continue to be paid less than men across the board and are excluded from executive administration, such as the CEO positions (Gibelman & Schervish, 1995; Gibelman, 2002; Koeske, Krowinski, 2004; Lane & Flowers, 2015; NASW, 2011; York, Henley, & Gamble, 2008). In these research findings, although, often an outcome was experienced as discriminatory, such as being told they were hired because they were black opposed to being qualified, women were generally unwilling to label their experiences as sexist, racist or homophobic. Additionally, the interview and questionnaire findings may have included a tendency for some participants to practice restraint, as a possible form of protection from or loyalty to their social service organization.

The Fourth Finding - Misleading Security

The fourth major finding included an idea that being surrounded by women in the work force forwards a sense of improvement by women that may lend itself to a misleading security in the advancement of women to the highest levels of management. A significant and potentially detrimental dynamic appears to be a notion that because the environment and employment standards are guided by state laws, discrimination based on gender and other social identities, does not significantly impact women's ability to promote and attain equal pay. This theme was based on the substantial information captured in the first interview when asked about how gender and other social identities impacted their journeys wherein eight participants shared that they worked in a predominantly female environment. Experiences included, the

contradictory information between sharing the negative impacts of their experiences and how policies and procedures prevented the very experience that they shared.

Most participants gave alternative explanations for when men were hired or promoted over them. Most participants indicated that people would not get hired specifically because they were male, Caucasian, or African American. Some participants noted that men may have been hired or promoted over them because of the way they interview, hiring managers' preferences, candidate's personality, they may have been best for that job, or they were just one of the many people that were hired. However, when asked to complete multiple close ended questions in the questionnaire that included specific words such as racism, sexism, prejudice, and homophobia, their responses were mixed from the interviews.

The questionnaire findings may indicate the phenomenon of when conduct is normalized by a dominant cultural environment, it becomes invisible (unknown) and the belief or idea of a culture encompassing post sexist, post racial ideologies. However, Bird (2011) made a significant discovery in her research, which is likely applicable to these research findings. She found that, in universities, most women leaders in powerful decision-making positions continue to embrace individual failures as explanations for gender disparities in advancement. The fact that these leaders' "lacked the recognition of institutionalized gender barriers, suggests the need for greater dissemination of research findings (and training) about how systemic barriers operate and why these barriers disproportionately disadvantage women" (Bird, 2011).

Most all participants generally agreed that the environment regarding discrimination is better than it used to be. Within county social service agencies there are women as Directors, Assistant Directors, Deputy Directors, Division Chiefs and Managers. In some agencies, there is even a balance of women leaders from different racial and cultural groups. There have been instances of white heterosexual males promoting women of color and other social identities. While there is evidence of women, in general, and especially women that identify with intersecting other social identities, breaking barriers, they have not yet broken through the glass ceiling. As Williams (1992) argued, instead of encountering the barrier of a glass ceiling, men are still riding a “glass escalator” to the highest management position.

For instance, in California there are fifty-eight social service agencies that employ directors. As of the writing of this chapter, two thirds are women (County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA, 2018). Additionally, although men only represent one third of the director positions, they make an average of 64,000.00 a year more than women directors (CWDA). Case in point, although there are 10 full-time staff members employed by the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the highest position is held by a man who has been in the Executive Director position for 25 years (CWDA). Additionally, 8 women and 1 man fill the other positions. At the next level of higher management and administrative positions, the environment is chiefly male heteronormativity as evidenced by participants stating that traditionalist gender views exist in upper level leadership. In at least one agency in California, a

Caucasian woman was promoted, and as one participant stated, she is forced to work in a sea of men.

Discrimination continues to exist within institutions as hidden as it is intrinsically present in policies, procedures, practices, and within practices that are often encased as microaggressions (Mallinger, Starks, & Tarter, 2017). The belief that they don't exist or the belief that they are not negatively impactful, creates barriers wherein women and as intersected by other social identities may not notice how these systems negatively impact their ability to obtain equal pay and promotions (Crosby, 1984; Crosby, Stockdale, & Ropp, 2007). Pomerantz and Raby (2017) found a similar phenomenon in their research. They called it invisibility, which, as Crosby (1984) stated, was actually a form of repudiation. Specifically, that although the girls they interviewed expressed experiences of discrimination due to gender and as intersected by other social identities, they denied that what they experienced was sexism or racism.

The findings from this research confirmed Ringrose's (2013) postulation, in the overwhelming response as eight of the women participants stated that their internal drive had the greatest influence on their success over collective or structural support. Participants also noted that their internal personal drive was significant and also that they had to work harder, give 110%, and prove themselves.

In these research findings, this aspect was present as women participants as intersected by other social identities, paraphrased, white people are in the top (highest positions), whether they are women or men. Also, they paraphrased that, in

some instances, white people and men were promoted over minorities even if they worked hard and were qualified.

Fifth Major Finding - Power Relations

Even though this research utilized discrimination as a significant factor expressed in inequalities, the overarching theme from this research is power relations such as expressed power and power over. Foucault stated that, "the analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question of power relations and the 'agonism' between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is a permanent political task inherent in all social existence" (Dryfus, Rabinow, 1982, p. 223, as cited in Foucault, 1980). In other words, to illuminate the power dynamic of those individuals and institutions wanting control of power and those resisting, it is necessary to have an open discourse to explore the 'expression of power': 'power over', 'power to', 'power with', and 'power within relationships as well as how those power relations impacts individuals, communities and societies. The question then becomes, who has power and how do they express power with others.

A significant indicator of this research finding was that the disparity of power differentials was a missing fundamental consideration, esteem and deference for women and especially as intersected with other social identities. In other words, it occurs that there was a general lack of respect, care and concern for women and minorities. As participants were sharing their journeys and the data were being reviewed, collectively most all participants shared multiple experiences that as an expression of power, was conceivably inherent disrespect. While some participants

moved easily and quickly up the ladder, others took longer and were subjected to racial and sexist discrimination at various points in their journey. Women and especially those intersected by other social identities such as race, ethnicity and variant sexual orientation have effectively been prevented from promoting to the highest level such as executive administration, CEO positions of leadership in social services.

The impact of negative expressions of power and power over were explicitly evident in the research findings when powerful women leaders were silenced and shamed in front of peers and when African American women, Latina and Lesbian experienced forms of prejudice, and discrimination that likely impeded the timeliness and ultimately prevented promotion to the highest levels of leadership. They were also evident when, as a result of the intersection of gender and other social identities, participants were subjected to backlash from peers including demeaning comments and rumors, quitting agencies, initiating formal complaints, or law suits in protest of women especially women of color attaining promotions. As well, power within was present in the participants as they continued to promote in spite of the impact of discrimination.

Freire (1993) discusses the idea that when individuals become culturally immersed and do not actively and ongoingly practice self-reflection, they may be predisposed to participate in and recreate oppressive cultures (p. 117). The significance of the recreation of oppressive cultures cannot be overstated. Social service organizations' hierarchical top down approach (Pease, 2011) impacts

individuals at each level. Then, the power over people, experiencing and resisting, ultimately impacts the clients they serve where the cycle may be then recreated within their families. This concept was significantly present in these research findings, in the resistance of women's unwillingness to label discriminations as sexist, racist or homophobia possibly because they are no longer politically correct, a connotation of victimhood may be attached to the labels, they may occur as feminist or they agree with the post-feminist color blind ideology. In any event, regardless of the label, these experiences continue to perpetuate oppressive structures albeit often hidden and intertwined within organizational culture and practices. As Crenshaw (2014) states, "At the end of the day, it really is a question of power: who has the power to end the debate? To walk away? To say, "I'm done talking about it, and I can go on with my rhetoric in a 'business as usual' kind of response?"

Limitations

The limitations of this study included a moderate sample size of 10 women. Although many of the findings of this research are congruent with previous research, the sample size may limit the findings and may not be able to generalize for a larger population. Additionally, due to time constraints, the researcher chose to forgo the second in person interviews for an internet based close ended questionnaire that was then member checked through follow up emails and meetings. This choice likely impacted the depth, and richness that may have been found in a rigorous grounded theory approach.

Implications for Social Work Policy and Practice

Existing Inequalities

To give context to these research findings and implications, it is important to acknowledge the effect of the current social and political climate and how it contributes to perpetuating inequalities such as prejudice and discrimination. Since the late 1990's the idea has been forwarded that we now live in a post-feminism, post-racial society (Ringrose, Gill, & Livingstone, 2013; Ringrose, 2013) The inherent understanding of post-feminism is that sexism is no longer a barrier for women. This is based on a belief that women have achieved equality to men and that in a post-racial society, people of color have achieved equality to the dominate white culture.

However, the basic foundation of the institutions, in general and specifically within social services, has not changed at the highest levels of leadership, authority and decision making. Pease (2001) explains, "Women in social work still work within patriarchal structures of employing organizations and may at times serve patriarchal interests, even if they are actively challenging them". As a result of working within a patriarchal structure, inherent conscious and unconscious bias against the female gender and as intersected with other social identities, likely exists. In fact, Orme (2003), contended that dominate forms of masculinity are predominantly encased in social work because masculine traits include being rational and technical. However, possessing rational and technical traits are not a mutually exclusive with men as women possess them as well.

Additionally, the implicit messages are that people now live in a color-blind society where everyone is equal even though women as intersected by other social identities are suffering the consequences of sexism, racism, homophobia and other discriminations. However, racial-ethnic minorities, experience colorblindness as an erasure of their racially discernible experiences because they repeatedly experience the negative effects of race (Fryberg & Stephens, 2010).

In a colorblind society, White people, can effectively ignore racism in American life, justify the current social order, and feel more comfortable with their relatively privileged standing in society as they are less likely to experience disadvantages due to race (Fryberg & Stephens, 2010). Brathwait (2018) argues that racism operates in several ways. She found that when an institution observes traditional ways of creating policy and procedures, it disregards the nature of a multiracial and multicultural society which she termed as racism by default. Next, she argued that, people in power may be influenced by racist stereotypes even if they are not consciously racist. And lastly, that although policy, processes and procedures appear neutral, racism occurs when they effectively maintain the position of privileged white individuals and have the effect of excluding black people.

Women and as intersected by other social identities today are navigating the existing structural inequalities while at the same time being told they do not exist. The answers are then not for social service institutions to solely create policies or practices for individuals, but to transform the structural aspects of the way that

social service operates. The findings of this study are relevant to social work policy as a potential primer for transforming power relations.

Theories for Organizational Transformation

Utilizing anti-oppressive, transcultural, and critical black feminist theories encompassed in the Pillars of Social Justice (Spade, 2011), to create policy would effectively disperse power. Employing these combined theories through inclusion of the four components of the Pillars of Social Justice (Spade, 2011), has the power to disrupt the existing dominate hierarchical and power distribution paradigm by being all-inclusive and encompassing everyone's voice as equal and equally important and valuable. They would also be generated from an oppressed view point which is significantly different vantage than the dominate group. Additionally, these theories encompass Freire (1970) individual conscientizaion which enables an open dialog about the root causes and interconnections of oppressive policies and practices which serves to facilitate personal transformations in people's biases, judgements and prejudices. (Carroll & Minkler, 2000; Freire, 1998). Anti-oppressive theory promotes inclusion, transformation, equity and social justice which looks to structural inequalities by focusing on process and outcomes to change structures, policies, procedures and practices (Morgaine & Capous-Desyllas, 2015, pp. 24-25).

Because all people operate in cultural contexts which is a lens that constructs world views, utilizing transcultural theory to create policy further addresses issues of disparity between dominate groups and minorities and ensures that the policies are sensitive and inclusive of all members of the organization (San Jose State University,

Master of Social Work, 2007). Including Black Feminist Thought provides an analysis from the perspective of equality from intersecting oppressions among race, gender, sexuality, class, age and disability (Collins, 2009, pp. 25-26). The lens is based on peoples lived experiences and how the interconnections are intertwined and cumulatively impact individuals, families, and communities. Black Feminist Thought importantly contributes to main issues of social justice as it enables stakeholders to critically view and understand how institutional racism and sexism contributes to oppressive policies and practices (Turner & Maschi, 2015, Collins, 2009). Utilizing these theories together in The Four Pillars Framework (Spade, 2001) would create the ability for transformational and lasting change by altering the foundation of the principles of social work policies and practices within the social service institution and the communities that they serve.

When an organization includes all its members in decisions makings, it teaches and empowers them to reciprocate the experience with the clients, likely impacting their relationships and increasing positive outcomes for clients. Therefore, in the context of the findings from this study, it behooves social service agencies to take a critical look at their practices and policies and increase their understanding and application of such anti oppressive, culturally informed practices and policies that would lead to an enhanced equitable experience for social workers across all social identities. As such, this researcher is recommending the successful practice of Participative Leadership.

Enhanced Equitable Experiences and Results

“Participatory management typically requires greater sharing of information, rewards, and power with front-line employees, as well as considerably greater investment in training” (Kaufman, 2001 p. 507).

Participative leadership model typically incorporates specific aspects. These include, leadership as a team, opposed to one individual, empowerment is utilized over power and control, education and training are paramount, and there is an emphasis on connectedness and interdependence (Kezar, 2001),

Upper management would utilize Participative leadership with collaborative decision making. Participative leadership has been successfully practiced by HCL Technologies worldwide, including twenty-one states in the United States (HCL Technologies, 2018). Participative leaders possess specific qualities which include, the ability to share power, are open minded, empower people and groups, collaborate and build teams (Mooney, ND). Utilizing this model creates transparency and disperses and inverts power differentials. In the Participative leadership model all members are engaged in setting company goals, processes and practices together collaboratively (Root III, 2018). Through inverting the power structure social services would initiate an employee first standard as a mechanism to promote employee empowerment and engagement (HCT Technologies, 2018; Gallo, 2013) The process of collaborating together typically leads to a decision that employees are committed to and that will eventually benefit all team members. Gary Kelly, the CEO of

Southwest Airlines, says, "... Everything begins and ends with our people" (Gallo, 2013).

Social workers and administrators would be trained in anti-oppressive and cultural humility and practice approaches. This training would assist social workers in discovering and acknowledging their conscious and unconscious bias and significantly reduce them. This training would assist them in relating to management, each other and clients by engaging each person from their own cultural perspective. They would also be engaged with leadership in goal, process, practices and collaborative decision making. Participatory leadership model also provides space where team members can experience agency and empowerment. As such, this model may also enhance leadership development to increase leadership qualities of more individuals.

Utilizing research and best practices within the above listed theories and framework, would increase collaboration with clients as a result of sharing power with the social workers. Sharing power would also create a space for clients to experience agency and empowerment. In an enlightened state, there is a possibility within social services to significantly reduce or ideally eliminate the disproportionality of children of color within social services and assist greater and quicker family and children reunifications. By employing Participatory Leadership and management, clients, social workers and administration alike may enjoy enhanced equitable experiences and results

forms of human blindness and an inability to recognize the notion of difference as a dynamic human force, one which is enriching rather than threatening to the defined self, when there are shared goals (Lorde, 2007, p. 45).

Recommendations for Future Research

Social work would be greatly served by advancing future research on the foundation of power relations opposed to individual components of power expression alone. Having moved from the collective advantage to the individualistic construct shifted the research focus from transforming structural institutional oppressions to promoting individual solutions. Focusing on the expressions of power as the potential ultimate dynamic barrier of women and especially as intersected by other social identities, may illuminate hidden inequalities. The question is no longer “if” an intersectional gender gap exists. The research shows that when accounting for all other variables, gender is the reason for the gap (Gould Schieder, & Geier, 2016; Kauffman, 2016). This researcher would also argue that the same is true for other social identities. The questions must be, how do we fix and prevent the intersectional gender gap. A valuable approach may be to engage in Participatory Action Research. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is valuable because its methodologies use real-world problems. Also, PAR is exemplified feminist research Cahill, Cerecer, & Bradley, 2010). Additionally, PAR includes the participants, about whom the study is for, in the all aspects of the research project, including, design, studying, and questions and analysis and implementation (Lawson, Caringi, Pyles, Jurkowski, &

Bozlak. 2015). Utilizing participatory action research with all stakeholders, specifically including gender at the intersection of other social identities, such as race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, would enable patterns and nuanced expressions of power and power relations to be discovered.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PROBATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was your experience of the policies and procedures that provided you with opportunities and or barriers on your journey to your current position?
2. How did the organizational culture of the organizations you have worked at influence/impact your journey to where you are now? (probes will include- unwritten rules, values of the organization, ideologies)
3. What was your experience of the common symbols and language within the social service agencies? (probes will include- mission and vision statements, visual displays)
 - a. How did these symbols and language impact your journey?
4. How were people rewarded, honored, and promoted within the social service agencies?
 - a. How did gender and other social identities influence the decisions?
5. How were people disciplined, shamed and or ostracized including what threatens them?
 - a. How did gender and other social identities influence the decisions?
6. What was your experience with resources that were available to assist women with pay rates and promotions and did they apply to all women?

7. What has been your experience with senior level administrators regarding gender identity, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation and did other women have similar experiences?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

California State University, Stanislaus
Informed Consent

Dear Participant:

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by a student that is being done to fulfill requirements for a Master's degree in Social Work at CSU Stanislaus. We hope to learn about the dynamics that contribute to the intersectional gender gap in employment, pay, and promotion in the field of social work so that we can suggest possible solutions to reduce and or eliminate the gap. If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in a face to face interview for approximately one to one and a half hours with possible follow up face to face or telephone interviews to answer questions and or to clarify information. The follow-up interviews are expected to be 30-45 minutes long.

There are no known risks to you for your participation in this study.

It is possible that you will not benefit directly by participating in this study. However, you and or others may benefit from this study based on recommendations from the study on how to reduce the intersectional gender gap. The information collected will be protected from all inappropriate disclosure under the law. All data will be kept in a secure location during the course of the study. No individual identifying information and or characteristic will be disclosed in the findings; all findings will be reported in an aggregate form. All data will be destroyed (the tapes erased, and the notes shredded) three years after the completion of the study, anticipated to be January 2021.

Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. You can also choose to not answer any question.

If you agree to participate, please indicate this decision by signing below. If you have any questions about this research study please contact me, **Lorie A. Webb**, at **408-489-7061** or my faculty sponsor, **Shradha Tibrewal** at **(209)667-3951**. If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator by phone (209)667-3493 or email IRBAdmin@csustan.edu.

Sincerely,

Lorie A. Webb
MSW Student

I have read and understand the information provided above. All of my questions, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Participant)

Name (printed) _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE THEME QUESTIONS

Section 1.

I am interested in your thoughts about if and or how

Specifically, your thoughts about the following

1. Internal personal motivation and drive contributed to your success
2. Mentors contributed to your success
3. Peer support contributed to your success
4. Relevant trainings significantly contributed to your success.
5. Which ones were most important

Section 2.

Cultural Themes Follow up questions to send to participants

I am interested in your thoughts about if and or how, unwritten rules may have acted as a barrier and impacted the timeliness and promotions to positions in leadership and management, including the highest levels, within social services.

Specifically, your thoughts about the following possible unwritten and or unspoken occurrences:

6. Insufficient (shaming, chaotic, reactive, indecisive) upper level management had a negative impact
7. Lack of support had a negative impact

8. Upper level management's poor communication approaches had a negative impact
9. The actions and communication of unreceptive staff had a negative impact
10. The possible expectation that women adopt masculine leadership traits had a negative impact

Section 3.

Intersection of Social Identities Themes Follow up questions to send to participants

I am interested in your thoughts about, if and how social identities as intersected by gender impacted the timeliness and promotion to the highest levels in leadership and management within social services

Specifically, your thoughts on the following:

7. Prejudice, intolerance, biases and or inequity regarding race had a negative impact
8. Prejudice, and or intolerance, and or biases and or inequity regarding ethnicity had a negative impact
9. Prejudice, and or intolerance, and or biases and or inequity regarding sexual orientation had a negative impact
10. Prejudice, and or intolerance, and or biases and or inequity regarding gender had a negative impact
11. A woman's race, minority status and or variant sexual orientation has a greater negative impact than gender alone

12. Women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation have to work harder and be better to achieve the same recognition, pay and promotion.
13. Women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation have to work harder and be better to achieve the same recognition, pay and promotion as Caucasian women, heterosexuals and or men.
14. Women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation have to be "fit" into the dominate culture, so they will be retained and or achieve the same recognition, pay and promotion.
15. Homophobia and or discrimination may contribute to people who identify as gender variant and or variant sexual orientation as people who identify as heterosexual regularly are hired and or chosen over for employment and promotions.
16. It is safe for people who identify as gender variant and or variant sexual orientation to be "out" and continue to be hired and or promoted.
17. When women of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation are hired and or promoted, they are often harassed by peers claiming they were promoted due to their social identity.
18. Woman of color, minority status and or variant sexual orientation are hesitant to participate in cultural displays, such as cultural clothing, hair styles and or holidays because they are concerned that cultural display would negatively impact their careers especially promotions.

Section 4.

Shroud of Invisibility Follow up questions to send to participants

I am interested in your thoughts concerning a prevalent belief that, because women leaders and managers work in a predominantly women saturated environment, sexism and discrimination does not currently occur and does not impact women's pay rates and their ability to promote into positions in leadership and management, including the highest levels, with in social services.

Specifically, your thoughts about the following:

19. state regulations and internal human resource departments prevent employment, pay and promotion policies from favoring any particular group.
20. Sexism may contribute to men commonly being hired and or chosen over women for employment and promotions.
21. There are many reasons why men are commonly being hired and or chosen over women for employment and promotions.
22. Racism and or discrimination may contribute to people who identify as Caucasian regularly being hired and or chosen over women of color and minorities for employment and promotions.
23. There are many reasons why people who identify as Caucasian regularly being hired and or chosen over women of color and minorities for employment and promotions.
24. A concept exists that sexism and discrimination are perceived as insignificant and or tolerable because they typically only occur at the highest levels of leadership and management