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**BOSTON, NEW YORK, AND OTHER: UNCLAIMED SPACE IN *THE
JOURNAL OF MADAM KNIGHT***

by

Kevin Drzakowski, Ph.D.¹

ABSTRACT

The travel setting in Sarah Kemble Knight's *Journal* undoubtedly represents the realm of the Other, but Knight's relationship to that Other is portrayed in two remarkably different ways, depending on whether the specific location depicted is that of rural civilization or the wilderness. In the rustic towns, inns, and houses, Knight exalts her own social position by figuring the inhabitants as manifestations of a backwoods Other, beyond and below any sort of social system pertaining to the civilized world. In the true wilderness, however, Knight resumes her "original" position in Colonial New England's patriarchal system of social stratification, namely that of a white female merchant subordinate to white males. The fact that Knight reverts to patriarchal conceptions of her relationship to her subjects both in the cities and in the desolate forest makes the scenes in which she adopts the exalted position of the witty observer into a curious middle ground. What allows Knight to speak from a role of authority in her commentaries on the backward behavior of the rustics is her separation of the Other into two realms, the Known Other and the Unknown Other, the former constituted by the wilderness and the latter by the in-between world of rural civilization. In the cottages and small towns, Knight's status as figurer of the Other is absolute; she has total control over the representations of the subjects, thus re-creating them as the Unknown Other. In the woods, however, her status as figurer suffers from two limitations, the second a result of the first: first, the

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American woods have already been rendered as the Known Other by a slew of colonial writers before her, and second, her placement *in* this previously defined Known Other necessitates a consciousness of her own social position, a consciousness she is only able to cast off while in the inhabited rural world. Because it is Puritan men who have marked the space of the wilderness as the Known Other, it has already been layered with the same system of patriarchal social distinction that exists in New England as a whole. Thus, Sarah Kemble Knight, even in her role as the observer and author of her text, must allow for a certain degree of social inferiority in her relationship to both the wilderness itself and the men who guide her in her passage through it. The hallmark of the *Journal* is the way in which Knight functions as observer to mark the previously undefined spaces, the rural inns and taverns, as her own. In her portraits of the individuals who inhabit these spaces, she enacts a system of Other-ing that far outstrips anything she writes while in the woods or in New York. In one example after another, Knight remarks on the humorous and peculiar habits of the locals while simultaneously affirming herself as an indisputable agent of the Known.

Boston, New York, and Other: Unclaimed Space in *The Journal of Madam Knight*

The Journal of Madam Knight, as Sarah Kemble Knight's travel journal was called upon its original publication in 1825, one hundred and twenty years after it was written, has been included time and time again in anthologies of Early American literature as the quintessential example of a colonial woman writing about something other than the usual subject of Puritanism, but the commentary it has received has been largely limited to its introductory notes in those anthologies.² Perhaps this is due to a mistaken belief that what there is to be said

² Scott Michaelsen, in one of the more recent articles on *The Journal*, has also pointed out the scarcity of recent scholarship. His article "Narrative and Class in a Culture of Consumption: The Significance of Stories in Sarah Kemble Knight's *Journal*" begins with a useful catalogue of the various anthologies that have included *The Journal*.

about *The Journal* has already been said. Criticism before the 1990s focused on the literary quality of Knight's work, on her remarkable ability as a humorist and her departure from the stoic, uninflected style of the time. Captivating though her wit may be, there was a finite amount of scholarship to be produced on the subject of *The Journal* specifically as a work of literary innovation. The shift in recent criticism, at least in what recent criticism there is, has been to go beyond the witticism of Knight and to treat her work as a true act of social commentary, a text lending itself to interpretation both of the author's position in relation to her subjects and her own conception of that relationship.³ An examination of the way in which Knight describes the world outside of Boston reveals a curious dichotomy of social self-exaltation and self-restraint. The setting of her travels undoubtedly represents the realm of the Other, but it is important to stress that her perception of her own relationship to that Other is portrayed in two remarkably different ways, depending on whether the specific location depicted is that of rural civilization or the pure wilderness.

In the various scenes containing depictions of human civilization, however rustic and humorous the scene, including inns, houses, and the town of New Haven, Knight exalts her own social position by figuring the characters with whom she comes into contact as manifestations of a backwoods Other, beyond and below any sort of social stratification system pertaining to the civilized world. In Knight's case, "civilized" appears to be synonymous with "British," and in *The Journal* her depiction of the civilized world is limited not to her native Boston but includes her business trip into the city of New York.⁴ In contrast to Knight's mocking, disdainful depictions of the inns in the countryside, she is unabashedly complimentary toward both the architecture and the people when describing New York. She depicts the buildings as "stately and high" (52), and notes that "the

³ See Michaelsen (*Ibid.*), Stern, Julia, "To Relish and to Spew: Disgust as Cultural Critique in *The Journal of Madam Knight*," and Balkun, Mary McAleer, "Sarah Kemble Knight & the Construction of the American Self."

⁴ Daniel Brink has already remarked that Knight's journal demonstrates a "strong affinity" for the British (207).

inside of them are neat to admiration” (52). She calls the New Yorkers “sociable to one another and Curteos and Civill to strangers” (54).⁵ In these urban spheres, Knight resumes her original position in the colonial New England system of social stratification, namely that of a white female merchant subordinate to white males.

Interestingly, this kind of self-consciousness by Knight of her place within the social system is apparent not only in Boston and New York, but also in the wilderness. In using the term “wilderness,” I do not wish to call to mind the entire realm of the Other, which for Knight is anything outside of Boston or New York, but instead I mean the true wilderness, the scenes taking place in the woods far from the inns and taverns, the points during which Knight is literally moving forward on her journey. The fact that Knight reverts to a patriarchal conception of her relationship to her subjects both in the cities and in the desolate forest makes the scenes in which she adopts the exalted position of the witty observer a fascinating middle ground. In a representative note of disgust with her accommodations, Knight evaluates one of her lodging rooms as “a parlour in a little back Lento, w^{ch} was almost fill’d wth the bedsted, w^{ch} was so high that I was forced to climb on a chair to gitt up to y^e wretched bed that lay on it” (7). What allows Knight to speak from this role of authority in her complaints about her lodgings and her commentaries on the backward behavior of the rustics is the separation of the Other into two realms, the Known Other and the Unknown Other, the former constituted by the cities and wilderness and the latter by the in-between world of the rural inhabitations.

The idea of the Other, of course, has become something convoluted in academic discourse, with every critic using it in such an esoteric fashion that it becomes necessary for everyone adopting the term to define its particular usage. In order to provide some clarity, I turn to Derek Attridge’s “Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other.” The Other in itself is a singular

⁵ These and all subsequent quotations from *The Journal* are taken from the Applewood Books 1992 reprint.

encounter. Even if the Other is created simply by recasting the familiar, the experience is always something particular (Attridge 21-22). If the world outside the urban areas is Knight's Other, one can assume that it would not continue to remain so for long if her traveling between Boston and New Haven were to become a regular occurrence. As *The Journal* nears its end, it becomes apparent that this rural world is already beginning to be stripped of its peculiarity. Compared with the verbose and heavily detailed observations that abound in the text's first three quarters, the final quarter contains a rather small amount of writing on each particular subject; Knight seems as eager to finish her writing each evening as she is to finish her journey itself. Robert Stephens has pointed out that in the latter stages of her writing Knight is apt to miss a particularly easy target for a joke, specifically seen in the case of the place name "Spiting Devil" (254). The lack of any sort of remark on this "Devil" is especially noticeable considering that Knight did not fail to make a crack when, early on in her travels, one of her guides suggests they take lodging at the home of a certain Mr. Devill: "I questioned whether we ought to go to the Devil to be helpt out of affliction" (20). During her return journey to Boston, Knight demonstrates that she has become considerably less hostile to the countryside and its people than she was at the outset. Upon reaching the town of Stratford, she remarks, "But the people that I conversed with were civill and good natured" (64). Soon after, following a difficult river crossing, she points out that her "fears and fatigues prevented my here taking any particular observation" (64). While she attributes her lack of commentary to the bodily exhaustion of the crossing, it seems rather unlikely that Knight, who up to this point has painted every remarkable event on her journey with scathing attention to detail and her own imagination, would forego commentary on an especially harrowing escapade due to mere fatigue. There is an indifference to be noted in the writing, an indifference suggesting she no longer perceives the wilderness as an Other worthy of remark. Otherness, after all, occurs in an active state of relation; the Other, as it is related to the self and

the known, “is always and constitutively on the point of turning from the unknown into the known, from the other into the same” (Attridge 22).

This potential of the Other to be observed implies that Otherness must always be a temporary state. To a point, this is true, as it is only a matter of time before the observer will reconfigure the Other according to his or her own ideas. In that act, a certain degree of Otherness will undoubtedly be lost. However, the Known Other is just as valid an entity as the Unknown Other. The Unknown Other has a more permanent status and would be defined as something entirely specific to an individual observer—indeed, a work of the observer’s own creation. This sort of Other is at first embodied as an undiscovered idea, a thought yet unformulated, but a thought for which an observer or writer is unknowingly searching (Attridge 24). In the case of Sarah Kemble Knight, this Unknown Other is pictured in rural civilization. Even though Knight writes of the experiences as literal fact, the rural space she creates cannot exist in the real world. Her depiction of these scenes in a literary manner for the purposes of humor marks them as an idea of her own, products of Knight’s own imagination rather than faithful representations of their real-life referents, and thus keeps them in the state of the Unknown Other.

What I call the Known Other, on the other hand, is similar to what Attridge calls the “encountered Other,” more similar in nature to the Other as discussed in the tradition of Hegel (23).⁶ This encountered Other is often embodied in an individual person. Once met, this person ceases to be the Other. The supposedly backwoods individuals that Knight meets along her way initially represent this sort of encountered Other, and as she meets them, the human beings themselves enter into the realm of the known. Yet the characters they become in *The Journal* retain that Other status, even though they are recast in a literary fashion according to the familiar type of the country bumpkin. Her depiction of

⁶ I prefer the term Known Other over Encountered Other because of its connotations of permanency. “Encountered” suggests that the process of figuring one’s relationship to the other only occurs while self and other interact. The Known Other is something or someone previously encountered, defined, and remembered.

these “bumpkins” conversely figures herself in the role of a narrator in the picaresque tradition.⁷ As Knight figures these individuals as characters, she invests in herself an amount of authority to which she would not normally be entitled. Her status as the observer in the relationship necessarily fixes her subjects in the roles she assigns them, empowering Knight while denying a voice to these rural figures.

Knight’s account of her stop at the aforementioned Mr. Devill’s inn provides a poignant example:

Like the rest of Deluded souls that post to y^e Infernal den, Wee made all possible speed to this Devil’s Habitation; where alliting, in full assurance of good accommodation, wee were going in. But meeting his two daughters, as I supposed twins, they so nearly resembled each other, both in features and habit, and look’t as old as the Divil himself, and quite as Ugly, We desired entertainm’t, but could hardly get a word out of ‘um, till with our Importunity, telling them our necessity, &c. they call’d the old Sophister, who was as sparing of his words as his daughters had bin, and no, or none, was the reply’s hee made us to our demands. Hee differed only in this from the old fellow in to’ther Country: hee let us depart. (20-21)

One could call Knight’s comparison of both the daughters and the father to the devil a cheap jab at the family’s surname. However, the accused have no means to respond, and Knight’s account of the Devill family is the only one readers have. Their place in history has been set; they are the monosyllabic devil and his two silent, homely daughters. These three individuals, fairly or not,

⁷ Peter Thorpe is one of several critics to point out Sarah Kemble Knight’s association with the picaresque tradition. He defines the picaresque in the terms of what it includes: the act of traveling must always be present; numerous episodes having little connection with each other occur; the traveler normally serves as a first-person narrator whose travels bring him or her into contact with varying social groups; finally, there is a “rakishly comic style,” although the text may end on a serious note (114-15).

cannot depart from Knight's assigned roles. For all eternity, they will remain as voiceless as she presented them.

In addition to the idea of an individual person as the Other, the Other can also refer to spaces, as is the case with the forest. In spite of the emphasis placed on the woods as a sphere of adventure and danger, this area becomes the Known Other as Knight passes through it. It assumes the role of the Known Other as opposed to Unknown Other due to the fact that this wilderness is not a genuine creation of Knight herself. Travel narratives and captivity journals had already staked out the American wilderness as a place of danger, a country capable of corrupting any who dared to enter (Balkun 19). Her description of her experiences en route from point to point, surrounded by trees, darkness, and an unforgiving landscape, differs in no significant way from the prevailing notion of the time of the wilderness as an arena of misrule. Hollis Cate has remarked on the horror Knight seems to associate with rivers and water, pointing out the significance of crossing a stream as marking one of *The Journal's* final moments (34). Knight speaks of every incident in the woods, particularly those involving river crossings, as though it were an adventure threatening her very life. The hyperbolic danger she describes gives testament to a very significant difference between her status as observer in the woods and her status as observer in the rural habitations. In the inns, cottages, and small towns, Knight's status as figurer of the Other is absolute; she has total control over the representations of the subjects, thus recreating them as the Unknown Other. In the woods, however, her status as figurer suffers from two limitations, the second a result of the first: first, the American woods have already been rendered as the Known Other by a slew of colonial writers before her, and second, her placement *in* this previously defined Known Other necessitates her consciousness of her own social position, a consciousness she is only able to cast off while in the rural habitations.

Peter Thorpe argues that by the year *The Journal* was written, the European class structure in the Colonies had already lost much of its significance. Knight, he claims, is "not strictly a member of any social group," and

consequently her travels allow her to traverse a spectrum of social levels (118). Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, on the other hand, refers to Sarah Kemble Knight as a “solidly middle-class Boston matron” (123). Although her occupation as a merchant certainly would have played at least a small role in blurring the boundaries affixed to Knight as a woman, it is difficult to accept Thorpe’s claim without qualification. Certainly, in Boston, Knight would have been the “solidly middle-class Boston matron” Derounian-Stodola calls her. Even so, this Boston social status would merely be the starting point on her journey. As Thorpe alludes to, when Knight leaves Boston she leaves her Boston social status behind, traversing a number of statuses on her journey.

This traversing is not a random act, though, nor is the shifting of social level dictated in any way by Knight herself. It depends entirely on location. In the woods, because Knight finds herself within a Known Other that has already been established and defined, she has to play by the rules of that established definition. What this means is a reliance on the social stratification system corresponding to the defined space, a system that is exactly the same as it would be in the urban centers. Because it is Puritan men who have marked the space of the wilderness as the Known Other, they have already layered it with the same patriarchal system of class and gender distinction that would exist anywhere else in New England. Thus, Sarah Kemble Knight, even in her role as the observer and author of her text, allows for a certain degree of social inferiority on her part in her relationship to both the wilderness itself and the men who guide her in journeying through it.

As stated earlier, Knight depicts the wilderness as a space in which life and limb are constantly threatened. The danger is depicted with particular prominence when Knight’s third guide rides too quickly through the woods for her to keep up:

Here We found great difficulty in Travailing, the way being very narrow, and on each side the Trees and bushes gave us very unpleasant welcomes wth their Branches and bow’s, w^{ch} wee could

not avoid, it being so exceeding dark. My Guide, as before so now, putt on harder than I, wth my weary bones, could follow; so left mee and the way behind him. Now Returned my distressed apprehensions of the place where I was: the dolesome woods, my Company next to none, Going I know no whither, and encompassed wth Terrifying darkness; The least of which was enough to startle a more Masculine courage. (13)

While her exaggerated accounts of danger are certainly due in part to her effort to heighten the adventure and intrigue of her journal, implying that it was never intended solely for her eyes only, this capacity for exaggerating the apparent danger in the wilderness also stems from the narrator's need to temper herself in order to fit the mold of the wilderness as the Known Other. A foray into the woods lacking any sort of calamity would not fit the "proper" definition of a wilderness experience. Therefore, since she fails to experience the kind of danger associated with something like a captivity journal, Knight has to turn to her own prose in order to account for the missing wilderness drama and fulfill the necessary criteria. Robert Stephens reads Knight's journey out of Boston as an Odyssean descent into the underworld (251), pointing to an effort by Knight to recast the woods that surround her journey as something harrowing. This would certainly account for the dramatics that accompany every river crossing. In a travel narrative lacking the necessary life-threatening episodes, water crossings will have to carry a good fraction of the load when it comes to portraying the woods as an area of mystery, danger, and evil. Knight is sure to invest each crossing with the requisite amount of drama, thus continuing in the established tradition of figuring the wilderness, specifically the woods, as the Known Other. Before she even reaches the first river, she foreshadows the event by including a comment on her own dread, infusing the crossing with drama before the event even comes to pass:

I cannot express The concern of mind this relation [her guide's description of the upcoming river] sett me in: no thoughts but those

of the dang'ros River could entertain my Imagination, and they were as formidable as varios, still Tormenting me with blackest Ideas of my Approaching fate--Sometimes seing my self drowning, otherwhiles drowned, and at the best like a holy Sister Just come out of a Spiritual Bath in dripping Garments. (10-11)

This first reaction to the thought of crossing a river is interesting not only in the tumult it apparently engenders in Knight's mind but also in her comment on the best-case scenario. Even "at the best," Knight still pictures herself falling into the river; after doing so, however, the river would continue to function in a capacity entirely appropriate to an agent of the wilderness as the Known Other. Just like the spiritual recognition of God's grace which would flood the narrator following the ordeals of a captivity narrative, Knight imagines the river as providing her with an appropriate conversion experience.

The actual crossing, in reality, offers Knight and the postman who accompanies her little difficulty, although soon after this crossing Knight finds herself alone when the postman presses on too quickly for her. Left to her own thoughts in the darkness, Knight worries about the state of her own soul: "Added to which the Reflections, as in the afternoon of y^e day that my Call was very Questionable, w^{ch} till then I had not so Prudently as I ought considered" (13). It is as if the experience of the crossing, since it failed to include any significant danger, was not suitable as the requisite baptismal experience of the wilderness. A later crossing, though, in spite of the fact that a bridge is on the scene, seems to fit the bill somewhat better:

But after about eight miles Rideing, in going over a Bridge under w^{ch} the River Run very swift, my hors stumbled, and very narrowly 'scaped falling over into the water; w^{ch} extremely frightened mee. But through God's Goodness I met with no harm. (30)

The fact that Knight endures a truly life-threatening situation here, or at least she paints it as so, provides her with a fitting trial for exemplifying God's grace and the safety of her soul.

What these river crossings allow Knight to demonstrate, along with the concluding note on Providence that ends *The Journal*, is that the wilderness is doing its supposed job; should it have failed to include obstacles and snares that cause Knight to call into question the possibility of her salvation, it would not have been functioning in its male-established role as the Known Other. Knight has a series of adventures in the forest repeating the same basic pattern, but she fails to connect these adventures consciously in her mind (Thorpe 115). Barring her thoughts on Providence, which themselves remain surprisingly sparse for a text of this period, Knight writes of each river crossing or momentary abandonment by her companions as an isolated incident. To connect these episodes would call to mind their constructed nature, something Knight intends to keep under the surface. In spite of the heroic poetry that she claims to compose in solitude in the woods, the wilderness is not the real site of Knight's literary innovation. Instead, this wilderness remains the male-created, male-centered Known Other that Puritans have come to expect. That is exemplified further in Knight's portrayal of the men who accompany her as guides through the woods, men who come not from Boston but instead are the very same country bumpkins whom she is so quick to mock while they are in the inns.

Central to my argument is the fact that Knight treats her subjects in the wilderness and in the rustic inns differently. Derounian-Stodola has argued that Sarah Kemble Knight exhibits a male independence on her journey (123). This is true, but only in certain locations. Knight's independence from males takes center stage in the rural inhabitations, but Knight returns to dependence, or at least the appearance of it, in the true wilderness. It would certainly be erroneous to claim that Knight retains her independence as she journeys through the woods; the very fact that she requires guides for every stage renders this idea inapplicable. In fact, Knight's narration figuratively glorifies her first guide, a man named John, to the

point of depicting him as royalty: “Hee entertained me with the Adventurs he had passed by late Rideing, and eminent Dangers he had escaped, so that, Remembring the Hero’s in Parismus and the Knight of the Oracle, I didn’t know but I had mett wth a Prince disguis’d” (4). In this short passage, Knight accomplishes two related objectives. First, she heightens the perceived danger of the forest through John as an intermediary, further making up for the lack of actual danger she comes across. Second, she portrays John, her first male guide, as an expert on the forest, as well as her own “Knight,” one to whom this female Knight entrusts her care. Once more, she is demonstrating that this is the wilderness we know. By figuring her guide in the guise of a romantic hero, Knight furthers the perception of the forest as the center of the male. The wilderness remains a Known Other to which she concedes the right of authorship.⁸

Perhaps this would help to explain one of the most notable characteristics of *The Journal*. Throughout its pages, Knight privileges the town over the wilderness in her description of her journey, continually devoting more time to the rustic civilizations that dot the back country than to the back country itself (Derounian-Stodola 124). If the trope of the wilderness had already been defined, then it makes perfect sense that Knight would devote her time to commenting on the towns, inns, and taverns of the countryside, themselves relatively undefined in the literary world, particularly those in America, when compared to the wilderness. As a female writer jotting down her thoughts for her Boston friends, it is entirely understandable for Knight to linger mainly on that which is fertile ground; not only would the rural dwellings provide Knight with an opportunity to demonstrate her own capacity for original literary innovation, but also, as unmarked spaces, these back country towns and houses served as areas in which

⁸ To be fair, allowance must be made for the possibility that Knight is being entirely sarcastic in this passage. While there is no doubt a tongue-in-cheek element to her comparison of John to two romantic literary heroes of the day, a passage that follows suggests that Knight is at least partially accepting of John’s expertise in the woods: “But nothing dismay’d John: Hee had encountered a thousand and a thousand such Swamps, having a Universall Knowledge in the woods; and readily answered all my inquiries wch. were not a few” (5).

Knight was free to unleash her social commentary unchecked by her own status as a woman.

These points midway between the wilderness and British civilization represent what is truly the Unknown Other, and the hallmark of the *Journal* is the way in which Knight functions as observer to mark these previously undefined spaces as her own. In her portraits of the individuals who inhabit these spaces, she enacts a system of Other-ing that far outstrips anything she writes while in the woods or in New York. In one example after another, Knight remarks on the humorous and peculiar habits of the locals while simultaneously affirming herself as an indisputable agent of the Known. There can be no doubt that Knight here transcends and breaks free of the feminine role she plays in the woods, although a feminist reading of Knight centering on her empowerment has to accept the fact that this power relies on the domination of others (Michaelsen 35). This domination, of course, is rooted in the natural power that an author assumes as enactor and recorder of the gaze, but it can assume several forms. One of the most common of these forms is rhetorical Other-ing. A large portion of *The Journal* consists of dialogues in which Knight invests the speakers other than herself with words that, according to Brink, “clearly indicate how odd she finds their speech” (204). An example from her stop at an inn will suffice to demonstrate this sort of rhetorical separation:

I was Interogated by a young Lady I understood afterwards was the Eldest daughter of the family, with these, or words to this purpose, (*viz.*) Law for mee-⁹ what in the world brings You here at this time a night? [...] Lawfull heart, John, is it You?-how de do!
(5-6)

Expressions such as “Law for mee” and “how de do” are certainly points of interest for Knight, or she would have had no reason to remark on them. It is especially important to note Knight’s use of the *viz.* in this passage. Layered

⁹ Knight’s spelling of “mee” here may seem to be a further separation of the speaker from the observer and the Known, but Knight’s spelling of the pronouns “mee,” “wee,” and “hee” is consistent throughout her own narration.

underneath these three letters is a complex process of Other-ing that debases the woman in question while firmly fixing Knight in a status well above her. On one hand, Knight's choice of indirect dialogue gives her total control as the author. Although the literal truth of dialogue would always be suspect, just as anything in the text of a travel journal must be suspiciously regarded as completely literal truth, what Knight is telling us by merely giving us "words to this purpose" is that the truth doesn't *have* to matter. These rural characters can have no authority in themselves, and taking away their direct dialogue further solidifies that. On the other hand, even as she becomes the author of the dialogue, Knight effectively distances herself from the girl's speech by using the abbreviation *viz.*, short for *videlicet*, a term typically used to set up an example rather than introduce dialogue. Knight demonstrates here that the girl's speech is so foreign, so utterly that of the Unknown Other, that to attempt to render it as an observer from the Known necessitates some kind of acknowledgement of error. In fact, Knight asserts that she *cannot* speak in the language of this rustic. To do so would lower her to the level of the speaker. Considering the fact that Knight critiques the rings this young woman wears as jewelry by noting that "her Granam's new Rung sow, had it appeared, would have affected me as much" (7), we can assume that this is a speaker Knight with which Knight would not wish to be associated.

The Journal's consciousness of the social classification accompanying language is further pictured in the comic description of the impromptu court of law in a New Haven pumpkin patch. While Knight is careful to separate herself from the dialogue of the girl in the above passage, a New Haven magistrate fails to exercise the same caution concerning dialect and thus renders himself eligible for ridicule. An American Indian male has been accused of possessing a stolen hogshead, and the magistrate is experiencing difficulty communicating the accusation to the supposed perpetrator. The Indian is unfamiliar with the word "hogshead," and he pleads his ignorance in typical dialect: "me no stomany." Searching for something to use as an object to represent the concept of a hogshead, the magistrate "(pulled) off his hatt, Patted his own head with his hand,

(says), Tatapa-You, Tatapa-you; all one this. Hogshead all one this.” The Indian replies with “now me stomany that,” and all who are present share a hearty laugh at the magistrate’s inadvertent comparison of his own head to an empty barrel (*Journal* 36). Scott Michaelsen has argued that Knight is able to poke fun at the magistrate, despite his social authority, because he resorts to dialect, even though its use was intended as a means of communication with the Indian.¹⁰ In this act, the magistrate places himself on the same level as the witness, and thus in a position below Knight herself (Michaelsen 39). Once again, Knight’s distancing of herself from this story is notable. She relates the story not as though she witnessed it in the first person, but explicitly points out that the tale comes secondhand, related to her by residents of New Haven themselves (*Journal* 34).

The inclusion of this anecdote, while adding as always to the humor of the text, helps to solidify the place of New Haven as the Unknown Other. It is relatively easy for Knight to identify figures embodying the type of the bumpkin in Connecticut, as she does so memorably in her description of the difficulty residents experience when they attempt a transaction at a merchant’s house, but these bumpkins alone would not necessarily mark New Haven as the Unknown Other; individuals of similar fashion could conceivably be found even in Boston. However, by affixing this rural label to a representative such as the magistrate, Knight renders not just one individual, but the entire town, as the Other. The superiority of her own station established, Knight is free to go forth with the litany of witty observations on the town that give *The Journal* its appeal. She actually describes the customs of Connecticut as though she were recounting the habits of a foreign country. She enumerates their holidays, religion, and government, along with focusing on their apparently foreign manner of speech (Brink 205). New Haven is no New York. By the same token, it is most certainly

¹⁰ Daniel Brink feels that Knight equates the members of the total population whose manners she finds most distasteful with Indians (205). If this is so, then her presentation of the magistrate of New Haven, and by association the town of New Haven itself, as a figure for laughter even in the presence of an Indian is particularly damning.

not the wilderness. If it were so, Knight would not be able to occupy her exalted social status.

In the wilderness, Knight remains free to criticize the rustics, but that criticism must always be directed at someone on an equal or (preferably) lower social footing than herself. The men who would be targets for derision in the towns and inns are offered a reprieve in the woods, forcing Knight to land her jabs on the only available target—another woman. She approaches New London Ferry with “neighbour Polly” and his daughter Jemina, a girl of eighteen with a penchant for complaining, a trait on which Knight is quick to focus. As a man in the Known Other of the Wilderness, Neighbour Polly sits on the highest social rung, rendering him off-limits for Knight’s wit. What she can do, though, is use him as an agent, not a subject, of derision while keeping his social role intact; utilizing his position of authority in the wilderness, Knight describes his ribbing of his daughter:

Wee made Good speed along, w^{ch} made poor Jemina make many a sow’r face, the mare being a very hard trotter; and after many a hearty and bitter Oh, she at length Low’d out: Lawful Heart father! this bare mare hurts mee Dingeely, I’me direfull sore I vow; with many words to that purpose: poor Child (says) Gaffer— she us’t to serve your mother so. I don’t care how mother us’t to do, quoth Jemina, in a passionate tone. At which the old man Laught, and kik’t his Jade o’ the side, which made her Jolt ten times harder. (27-28)

Of course, this passage also demonstrates another important point. Throughout her writing, Knight continually criticizes outspoken women while implicating herself in that same role (Stern 3). What gives Knight the right to complain about her food and lodgings in the inns, however, is the position of authority she creates, through both her capacity as a figurer of the Unknown Other and her association with the Known--something, we are to assume, that these rustics lack.

As a means of providing a final look at the separation between the wilderness and rural spheres, let us examine an instance in which Knight moves from a rural inhabitation directly into the woods, interacting with the same person in both spheres, in this case a man. By the shores of the Paukataug River, Knight finds herself forced to part company with her guides in order to wait for low tide. She passes the time in a cottage by the river, a “little Hutt (which) was one of the wretchedest I ever saw (as) a habitation for human creatures” (23). Her disdain for the spartan, earth-floored cabin provokes her to compose some jeering lines of verse, lines that are interrupted by the approach of a man making his way through the forest. While she is in the cabin, which, though it may be the most rustic of the rural inhabitations pictured, still in itself is not the true wilderness, she can offer nothing but internal jests concerning this new arrival. She calls him an “Indian-like Animal” when he arrives at the door, and figures his use of tobacco as “sucking like a calf, without speaking” (25). This is just one of several instances in which Knight compares her subjects to animals or suggests animal behavior (Cate 32-33). However, this sort of figurative language degrading males, it should be noted, always takes place in the spaces of the rural inhabitations. Knight, despite her initial revulsion, asks this particular man to serve as a guide, “as ugly as hee was.” Once out in the actual wilderness, these insults vanish. She acknowledges his assistance in her crossing the river: “I ventur’d over wth the old mans assistance” (26). Also, as she does with all her male guides, Knight emphasizes his status as an expert of the woods: “I asked the fellow, as we went, divers questions of the place and way, &c.” (26).

The Journal of Madam Knight allows its female author and narrator what may be an unprecedented status as an observer that is both humorous and critical. Although this newfound status is what makes *The Journal* a singular work that continues to grace anthologies and offer a unique literary viewpoint from the perspective of a highly skilled Puritan woman, it must be remembered that space played an important part in regulating this status. We remember Sarah Kemble Knight’s colorful depictions of the residents of New Haven, her muffled shock at

the seeming lack of manners of country hermits, and her unmitigated disgust in response to the food, quarters, and company she finds, because she was laying claim to an Unknown Other, an Other that allowed her to offer her revolted judgments with a created authority. In the wilderness, she could be naught but one of the Puritan women from whom we continually attempt to differentiate her, but by the glow of a country fire, Sarah Kemble Knight will forever be judge, jury, and executioner.

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BUILDING URBAN COMMUNITY CAPACITY: A MULTILITERACY FRAMEWORK

by
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ABSTRACT

Research literature on Community Capacity Building (CCB) reveals that the constructs and practices of community capacity building have been extensively used in areas of development, especially health promotion, community coalitions/partnerships, education, agriculture, tourism and ecotourism development, information capacity, and other areas such as local government, urban regeneration, community work, international development, social work and social planning. The information and communication technology revolution in the late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries has empowered human resources, but at the same time has generated the digital divide, by which the most affected are urban communities, especially low-income households. A multiliteracy perspective has been emerging in response to the challenges of the new multimodal ways of information communications. Community capacity building is vital for empowering urban communities with sustainability in order to take advantage of the opportunities provided by multiliteracy development. Meanwhile, multiliteracy development needs to be supported by CCB activities as

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catalysts. Up to the present, community capacity building has been given limited attention in research regarding multiliteracy development. The purpose of this paper is to explore the concept, types and levels, and dimensions of community capacity building, and suggest an alternative CCB model within a multiliteracy framework. The implication is that facilitating urban community capacity within a multiliteracy framework as a catalyst for sustainable skills, resources, and commitments to urban revival is of vital importance to the holistic advancement in the underserved, economically distressed urban communities.

Building Urban Community Capacity: A Multiliteracy Framework

Overview

The concept of community capacity building (CCB) is becoming a household word as the emerging paradigm of the twenty-first century (Loza & Ogilvie, 2005; Suda, 2006; Verity, 2007). An increasing interest in community capacity building as a strategy for sustainable skills, resources and commitments in various settings and sectors has grown (Laverack, 2001, 2004). Building community capacity by engaging all stakeholders in the urban community has become one of the strategic aims at urban revival (Chaskin, 2001; Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Kobler, 2009; Osmond, 2008). A number of featured literature review papers on community capacity building reveals that the constructs and practices of community capacity building have been extensively used in areas of development, especially health promotion (Smith, Littlejohns, & Roy, 2003), community coalitions and partnerships (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001), education (Harris, 2001; McGinty, 2002; Seddon & Billett, 2004; Smyth, 2009), agriculture (Dollahite et al., 2005), tourism and ecotourism development (Aref, Redzuan, & Gill, 2009), information capacity (Bailey, 1997), and other areas such as local government, urban regeneration, community work, international development, social work, and social planning (Verity, 2007).

Urban, suburban, and rural areas alike are affected by changing economies, demographics, social norms, family structures, and societal emphases (Jakes, 2003; McGinty, 2002). Since the late twentieth century, shifting demographics, and new information and communication technology imperatives upon real-world careers, fertilization of knowledge and ideas, information processing modes, and everyday life have infiltrated the political, historical, socio-cultural, and economical infrastructures of our communities, especially the urban communities. The twenty-first century's changes will overturn many of our assumptions and will go deeper than rebalancing economics and geopolitics of the competing nations that scramble for markets, power and resources towards protecting the environment, narrowing the gaps between the haves and the have-nots, harnessing new technologies for clean energy, reliable food supplies, and disease control and ending extreme poverty (Sachs, 2008, March 24). The information and communication technology revolution in the late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries has empowered human resources, but at the same time has generated the digital divide (Rentie, 2008). The most affected by the digital divide are the urban communities, especially low-income households.

Traditionally, literacy has been conceptualized as the basic ability to read, write, and calculate. But the advent of information and digital technology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has created multimedia and multimodal texts, and new media and new technologies are drastically changing every aspect of life from work to education. In response to the challenges of the new multimodal ways of information communications and the imperatives upon the associated skills to utilize, produce, evaluate, and distribute those texts, a paradigm shift from traditional literacy to multiliteracies is required. The continuously fast-changing technologies often produced by pressing social forces at work within any society constantly challenge the traditional forms and functions of literacy (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004; Suda, 2002a, 2002b). The demand for multiliteracy skills in the workforce and workplace is rapidly increasing (Martinez, 2008).

The author's doctoral dissertation successfully defended in 2010 entitled *Information and Technology Imperatives on Higher Education and Job-Oriented Multiliteracy Skills in Urban Settings* suggests that there is a disparity between the employers' expected workplace multiliteracy and the employees' job-related multiliteracy competence, which is supported by the findings that (a) today's workplace and workforce have been impacted by the powerful driving forces of information and technology, (b) the urban employers demonstrate an imminent interest in the employees' competency of job-oriented multiliteracies including traditional and new literacies, and (c) their expectation on the enhancement of workplace new literacies competency is higher.

Up to the present, the concept of community capacity building has been given only limited attention in research or discussion regarding multiliteracy development. Community capacity building is vital for empowering the urban communities with sustainability in order to take advantage of the opportunities provided by multiliteracy development. Meanwhile, multiliteracy development needs to be supported by CCB activities as catalysts. The purpose of this paper is to explore the concept, types and levels and dimensions of community capacity building, and suggest an alternative CCB model or perspective within a multiliteracy framework. The literature review is grounded on the author's doctoral coursework of the theoretical perspectives in community capacity building, and the proposed CCB model derives from the author's dissertation-related research in adults' job-oriented multiliteracy development. The implication is that facilitating urban community capacity within a multiliteracy framework as a catalyst for sustainable skills, resources and commitments to urban revival is of vital importance to the holistic advancement in the underserved, economically distressed urban communities.

Operational Definitions of Multiliteracy Dimensions

In this paper for an operational definition, *Multiliteracy Skills* are defined as workforce and workplace literacy skills incorporating the traditional literacy

skills of prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy with the new literacy skills of computer literacy, information literacy, technology literacy, mass media literacy, digital and visual literacy, cultural and cross-cultural literacy, and scientific literacy.

Based on pre-existing studies and the author's ideology, the following terms that are the components or domains of multiliteracy are defined for the purpose of this study:

Computer literacy—the knowledge and ability to use computers and know how computers work, and to use computer programs and other applications (Clark, 2007).

Cultural/cross-cultural literacy — the ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of one's own culture and the cultures of others.

Digital/visual literacy (DVL)—ability to critically analyze visual materials, create effective visual communications, and make judgments and decisions using visual representations of thoughts and ideas (NSF, 2007; Spalter & van Dam, 2008).

Document literacy—the knowledge and skills needed to search, comprehend, and use information from non-continuous texts (NCES, 2003).

Information literacy—the ability to recognize when information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information, which is the most generally accepted definition of information literacy put forward by American Library Association in 1989 (McAdoo, 2008; Warner, 2008).

Mass media literacy—the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a variety of forms—from print to video to the Internet to develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques (Real, 2008).

Multiliteracy—a dynamic conception incorporating the traditional literacy skills of prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy with the new literacy skills of computer literacy, information literacy, technology literacy, mass media literacy, digital and visual literacy, and scientific literacy.

Multiliteracy programs or projects—programs or projects that offer and involve multiliteracy or alternative literacy skills beyond the traditional literacy skills.

Multiliteracy skills—workforce and workplace literacy skills incorporating the traditional literacy skills of prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy with the new literacy skills of computer literacy, information literacy, technology literacy, mass media literacy, digital and visual literacy, and scientific literacy.

Prose literacy—the knowledge and skills needed to search, comprehend, and use information from continuous texts (NCES, 2003).

Quantitative literacy—the knowledge and skills needed to identify and perform computations using numbers that are embedded in printed materials (NCES, 2003).

Scientific literacy—“The knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity” (NCSESA, 1996, p. 22).

Technology literacy—the ability of an individual, working independently and with others, to responsibly, appropriately, and effectively use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, and communicate information (Georgina, 2007; Kalfsbeek, 2007).

Traditional concept of literacy—three types of literacy: prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy.

Review of the Literature

Community Capacity Building Conceptualized and Defined

Community Capacity Building (CCB) as a concept has its historic antecedents in a much older movement called Community Development in the 1990s (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2000; McGinty, 2002, 2003; Verity, 2007). According to Gilchrist, “This term first appeared in policy statements as a means of ‘smuggling’ community development values and methods into what would otherwise have been rather technocratic strategies for regenerating deprived neighborhoods” (2003:18); Verity agrees (2007, p. 11). Laverick writes, “Community may be interpreted as heterogeneous individuals and groups who share common interests and needs and who are able to collectively mobilize and organize themselves” (2001, p. 2). The Cornell Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center, in collaboration with the United States Department of Commerce EDA, defines community capacity “as a community’s aptitude for identifying, pursuing, and achieving goals that enhance the social, economic, and ecological well-being of its members” (CaRDI, 2009).

The origin of the conceptualization of “capacity building” can be traced back to “institution building” initiated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the early 1970s. By 1991, UNDP had defined capacity building “as the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation..., human resources development, and strengthening of managerial systems.” Capacity building is a long-term, continuing process, in which all stakeholders participate. In the twenty-first century, capacity building is being used by government to transform community. Ann Philbin (1998) defines capacity building as the “process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world” (p. 4),

McGinty (2002) reports the definition of community capacity building by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (1996, p. 2):

“Capacity-development, like sustainable development, encompasses a wide range of aspects, including the human, technological, organisational, financial, scientific, cultural and institutional.” He elucidates that schools as community assets are central to a community’s learning and development and are best placed to provide a learning community that has the potential to build the capacity of the whole community to collaboratively address educational disadvantages. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, education and community were integrated through collaboration, and it was recognized that education could be a radical tool for change if it was linked with community needs and desires.

Suda (2006) holds that communities and regions will be strengthened economically and socially through learning and employment. She suggests building community capacity towards a learning community and provides the current and most widely accepted definition of capacity building:

An ability of individuals, organizations, or systems to perform appropriate functions effectively, efficiently, and sustainably. [This involves] the continuing process of strengthening of abilities to perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives and understand and deal with development needs (Milen 2001:1). (p.10)

Smith, Littlejohns, and Roy (2003), who have been exploring the concept of community capacity and its relationship to community health since 1996, conduct a synthesis review by using keywords such as “community capacity,” “empowerment,” and “social capital” to search the published literature for relevant articles and retrieve 123 potentially relevant articles on community capacity building with respect to health promotions. They summarize the definitions of community capacity as follows:

The characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health problems (Goodman et al., 1998; Poole, 1997); the set of assets or strengths that residents individually and collectively bring to the cause of

improving community quality of life (Easterling, Gallagher, Drisko, & Johnson, 1998); a wholistic representation of capabilities (those with which the community is endowed and those to which the community has access) plus the facilitators and barriers to realization of those capabilities in the broader social environment (Jackson et al., 1999); the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community (Chaskin, 2001). (p. 16)

They come up with their definition of community capacity with respect to health promotion as “the ability of people and communities to do the work needed in order to address the determinants of health for those people in that place’ (Bopp, Germann, Bopp, Baugh, Littlejohns, & Smith, 2000)” (p. 15).

Dimensions, Types, and Levels of Community Capacity Building

Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) conduct a literature review through a qualitative analysis of eighty articles, chapters, and practitioners’ guides about building collaborative capacity through community capacity building. Their conclusions are that collaborative capacity is greatly influenced by the larger community context and that the four capacity types, which are member capacity, relational capacity, organizational capacity, and programmatic capacity, are highly interdependent with each other. Shifts in one capacity type greatly affect the others. Therefore, we should continually build community capacity, empowering communities to respond to new challenges by developing new competencies, new relationships, and new solutions.

McGinty (2002) reviews the literature on community capacity building to address collaboratively educational disadvantage among the Aboriginal people in Australia. He introduces Garlick’s (1999, as cited in McGinty, 2002) classification of five major elements of capacity building: *Knowledge building*: the capacity to enhance skills, utilize research and development and foster

learning; *leadership*: the capacity to develop shared directions and influence what happens in the regions; *network building*: the capacity to form partnerships and alliances; *valuing community* and the capacity of the community to work together to achieve their own objectives; and *supporting information*: the capacity to collect, access and utilize quality information.

Smith, Littlejohns, and Roy (2003) attempt to identify ten “domains” or “dimensions” to recognize and measure community capacity building successes: participation; knowledge, skills, and resources; shared vision; sense of community; communication; leadership and ongoing learning; problem-solving abilities of communities; quality of life; network partnerships; and neighborhood cooperation.

Verity (2007) conducts a literature review on community capacity building as an umbrella concept under which community capacity building is interdependent and interconnected with other types of capacity building such as organizational, technical, and infrastructure capacity. Verity also summarizes definitions of “community capacity building” with reference to the following six dimensions or domains:

Community domain (power, history, profile, conflicts, leadership, participation); Institutional domain (influence, voice, resources, policies, discourses, responsiveness); Linking domain (networks between and within formal and informal systems, interactions, collaboration, responding to community needs); Knowledge domains (critical reflection, awareness of power, processes for change, knowledge of community needs); Skills and abilities domains (leadership, confidence, ability to solve problems); Resource transfer domain (resource mobilisation). (p. 6)

Aref, Redzuan, and Gill (2009) conduct a literature review on community capacity building for tourism development planning in local communities. Their study shows eight dimensions of CCB in three levels in processes of tourism development in local communities:

community leadership; community participation; community structures; external supports; skill and knowledge; resource mobilization; community power; and sense of community.

Kobler (2009) observes the pressures of population growth and diversity, demographic shifts, and technology imperatives upon the complexity of urban problems and claims that institutions lack the capacity to deal with globalization, rapid technology growth, advanced communications systems and community fragmentation (Innes & Booher, 2002, as cited in Kolber, 2009). She argues that a clear definition of capacity is difficult to construct, but Chaskin (2001) asserts that four factors are present when a community has capacity: “(1) The existence of resources (from individual skills to access to financial capital); (2) networks of relationships; (3) leadership; and (4) support for collective action and problem solving mechanisms or processes.” (Kolber, 2009, p. 4) Innes and Booher (2002, as cited in Kolber, 2009, p. 4) point out that “the process of capacity building should include a diverse range of stakeholders, plus technical and other assistance to ensure equality,” and “capacity can be built at four levels in a community: ‘within members; within their relationships; within their organizational structure; and within the programs they sponsor’ (Innes and Booher 2002, p. 9)” (Kolber, 2009, p. 5).

Alternative Frameworks of Community Capacity Building

McGinty (2002) explains the framework of four interrelated dimensions for sustainable capacity development developed by the United Nations: individual; entity; interrelationships between entities; and enabling environment. This framework embodies a four-step capacity assessment approach: mapping the starting point; determining where to be--and establishing objectives; determining a change strategy to get there--the How; and determining what capacities are needed to get there--the What.

Jakes (2003) suggests building community capacity through coalitions and diversity, i.e. a CCB collaborating diversity framework. He stresses that community capacity building programs that teach organizations how to mobilize

members and effectively partner with diverse populations will be more successful in their collaborative efforts and will increase the diversity of solutions and the resources available to address complex problems in the CCB process.

Light, Hubbard, and Kibbe (2004) comment on the popularity of capacity building in the nonprofit sector, pointing out that “an Internet search for ‘nonprofit’ and ‘capacity building’ produces nearly 25,000 hits. Yet, despite the popularity of the concept, relatively little research is available that demonstrates the value of nonprofit capacity building” (p. 10).

Seddon and Billett (2004) study social partnerships and community capacity building under the context of vocational education and training, citing one of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)’s four key objectives: “Communities and regions will be strengthened economically and socially through learning and employment linking skills to local employment, stimulating an interest in learning and strengthening TAFE [technical and further education] and other providers to partner with local agencies, businesses and industry clusters.” They highlight that this sector offers “second chance” opportunities to those who had been unsuccessful at school or university.

Bailey (1997) proposes an information literacy framework to enhance community capacity, emphasizing the aspect of building the capacity of the leaders and residents of distressed neighborhoods to use information effectively in the community capacity building process. Bailey concludes that all communities possess an assortment of informational assets, skills, and opportunities that need to be understood and supported, and suggests four steps: “(a) assessing community information capacity, (b) strengthening the social and technological communications networks available in the community, (c) building skills to use information for community change, and (d) providing technical assistance in support of community use of information” (p. 1).

A Paradigm Shift from Literacy to Multiliteracy

Since the late twentieth century, the information and communication technologies have infiltrated many aspects of the real world careers, fertilization

of knowledge and ideas, information processing modes, and everyday life. Decades ago, the higher education community in the United States made a conscious effort to enhance the information- and technology-driven education on campuses, which has had a great impact upon the community capacity building. The 1999 National Survey of Information Technology in Higher Education at 378 colleges and universities proclaims that our educational settings are becoming computer- and technologically-mediated (Selber, 2004). The advancement of information and communications technologies, changing demographics, knowledge-based economical environments, and the globalizing phenomena of higher education have undermined the adult citizens' job-oriented credentials and interrupted the relationships between employers and employees.

The concept of multiliteracies attempts to address both the defining of literacy and the implications of the practices for the varied contexts of a twenty-first century life. The notion of multiliteracies first positioned by The New London Group (1996), an aggregate of ten multidisciplinary scholars from the fields of linguistics, education, literacy analysis, the sociology of education, and cultural studies, gave attention to the phenomena of literacy collision with new technological modes of representation and shifting heterogeneous demographics (Cole & Pullen, 2009). They pinpointed characteristics of higher education in the twenty-first century such as the changing demographics of student clientele and faculty body, the loosely coupled governance of the public university systems, the expanding, diverse, and multicultural campuses, the competitive financial and logistics constraints, the fiscal war for state and federal funding and alumni endowments, the multi-disciplinary learning and research endeavors, the lifelong learning appeals, the responsible and responsive integration of the higher education's three core missions of knowledge and learning, research and discovery, service and engagement to meet the demands knowledge-based economy and digitized communities, the driving forces of technology and skills-oriented workforce market upon curriculum reform and instructional delivery innovation, and the impetus of the globalizing and cross-border education have

posted great challenges and opportunities to higher education in the contemporary era and beyond.

Urban Community and Employment Challenges

The United States 2000 Decennial Census Population Statistics reveals that people living in America's urban areas amount to 79.2 percent of the total United States population. Socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and socio-cultural perspectives on sustainable development have shifted from ending extreme poverty in rural settings to ending it in urban settings. Pressing issues such as demographic shifts, technology imperatives, and the disparity between the employers' expected skills and the actual workplace skills of the adult workforce including college graduates have drawn the attention of researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners worldwide to the vital role of adult citizens' multiliteracy skills in the dynamics of modern urban economic, political, and social development (Bogart, 1998; Mills, & Hamilton, 1994; Rogers, 2005; Sullivan, 2009). The synergy of human resources, natural resources, and financial resources contributes to economic prosperity whereby the deficiency of natural resources and the constraints of financial resources can be overcome by excelling in human resources and human capital which include the education, skills, and workplace capacity of the workforce through community capacity building (Becker, 2006; Harris, 2009; Smyth, 2009).

The advent of digital technology has created multimedia and multimodal texts, and globalization has made cross-culture and multiculturalism permeable. Meanwhile, the knowledge- and information-based economic climate has substantially established the connection between adult citizens' multiliteracy capacity and the community's economic capacity in the increasingly technological environment. The picture of the emerging job trends is eight out of ten of the fastest growing occupations in the United States are computer-related, and even jobs that focus on outside information services, such as those in the retail and food service industries, require employees to be familiar with computers and other appliances (Rentie, 2008). The frighteningly high unemployment rate in

the most technology advanced countries is due to the lack of skilled workers and their inability to adapt to the technologically-expanding economy (Hesselbein, 1998, as cited in Rentie, 2008). Unprecedentedly, employers are more interested in people who demonstrate an integration of traditional literacy (prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy) with some form of new literacies like computer literacy, technology literacy, information literacy, mass media literacy, cross-cultural literacy, and scientific literacy. Researchers have spotlighted the landscapes to understand how technological literacy or computer literacy or digital literacy or media literacy impacts higher education and workplace literacy (Barron, 2007; Miller, 2005).

Trends and Critical Issues Relating to Community Multiliteracy Capacity

The author's doctoral dissertation entitled *Information and Technology Imperatives on Higher Education and Job-Oriented Multiliteracy Skills in Urban Settings* reveals that research findings from the primary data of 769 subjects of diverse demographic characteristics collected from three groups of population located in two Mississippi Metropolitan Statistical Areas, including (a) 553 full-time students in 28 intact classes of doctoral, master, senior, and junior programs covering 56 academic majors in two universities, (b) 260 full-time faculty members covering 53 disciplinary areas in six colleges of the two universities, and (c) 110 major employers covering manufacturing, government agencies, education, services, and other trades suggest a prevalent consent among the urban employers (93%), the university students (92.8%), and the faculty members (94.7%) that (a) today's workplace and workforce have been impacted by the powerful driving forces of information and technology, (b) job-oriented new literacies are important components of workplace multiliteracy skills, and (c) high expectations exist that workers and the entering workforce should be resourceful in being empowered with the workplace multiliteracies. Moreover, urban employers demonstrate an imminent interest in the employees' competency of job-oriented multiliteracies, including traditional and new literacies, and their

expectation on the enhancement of workplace new literacies competency is higher.

The future picture of community capacity building within the multiliteracy framework can be envisioned in the following trends and critical issues relating to adults' literacy education: (a) Multiliteracy needs and development as a high-profile issue; (b) Multiliteracy as a gateway to achievement and opportunity; (c) Multiliteracy as pragmatic values; (d) Multiliteracy as a lifetime learning conceptual framework; (e) Access, affordability, and accountability of multiliteracy programs; (f) More directly skills-oriented curriculum; (g) Diversified and decentralized high-tech-aided instruction and teaching materials; (h) Brick-click multiliteracy programs; (i) Free or employer-sponsored click-on-site remedial and retooling job-related multiliteracy programs; (j) Demon and tech-application villages on campus and in the communities to facilitate multiliteracy development; and (k) home-based multiliteracy learning programs.

Recommendations and Implications

Derived from the literature review and expanded on Bailey's (1997) and Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen's (2001) strategies, the following recommendations are suggested with respect to promoting community multiliteracy capacity which includes the traditional literacy skills of prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy and the new literacy skills of computer literacy, information literacy, technology literacy, mass media literacy, digital and visual literacy, cultural and cross-cultural literacy, and scientific literacy:

1. The technological capacities the community should possess:
 - a. Computer literacy to use computers and know how computers work, and to use computer programs and other applications.
 - b. Technology literacy to use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, and communicate information.

- c. Digital and visual literacy (DVL) to critically analyze visual materials, create effective visual communications, and make judgments and decisions using visual representations of thoughts and ideas.
2. The information capacities the neighborhood should possess:
 - a. Information literacy to recognize when information is needed, and locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information.
3. The communications capacities the community should possess:
 - a. Mass media literacy to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages from print to video to the Internet to understand the nature of mass media, the techniques used, and the impact of these techniques.
4. The multicultural and cross-cultural capacities the neighborhood should possess:
 - a. Cultural and cross-cultural literacy to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of one's own culture and the cultures of others.
5. The scientific and academic capacities the community should possess:
 - a. "The knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity" (National Science Education Standards, p. 22) and
 - b. A multidimensional construct of competencies such as *Process* (understanding the methods and processes of science), *Content* (knowledge of scientific facts, terms, and concepts and understanding of scientific principles and laws), and *Situation* (applying scientific methods, processes, facts, principles, and laws in the contexts of (a) life and health, (b) Earth and environment, and (c) technology) (Schwab, 2007).

In addition, if we accept Laverack's (2001) definition of community as heterogeneous individuals and groups who share common interests and needs and who are able to collectively mobilize and organize themselves, community multiliteracy capacity cannot be developed unless we give enough attention to the financial and infrastructural capacities the neighborhood should possess: Assets to strengthen the social and technological communications networks available in the community and opportunities for residents to gather and discuss community issues and share the decision-making process.

The following capacity constructs at four levels will be integrated into the CCB multiliteracy framework:

1. Building member capacity to collaborate through fostering attitudes and motivations and providing access to member capacity;
2. Constructing relational capacity through creating interactive and supportive internal and external partnerships;
3. Building organizational capacity to engage community people in performing their tasks and responsibilities; and
4. Enhancing programmatic capacity to design and implement multiliteracy programs or projects—programs or projects that offer and involve multiliteracy or alternative literacy skills beyond the traditional literacy skills.

Conclusion

There is no clear-cut definition of community capacity building (CCB) because the historic antecedents of the concept can be found within the literature and practice of both community development and community empowerment. All three terms (i.e. community development, community empowerment and community capacity building) describe a process that increases the assets and attributes which a community is able to draw upon for survival, betterment of lives, and sustainability (Gibbon, Labonte, & Laverack, 2002). A myriad of literature reviews on CCB since the 1990s has summarized alternative CCB models, perspectives, and frameworks such as health promotion, community

coalitions and partnerships, education, agriculture, tourism and ecotourism development, information capacity, and other areas such as local government, urban regeneration, community work, international development, social work, and social planning. Multiliteracy capacity building framework is proposed on the assumption that multiliteracies are the beginnings of an idea of designing social futures (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; McGee, 2007; Sarsar, 2008; Stevens, 2006). Communities evolve and change in response to dynamics such as demographic shifts and information and technology imperatives produced by local, national and global forces and resources. The political, historical, social and cultural, economical, and new technological factors have been influencing the development of the concept of literacy, and have given birth to new literacies to conceptualize multiliteracy. Therefore, facilitating adult citizens' multiliteracy development as a catalyst for urban community capacity building is of vital importance to the holistic advancement in underserved and economically distressed communities.

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**HOW EMPOWERED AM I?
IS THERE A MATCH BETWEEN MY PERCEPTION OF SELF-
EMPOWERMENT AND EMPOWERMENT MEASURES?**

by

Joeritta Jones de Almeida, Ph.D.*

ABSTRACT

This study is a quantitative analysis of various questionnaires and instruments given to young women of color who are the staff of a collective called “Sista II Sista” (SIIS), a community grassroots organization in Brooklyn, New York. It is a part of a larger study that examines the perceptions and meanings of empowerment as defined by these women, who are all in their twenties. “Personal empowerment” is a ubiquitous aspiration in educational and organizational endeavors, but how people understand the concept and what it looks like in action are unexplored in the research. In this paper quantitative measurements will be used to complement and examine the levels of quantitative empowerment (as defined by the author) and how they match the levels of empowerment measured by the various published questionnaires.

Background and Introduction

In my doctoral thesis I examined the meaning of empowerment as a concept and the mission of SIIS. The major finding is that most of my respondents, seven out of twelve, define *empowerment* in a way that spontaneously incorporates two-dimensionality. These descriptions not only exemplify SIIS’s model of focusing on the individual and the community, but

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they also personify their use of the term “Personal is political and political is personal!”

The study found that the young women are defining empowerment in three distinct ways:

1) Empowerment as two dimensional with personal-individual and political-social aspects. This use of the term conveys a process that can be considered dialectical, simultaneous, and continuous (7 of 12). This use of empowerment is in reference to a process that resembles constant movement, symbolized by the infinity symbol, ∞ . The symbol shows constant movement: as one side is moving, so is the other. And in this way one side represents personal-individual development while the other side represents political-social development, both happening continuously. Empowerment is where and when the two sides intersect.

2) Empowerment as linear with a sequential process (1 of 12). This definition of empowerment is the development of critical consciousness, questioning, and learning. These skills representing empowerment are needed first, according to this linear definition, within a person before the person can sequentially help and empower others.

3) Empowerment as personalistic, which is the more conventional definition (4 of 12). This definition of empowerment is a straightforward definition of what one perceives as empowerment; for example, “empowerment is self-growth,” “feeling strength and comfort to express strengths and weaknesses to be whole,” and “self growth.”

Review of the Literature: Theoretical Orientations of the Study

The conceptual framework that serves as a foundation for this study is drawn from the empowerment literature, so called “popular education” ideas as exemplified by Paulo Freire, and the black feminist thought and theory of Patricia Collins.

Empowerment

The meaning and use of the term empowerment have evolved over the last century. The term *empowerment* was used as early as 1849 to mean “the action of empowering; the state of being empowered” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989). The word *empower* means “to invest legally or formally with power or authority; to authorize or license” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989). Both of these definitions imply that empowerment is something done *to* or *for* something or somebody.

In the 1960s, the term evolved to encompass more proactive roles for those being empowered. The more recent use of the term recognizes that empowerment cannot simply be given or granted to another. People can only empower themselves, although others may facilitate the empowerment process (Staples, 1999).

This evolution of the term empowerment reflects the prevailing social theories of different historical eras. Prior to the 1960s, sociologists, social psychologists, and educators viewed members of society who were not part of the dominant culture as members of the *minority* or *culturally disadvantaged* (Myrdal, 1944; Moynihan, 1965). This concept stemmed from a theoretical framework that viewed other cultures from the perspective of a *deficit model*. The assumption was that differences were inadequacies. This model was later discredited by many educators, sociologists, and political activists, and by the 1980s a new model opposed it, an *assets and strengths model* (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1990; O’Melia & DuBois, 1994; Chapin, 1995; Inglehart & Becerra, 1995; Saleebey, 1996). It is from the context of an “assets and strengths model” that the present use of empowerment is employed.

In this study five distinct concepts--self-esteem, locus of control, assertiveness, planning and organizing skills, and critical consciousness--are used and can be found in the empowerment literature. *Empowerment as self-esteem* reflects the way one feels about oneself (Gutierrez, 1990; Leavitt & Saegert, 1990; Shlay & Holupka, 1992). It entails confidence in one’s abilities and a

positive self-image. According to some researchers, “Empowerment enables clients to develop behaviors that improve the use of personal power, foster self-esteem, take charge of personal problems, to set and pursue personal goals” (Hopps, Pinderhughes, & Shankar, 1995).

Locus of control is the sense of control that one feels over one’s own life and destiny (Paulhus, 1983; Chavez, 1990). For example, “For some people the mechanism of empowerment may lead to a *sense* of control; for others it may lead to actual control, the practical *power* to affect their own lives” (Rappaport, Swift, & Hess, 1984). The concept of locus of control is closely linked to assertiveness. In some instances, *assertiveness*, the ability to actively take control over one’s life, is seen as an aspect of locus of control. Empowerment involves assertiveness when a person acts freely, defining his or her problem as it is experienced (Freire, 1970; Deegan, 1990; Gutierrez, 1990; Gutierrez, DeLois, & GlenMaye, 1995),

Planning and organizing skills are also seen as important components of empowerment. Empowerment entails the ability to grow and improve oneself by assessing present circumstances in order to achieve future goals. Planning and organizing skills are essential to effect progress (de Almeida, 2001). Techniques for facilitating empowerment--such as teaching and developing skills for strategic analysis, planning and taking action--are often cited (Gutierrez, 1990; Freire, 1998; Staples, 1999).

Critical consciousness is also frequently cited as an essential aspect of empowerment. It encompasses the ability to make connections with the socio-economic contradictions in society. It implies that a person will not just attribute problems to individual accidents or defects, but will see institutional or systemic causes. For example, how could a country as rich and prosperous as the United States have a growing portion of its children poor and homeless? Are these statistics merely isolated incidents caused by individual and separate deficits? The ability to recognize systemic contradictions indicates a person’s (level of) critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Collins, 1990; Freire, 1998).

My definition includes all five aspects: Empowerment is the development of positive self-esteem, a greater sense of control over one's life, the ability to stand up for one's rights and to advocate for oneself; the ability to effectively organize, plan, and act to achieve one's goals; and the capacity to critically analyze life circumstances at the individual and collective levels. To be empowered requires an internal attitude of giving oneself permission to experience personal power, which then extends outward into the world, influencing, manipulating, and changing whatever is necessary to feel in charge of one's own destiny (de Almeida, 2001).

Context: History of the Freedom School

SIIS runs a "Freedom School" that offers cultural and historical classes as an after-school program for teenage girls of color to increase their self-awareness and critical consciousness. SIIS intentionally uses an empowerment model to teach leadership-development skills and community organizing as techniques for creating social change. SIIS has a mission based on the notion that "personal is political" and it uses a holistic approach to emphasize that personal and individual care are as important as our societal and community conditions. SIIS sees itself engaged in a collective struggle for individual empowerment and social justice.

Historically, Freedom Schools were established in 1964 by the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This effort was an extension of the Freedom Summer campaign to end the political disenfranchisement of African Americans in the Deep South. There were more than thirty Freedom Schools created throughout Mississippi, for example. Their curriculum was built around black history and the philosophy of the civil rights movement with the goal of empowering African Americans in Mississippi to become active citizens and agents of social change. The curriculum of the Freedom School was based on the asking of questions whose answers were sought within the lives of the students.

The following is an example of the curriculum Introduction to Unit I of the Citizenship Curriculum: *Comparison of Students' Realities with Others* (Emery, Braselmann, & Gold, 2004; Spartacus, 2004).

We are going to talk about a lot of things: about Negro people and white people, about rich people and poor people, about the South and about the North, about you and what you think and feel and want. . . . And we're going to try to be honest with each other and say what we believe. . . . We'll also ask some questions and try to find some answers. The first thing is to look around, right here, and see how we live in Mississippi.

This curriculum was the intent of Charles Cobb, field secretary of SNCC, who originally proposed the formation of Freedom Schools in December of 1963. It was initially understood that schools as institutions were part of the system of oppression (Cobb, 1999). Students, trained as local civil rights workers, were taught to be agents of change (Cobb, 1999).

History of Sista II Sista

Originally, SIIS was created as a Freedom School for Young Women of Color in 1996. This Freedom School was the only component of the organization and consisted of twenty youth and eighteen volunteers. The organization is structured, according to the members, in ways that do not replicate hierarchical or patriarchic organizations. The shape of the management structure resembles a flower, with distinct components represented as petals. The group functions as a collective (presently of fifteen women), using consensus as the decision-making process. As a management structure, the collective allows each young woman to share in leadership roles. The collective envisioned that Sista II Sista would be dedicated to personal and political development through an exploration of cultural identity, community organizing, and leadership training through long-term relationship building (Sista, 1996).

The aim of Sista II Sista is "to facilitate the holistic development of young women and to link their personal development to community organizing

for political and social change (Sista, 1996). The collective is composed of women who offer leadership skills and training to help younger women of color develop their own collective power. The collective structure not only seeks to model its vision of a more equitable and just society, but it also seeks to facilitate and strengthen the members' leadership capacity to transform their own lives as well as the community in which they live. There is great similarity between the objective and function of SIIS and the Freedom School model of the 1960s from which it was created. SIIS, as a grassroots community organization, sees itself, as did the original Freedom School, as a space for training and educating youth to be agents of change. In addition to bringing social justice to their community, SIIS uses an empowerment model to change and help the young women develop and grow as well.

Quantitative Analysis

This particular study reviews and analyzes the results of the four self-report instruments, described above, that were administered to the interviewees to get a view of the following aspects of empowerment: assertion, self-esteem, locus of control, and organizing and planning. These constructs frame this definition of empowerment. The definitions of empowerment gleaned from the multiple interviews, observations, self-assessments of empowerment and growth and the evaluation of others are compared and contrasted. Exploring what is meant by empowerment from these various sources gives a more complete and multivariate profile of each member's working definition of empowerment. These different perspectives also provide ways to see how their definitions correspond to their perceptions of the ways in which the organization succeeds in its goals to be empowering for its members as well as for those it serves. Individual results from the Assertion Inventory and Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales are plotted in two charts. These charts show how individual members and the group as a whole performed.

Assertiveness: The Assertion Inventory, Gambrill and Richey, 1975

This Assertion Inventory, according to Lange and Jakubowski (1976), collects three types of information about a person's assertive behavior: (1) how uncomfortable a person feels in specific assertion situations, (2) how likely the person is to react assertively in specific situations, and (3) the specific situations in which the person would like to act more assertively (Gambrill & Richey, 1975). As a result, the Assertion Inventory offers four possible profiles: 1) unassertive, 2) anxious performer, 3) does not care, and 4) assertive. The figure below shows the distribution of the responses. Each item on the inventory has two responses: 1) degree of discomfort (DD) and 2) response probability (RP). Dividing discomfort and response probability into high and low values generates four possible profiles.

Empowerment as assertiveness is the unleashing of activity on one's own behalf that has consequential overall results (Brager & Specht, 1973; Warren, 1978; Simon, 1994). Building on existing strengths is a primary aspect of empowerment. In this manner the person is actively engaged in the change process that attempts to solve the problem. This view of empowerment is supported by Freire (1970), Deegan (1990), and Gutierrez (1990).

Figure 1, Assertion Inventory, shows how the members of SIIS are located on the assertion inventory scales. In the chart, DD stands for degree of discomfort and RP stands for response probability. All the members fall into the lower-right-hand quadrant, which represents the assertive profile. This profile indicates that they all have low discomfort in comparison to their high response probability.

ASSERTION INVENTORY

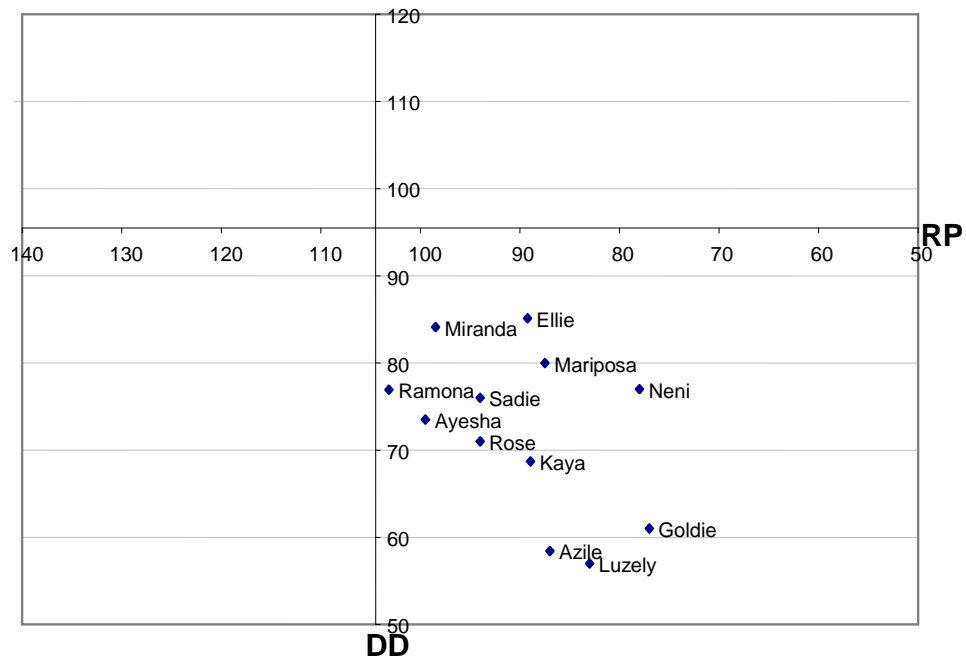


Figure 1: Assertion Inventory

This chart presents a striking and evident portrayal of the level of assertiveness present within the SIIS collective. Assertiveness can refer to personal control that is enhanced through empowerment. It also has relevance for social and systemic changes. This is particularly significant in this study because of the organization's, SIIS's, main premise of "personal is political."

LOCUS OF CONTROL: INTERNALITY, POWERFUL OTHERS, and CHANCE

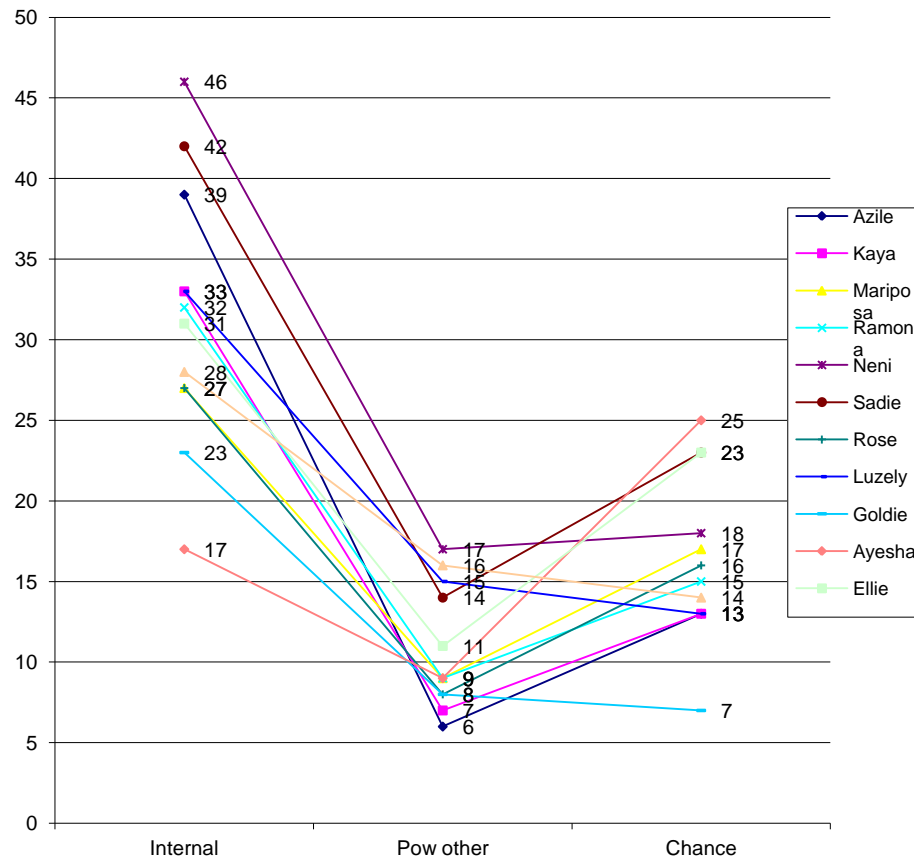


Figure 2: Locus of Control: Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance

Locus of Control – Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales (Levenson, 1981)

Levenson separates the locus of control construct into three components (*I-P-C scales*): internal (personal control), powerful others (external), and chance (external). According to the author, there are distinctions to be made within the general concept used by Rotter to measure externality versus internality. She cites two types of external orientation--belief in the basic unordered and random nature of the world and belief in the basic order and predictability of the world. These two beliefs are coupled with the expectation that powerful others are in control. However, this does not mean that belief in powerful others excludes

belief in a person's ability to have control. It is possible that a person who believes in control by powerful others may perceive enough regularity in the actions of such people as to believe that he or she can obtain reinforcements or rewards through purposeful action (Levenson, 1981).

According to Levenson, this view of externality is similar to Rotter's conceptualization of internality. Even though the potential for control exists when there is some predictability in the actions of powerful others, internality is seen as a separate concept encompassing whether a person feels that she or he has control over her or his own life. Figure 2 shows that the twelve women of my study appear to score relatively high on "internal," and low on "powerful other," and a little bit higher on "chance." This means that overall there is a higher expectation of control by internal forces and lower expectation of control by powerful others.

Self-Esteem: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg 1965)

According to Rosenberg, self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude toward the self. The concept of self-esteem is broader and more global than the evaluation about any specific attribute. High self-esteem can mean either "good enough" or "very good," with "good" being the lowest score. These definitions range from someone who is "self-accepting" (recognizes her limitations and expects to grow and improve) to someone who could possibly consider herself superior to most others yet feels inadequate in terms of certain standards she has set for herself (Rosenberg, 1965). For the twelve women interviewed (See table that follows), the results are evenly distributed among the three positive attitudes-- (4) very good, (4) good enough, and (4) good--without anyone's getting a low self-esteem score.

Organizing and Planning Skills: Organizing and Planning Survey (Bassuk, 1991)

According to Bassuk, principal investigator of the Worcester Family Research Project (WFRP), the scale was developed to identify qualities that a single mother must have to be able to run her household well despite all the adversity and chronic stress (J. Perloff, personal communication, January 6, *Volume 23, number 2, Fall 2010*

2001). This scale was used even though one of the young women of my study is a married mother: this is the only scale of this construct that was designed for a population of people of color. And it is the only instrument that specifically measures the type of organizing and planning skills used to define empowerment here (de Almeida, 2001). The concepts are generalizable beyond single mothers to other young women of color (J. Perloff, personal communication, February 6, 2005).

The scores of the Organizing and Planning Survey are in the table below. This survey does indicate the level of organizing and planning skills that confirms what is known and observed about the members through feedback from others and observations that correspond to these scores based on personal histories and assessments of accountabilities. These issues were discussed in meetings that dealt with the level of competency and responsibilities of each.

Discussion

In the table, I have given the results from self-reports on published measures of empowerment with summarized ratings of empowerment and comments by others SIIS colleagues. This table enables us to compare the quantitative ratings of particular scales of empowerment qualities with the comments made by others of individual growth and progress. There tends to be a parallel between the individual performance on the empowerment rating scales and how they perceive their own empowerment.

For example, Miranda, scored *very good* on self-esteem, and *above average* on her organizing and planning skills. She also fell into the *assertive* profile on the assertive inventory; and she obtained a score on the internality section of the locus of control scales that was higher than her scores on the other two sections, signifying that she sees herself in control of her life. Miranda received comparable feedback from her fellow sistas. Their comments included terms such as: “powerful person,” “dynamic force,” and “has changed in putting the human aspects before the political.” All are strong statements supporting her performance on the empowerment questionnaires.

In the case of Azile, who received the lowest score of all on organizing and planning, her fellow sistas did comment on her being “a little disorganized.” And they also gave confirming feedback such as “becoming more accountable and responsible,” on her assertiveness and capacity to be in charge, as self-report of these measures show. Ramona received the next to the lowest score on organization and planning and there is feedback to confirm this, with comments such as: “[She] has accountability issues.” On the other hand she is considered “inspiring, bold, and a good organizer,” and a “persuasive and good debater.” These qualities are consistent with her falling within the assertive profile in Figure 2, as did all of the sistas in this study. Ramona’s results on the locus-of-control scale support her as having “agency” to be the good community organizer that her sistas perceive her to be.

Personal is Political

The perspective of seeking empowerment as continuous and with two levels of interpretation is, I feel, a direct result of the group’s premise that personal is political and political is personal. This is the basis of the group’s model of sustaining viable community change only if there is a parallel development and growth of empowerment individually and collectively.

As a phrase, “personal is political” represents the need to develop awareness of how gender, racial, and class identities of women of color combine to influence their daily lives. These identities are forms of oppression in the society that intersect and are interconnected in the experience of young women of color in this country (Collins, 1990; Collins, 2000).

As used very widely in feminist organizations across the country, this phrase “personal is political” also points to the fact that women’s individual problems should not be conceived as residing only with themselves. Personal problems (abusive partner, no housing, low wages) are also a function of structural oppression. The phrase has been used to note that women need to raise

Table: Results from self-reports on published measures of empowerment

Name	Empowerment rating scale						
	Self Esteem Scale	Organization & planning	Locus of control			Assertiveness inventory	
			Internality	Powerful others	Chance	Degree of discomfort	Response probability
Miranda	Very good	2.6 (high)	28 (low)	16 (high)	14 (medium)	84 (high)	98 (high)
Mariposa	Good enough	2.3 (high)	27 (low)	9 (medium)	17 (medium)	80 (high)	87 (medium)
Azile	Good enough	1.6 (low)	39 (high)	6 (low)	13 (low)	58 (low)	87 (medium)
Kaya	Good enough	2.4 (high)	33 (high)	7 (low)	13 (low)	69 (low)	89 (medium)
Goldie	Good enough	2.3 (high)	23 (low)	8 (medium)	7 (low)	61 (low)	77 (low)
Sadie	Very Good	2.1 (medium)	42 (high)	14 (high)	23 (high)	76 (medium)	94 (high)
Ellie	Good	2.1 (medium)	31 (medium)	11 (medium)	23 (high)	85 (high)	89 (medium)
Ramona	Very Good	1.7 Low	32 (medium)	11 (medium)	15 (medium)	76 (medium)	98 (high)
Luzely	Very Good	2.2 (medium)	33 (medium)	15 (high)	13 (low)	57 (low)	83 (low)
Neni	Good	2.1 (medium)	46 (high)	17 (high)	18 (high)	77 (high)	78 (low)
Ayesha	Good	2.2 (medium)	17 (low)	9 (medium)	25 (high)	74 (medium)	99 (high)
Average score		2.1	31.5	10.8	16.4	72.4	89.8

Name	Comments by others
Miranda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has changed in putting the human aspects before the political ○ Amazing negotiator ○ Powerful person ○ Dynamic force
Mariposa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speaks up sooner when things bother her ○ Reliable and responsible ○ Has grown holistically ○ Articulates what she is willing and not willing to do
Azile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Great at building relationships with people ○ Becoming more accountable and responsible ○ Needs more confidence ○ Little disorganized ○ Is feeling more confident ○ Cheerful
Kaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Honest, frank person who is good at communicating ○ Determined and does what she wants ○ Needs to come out and show more of herself
Goldie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has grown in comfort ○ Sees things that she's willing to fight for ○ Good facilitator in tense situations ○ Good camera woman ○ Would love to see her participate more
Sadie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good at not taking on more than she can do ○ Should express more of the things that she feels that are being said without being said
Rose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has ability to step away ○ Opinionated dynamic ○ Very outgoing and has strength in doing outreach ○ She needs to figure out when to be "on" and when to be silent ○ Shows sign of maturity when she left staff position because she realized that she had taken on more than she was able to do
Ellie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sensitive to what she thinks people are thinking and what she thinks they are thinking is not accurate ○ Good with money and knows how to handle it ○ Needs to express herself more and not feel she needs to be a certain type to be with the organization ○ Needs to clam her space and her rights ○ Too self-critical ○ She does her stuff, her thing but there's a piece that still holds back
Ramona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has grown a lot is now able to let others know when she needs help. ○ She's very persuasive and has very good arguments. Appears calmer and a little more introspective. ○ She has settled down.
Luzely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Amazing at outreach, loves talking to people on the street and is good at it ○ She speaks up more ○ Is being more assertive and taking control of the situation ○ Coming into her own ○ Beautiful spirit ○ More secure, confident and vocal
Neni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has taken on more leadership roles ○ Has grown into a young woman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open to critique ○ Gives more input and feels confident in expressing her thoughts ○ Of all she has shown the most growth ○ Understanding towards others

their political consciousness to become aware that the problems that they face often are a result of a patriarchal system. What appear as individual problems are really systemic problems. Thus, collective action is needed to bring about

political change. In order to create social change and justice, both the changed consciousness of individuals and the social transformations of political and economic institutions are mandatory (Collins, 1990; Collins, 2000). In reference to this understanding, the phrase “personal is political” is most meaningful.

For SIIS this implies that in order to successfully execute changes in social justice it has to be on two fronts: the individual and the communal. If the individual is not growing and is not empowered within the community then it is impossible to create equity and justice within that community or social setting.

SIIS has devised mechanisms to accomplish the work of developing and educating the individuals and ways of organizing the community to improve and fight for social justice. Its founding program is the Freedom School for young women of color. This offered young girls in middle and high school an after school program with weekends that included workshops ranging from African American History, cultural influences from Latin America, racism, to arts and crafts. The purpose of this program and others is to offer educational experiences that will allow people to grow individually, while pursuing the changes in social justice.

Individual empowerment is paralleled with community organizing strategies that are envisioned for social equity. SIIS’s original organizing campaign has slowly evolved over the years to a new direction in organizing, an SIIS approach to community organizing. What started as a video project to deal with an area of great concern for the young women—sexual harassment--became an opportunity to involve all the young women of the community in a public forum. This open dialogue formed Sistas Liberated Ground (SLG). It represents a new way to effectively change and address a problem. This approach collectively brings together the community to envision what is needed, what is wanted in regards to an issue, problem or dilemma.

There are important implications for community organizing, which tends to be reactive to something as opposed to proactive in creating something new. SLG expresses the power of the mind to create and to envision what is wanted. SIIS developed a “new spin” and created a new model of organizing starting with

sista circles (focus groups) which ultimately became SLG. Sista Liberated Ground is a violence-free zone within the community.

It is from this context that the young women's understanding of empowerment incorporates a dynamic and two-dimensional perspective. Not only does this way of defining empowerment enable the women to accomplish their mission of "personal is political and political is personal," but it also facilitates the holistic approach that the organization uses.

This organization and the work that it does attract young women of color who are in the local public schools, some local activists, and college graduates who want to do something in the community to fill the void they felt growing up. These young women want to work on changes within themselves and within the communities where they live. They feel the need to stay close to their community in ways that help others and put others "at the table" to enter into dialogue to construct collectively a new and constantly changing community.

I have learned from them. The definition of empowerment that I came into the study with has since been altered by this work. I feel now that my previous definition was a work in progress that has been fine-tuned as a result of this research. I had defined empowerment using all the correct words but without the visual understanding to see how empowerment is more a process than an end result.

My original definition of empowerment was that empowerment is an internal attitude of giving oneself permission to experience personal power, which then extends outward into the world, influencing, manipulating, and changing whatever is necessary to feel in charge of one's own destiny (de Almeida, 2001). Now I am aware that this definition, although it has two-dimensions, is linear. It lacks the dynamic and continuous features that characterize the concept as used by the majority of my respondents. To most of them, empowerment is an on-going process that has neither middle nor end. It is the stories of these young women, and how they visualize and actualize empowerment using a two-dimensional and continual meaning, that is a new and important addition to the empowerment literature as well as the community organizing literature. My view

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of empowerment has broadened, as will the views of those who read this story of the sistas.

It is also evident from the four self-report instruments given—assertion, self-esteem, locus of control, and organizing and planning—that there is a strong parallel of the results to how each person’s empowerment is viewed by their peers as well as how each defines empowerment. This supports and strengthens the notion of how one defines a concept and to what degree does one portray and acts out the concept as viewed by others. The administered instruments results are additional evidence of the match of the quantitative with qualitative data.

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STRESS AND BURNOUT AMONG MALAYSIAN ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELORS

by

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ABSTRACT

Burnout and stress factors were examined among 180 Malaysian drug rehabilitation officers and counselors employed by the government anti-drug agency who attended a one-day training session entitled “Challenges in Helping the Relapsing Client and Collapsing Counselors.” The officers and counselors managing the cases at the rehabilitation centers were administered two questionnaires. The first questionnaire collected data on demographic background, and the second questionnaire, Compassion Fatigue and Satisfaction (CFS) questionnaire, assessed the burnout and compassion fatigue risk of officers and counselors from Malaysia. The findings indicate that the principal factor contributing to the burnout and fatigue of the rehabilitation officers and counselors were stress related, which has implications for future training and further exploration of specific related factors.

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Introduction

The rehabilitation scene in many parts of the world has been one of rapid and dramatic changes over the past decade. Societal trends, legislative changes, innovations in technology, and economic policy in areas of health and social welfare have resulted in rising expectations and increased demands for rehabilitation services. The preparation of rehabilitation professionals for the future will clearly require innovative and imaginative training initiatives and curriculum developments which also focus on other themes in addition to issues of stress (Flett, Biggs, & Alpass, 1995).

The human service field involves continuous, direct involvement with people. The intensity of these interactions can be extremely stressful and creates the potential for worker burnout (Cranswick, 1997). Furthermore, counselor burnout has been increasingly recognized as the product of the emotional overload inherent in therapeutic work with troubled clients and a stress-inducing work setting (Beck, 1987). In some school settings professional counselors are asked to perform multiple duties as a part of their daily work (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006), which may lead to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Lambie, 2007).

Burnout has not been characterized as a one-dimensional construct, but rather has been defined as “a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people (Maslach, 1993, p. 20.) Burnout can be defined as a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, wherein the individual blames himself—not the circumstances—for his feelings, emotional and physical exhaustion, occupational fatigue, cynical attitudes, depersonalization toward or withdrawal from clients, chronic depression or increased anxiety (Rando, 1984). Maynard (1986) identified interpersonal conflicts and strained work relationships, low morale and productivity, physical complaints, and a strong tendency toward

substance abuse. It has been long recognized that substance abuse counselors are extremely vulnerable to burnout (Sorenson & Costantini, 1989).

Generally, the symptoms of burnout tend to fall into four categories, (a) cognitive, (b) affective, (c) behavioral, and (d) physical (Patrick, 1979). Cognitive symptomology is frequently manifested in an alteration of the individual's typical cognitive style. For example, a person who once was accepting and tolerant may adopt a rigid form of thinking and functioning. Such a cognitive change tends to have survival value; it serves a defensive-maintenance function, enabling the individual to hold on to some semblance of control in a world gone awry (Watkins, 1983). Affectively, the person often experiences a variety of disturbing and conflicting emotions. Most prominent is a feeling of deep and pervasive poor physical coordination and upsetting the functioning of some internal systems (Watkins, 1983). On the other hand, the recovery process from severe burnout can be compared to that of coping with loss, illness, or trauma because of the tragic quality of the crisis involved (Bernier, 1998).

A growing body of research advocates that many therapists experience negative effects and burnout with respect to their ability to relate meaningfully to their family members and friends (Guy & Liaboe, 1986a). With respect to setting boundaries in the counseling professions, Gladding (1991) concentrated on those within the counseling profession who fail to become helpful healers because of their disposition to abuse themselves by not learning from the past or not setting proper boundaries for themselves with their clients and colleagues. He called this phenomenon counselor self-abuse. According to Gladding (1991) counselor self-abuse incorporates a variety of behaviors, but it may best be defined as the propensity of a counselor to act in dysfunctional ways that harm him or her personally and professionally. The results of this behavior are damaging to these mental health professionals both internally and externally. Internally, they may become psychologically upset--that is, enraged and depressed. Externally, they may displace their feelings in physically inappropriate ways.

Drug Rehabilitation Centers in Malaysia

The federation of Malaysia covers a total area of 206,155 square mile (329,847 square kilometers). The total population is estimated at 26.6 million (2007) and comprises approximately 60 percent Malays, who are constitutionally defined as Muslims; about 26 percent Chinese, and 14 percent Indians and indigenous people. Drug treatment and rehabilitation in Malaysia are operated either by the National Anti-Drug Agency, the Prison Department, the Ministry of Home Affairs, or by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The National Anti-Drug Agency operates 29 treatment and rehabilitation centers, also known as Pusat Serenti. These centers provide rehabilitation services for users from various categories of addiction ranging from hardcore users to new users (Malaysia Ministry of Health, 2002).

According to UNICEF Malaysia (2007), in 2006, as many as 22,811 drug users were detected, 12,430 of whom were repeat offenders. There was a 43.47 percent reduction in the number of cases detected in 2006 as compared to 34,813 cases detected in 2005. Pulau Pinang recorded the highest number of detected cases. In the last bulletin, the National Anti-Drug Agency (2007) reported that at the end of June 2007, 14,489 drug users were identified, showing another 36.48 percent decrease compared with 2006 (22,811 drug users). The profile of the drug users are 97.60 percent male; 72.62 percent Malay; 70 percent youth aged between 19 and 24 years old; 92.03 percent employed (majority laborers); 62.56 percent heroin or morphine users; and 55.65 percent of them said that they were influenced by friends to use drugs.

Studies on Burnout of Helping Professionals in Rehabilitation Centers

Individuals in helping professions, particularly counselors, can easily ignore the signs of burnout. They can become depleted as they may view themselves as having unlimited capacity to give, and at the same time close their eyes to issues vital to their wellness (Cory, Cory, & Callahan, 2003). Kahn (1993) offers a system-level perspective on job burnout among human service workers by focusing on their internal networks of care-giving relationships. This study suggests a more general proposition that primary caregivers may be filled with or emptied of emotional resources of care giving in the course of their interactions with other organization members. Robinson and Skarie (1986) studied job role stresses and psychosocial variables among professional women. The study suggested that it seems likely that a woman's perceptions of job role stresses may be greatly affected by her attitudes regarding her personal power and control. Davis, Savicki, Cooley & Firth (1989) assessed counselor expectations and supervision and counselor burnout. The strongest relationship existed between dissatisfaction with supervision and perception of reduced personal accomplishment. Dissatisfaction with supervision was positively related to both frequency and intensity of emotional exhaustion. Dissatisfaction with supervision was also related to intensity of depersonalization.

Research on counselor burnout in seventeen family agencies showed low average burnout, with significant correlations between burnout and work pressure, job dissatisfaction, lack of support, authoritarian administration, and personal vulnerabilities (Beck, 1987). Capner and Caltabiano (1993) compared professional and volunteer counselors on a number of key variables in the progression to burnout, namely stressors, strain, defensive coping, social support, Type A personality, and breakdown. Path analysis supported arguments that social support may act as a buffer to burnout.

Clanton, Rude, and Taylor (1992) investigated learned resourcefulness, assessed by the Self-Control Schedule, as a moderator of burnout among 260

rehabilitation workers. The pattern of findings suggests that learned resourcefulness may be influential in determining workers' success in building personal accomplishment but not necessarily in helping them avoid increases over time in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Shopstaw, Stein, and Rawson (2000) examined correlates of burnout among substance abuse treatment counselors who work with HIV-infected clients to prevent or limit burnout. The result indicated significant level of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and high level of burnout among the counselors.

Price and Spence (1994) found that high rate burnout was associated with younger age, larger agency size, high levels of total work stressors, work overload, daily hassles, and a lower level of peer cohesion.

Research on Treatment and Strategies to Prevent and Overcome Stress and Burnout

Burnout is a process that occurs over time. Recovery from burnout, like healing from grief, takes time, patience, and hard work. In time, counselors can learn what combination of events causes them stress and burnout. Although the work done to alleviate burnout can be private and tedious, it requires gentleness with self and a social support system that abides during the tough times. Burnout never occurs in a social vacuum; therefore, abiding is an important concept. Recovery from burnout is not linear and often tends toward chaos. It is also important to note that chaos is a signal to sufferers that they are ready to gain insight, strengthen, and grow (Kesler, 1990). Ursprung (1986) indicated that the effectiveness of various professional development approaches (time management, caseload management, and other related topics commonly offered by rehabilitation continuing education programs) could also be examined in relation to burnout. A number of more clinically based stress management interventions also need evaluation.

Watkins (1983) found collegial and extra-collegial contacts provide opportunities for personal growth. The counselor is able to experience periods of self-disclosure, interpersonal intimacy, and unmitigated fun that would help in achieving self-actualization. In summary, then, the family and friends of the helper serve as continuous sources of support and enrichment. Watkins (1983) identified three specific approaches to prevent or overcome counselor burnout: (a) personal therapy, (b) free, private time, and (c) association with “healthy souls.” The effort must proceed on many levels: by helping counselors achieve needed cognitive, emotional, physical, and habit changes; by facilitating effective staff, communication, and mutual support; by improving agency structure, policies, and remuneration levels; by moving closer to participatory leadership administrative style; and by rallying community-wide support for overcoming obstacles to service (Beck, 1987).

Encouragement exchange is a technique that uses positive group dynamics and a warm-up activity (e.g., a potluck dinner) to promote social interest and psychological hardiness in professional counselors. The encouragement exchange is a valuable technique that can be adopted in a variety of settings. For instance, agencies could use it for team building and support (Evans & Villavisanis, 1997). Beck (1987) suggested that the effort must proceed on many levels--by helping counselors achieve needed cognitive, emotional, physical, and habit changes; by facilitating effective staff communication and mutual support; by improving agency structure, policies, and remuneration levels; by moving closer to a participatory leadership administrative style; and by rallying community-wide support for overcoming obstacles to service.

Significance of the Study

This study is an exploratory study on drug rehabilitation officers and counselors in Malaysia to understand the stress faced by them and also to explore whether their work causes burnout. If there are signs of burnout, then policy makers and

top management can design appropriate professional development and in-service training activities to address this problem.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the study were 180 Malaysian drug rehabilitation officers and counselors employed by a government agency. There were 57.1 percent male and 42.9 percent female. The age group of participants was 22.7 percent less than 20 years, 51.4 percent between ages 25 and 35, 16 percent between ages 36 and 46, and 9.9 percent between ages 47 and 57. Their academic levels were 0.6 percent doctorate, 5.2 percent post graduate, 23.1 percent degree, 20.2 percent A level, 4 percent specific training, and 46.8 percent others. The rehabilitation backgrounds of officers and counselors were 60.2 percent with experience and 39.8 percent without experience.

Instruments

The survey is designed to measure stress and burnout among the participants. One questionnaire was to obtain the background information on the participants and the second questionnaire is the Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Test (CSFT) (Stamm & Figley, 1999). Participants were asked to check appropriate answers. Demographic background included variables of age, sex, race, marital status, and number of children; education background included degree and training, years of graduate study, and field of study; rehabilitation background included length of work experience in rehabilitation. Additional items included type of caseload, composition of caseload, administrative style of the agency, questions of input on policies and procedures and whether policies are explicit and understandable, success in coping with work related stress, frequency of physical symptoms, home stress that affects work, office stress that affects work, office stressors that affect home life, impact of office stress, types of support, provision of service, support and positive feedback, job function, and job pressures.

Procedure

The participants participating in the survey were informed that the purpose of the study was to examine stress and burnout. The questionnaires were completed anonymously with confidentiality of information ensured.

Results

The CSFT examined the estimation of compassion status: How much at risk the person is of burnout and compassion fatigue and also the degree of satisfaction with helping others.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Fatigue and Burnout Scales

Scales	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Fatigue	180	.18	3.88	1.81	.73	.54
Burnout	180	.60	4.25	2.35	.61	.37

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and variances of two scales in the Burnout and Fatigue Test for the drug rehabilitation officers and counselors. The level of burnout (Mean = 2.35) and the level of fatigue (Mean = 1.81) were the lowest of all scales. The mean of 2.35 in burnout indicates feelings of hopelessness and unwillingness to deal with the work. This study shows that the level of burnout in officers and counselors is relatively low.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance for Burnout Scale and Comprehensive Background Data of Rehabilitation Officers and Counselors

Comprehensive background	SV	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between	.704	3	.235	.623	.601
	Within	65.199	173	.377		
	Total	65.903	176			
Gender	Between	.714	1	.714	1.929	.167
	Within	65.913	178	.370		
	Total	66.627	179			
Marital Status	Between	1.091	3	.364	1.345	.262
	Within	47.077	174	.271		
	Total	48.168	177			
Academic Level	Between	.826	5	.172	.478	.794
	Within	59.131	164	.361		
	Total	59.933	169			
Stress	Between	5.173	6	.826	2.427	.028*
	Within	61.454	173	.355		
	Total	66.627	179			

* Significant at p<.05 level

Table 2 shows the comparison that was done of the comprehensive demographic, educational, and psychological symptoms backgrounds of officers and counselors with the two scales of burnout and fatigue of the CSFT. The result shows there are no significant differences between age, gender, marital status, and academic levels and the burnout scale. However, there was a significant difference between burnout scale and the stress level of the rehabilitation officers and counselors.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance of Fatigue Scale and Comprehensive Background Data of Rehabilitation Officers and Counselors

Comprehensive background	SV	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between	1.113	3	.371	.676	.568
	Within	94.919	173	.549		
	Total	96.032	176			
Gender	Between	.000	1	.000	.000	.992
	Within	96.595	178	.543		
	Total	96.595	179			
Marital Status	Between	1.214	3	.405	.746	.526
	Within	94.448	174	.543		
	Total	95.662	177			
Academic Level	Between	.861	5	.172	.322	.899
	Within	87.598	164	.534		
	Total	88.458	169			
Stress	Between	7.315	8	.914	1.745	.091*
	Within	89.074	170	.524		
	Total	96.390	178			

* Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 3 shows the analysis of variance of fatigue scale and comprehensive background of rehabilitation officers and counselors. This indicates that there are no significant differences between age, gender, marital status, and academic levels and fatigue factor in CSFT. However, there was a significant difference between fatigue scale and stress level of the rehabilitation officers and counselors.

A microanalysis was done of work-related stress in the following categories: stress due to coping with work, stress due to the adverse effect of the job on home life, stress due to involvement of the counselor in clients' problems, and loneliness. The percentage of inability to cope with work stress ranked number one, with 78.3 percent reporting such contributing to their stress; 10.3 percent reported adverse effects of the job on home life, and only 0.5 percent of

counselors attribute the factor of loneliness to their stress. Additionally, the counselors reported different reactions to the stress. Sixty-nine percent of them reported sleeping problems such as insomnia, 14.7 percent eating problems, 1.6 percent nervousness, and 0.5 percent shortness of breath.

Table 4: The Analysis of Variance for Satisfaction Scale and Comprehensive Background Data of Counselors

Comprehensive background	SV	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between	1.053	3	.351	1.292	.279
	Within	46.980	173	.272		
	Total	48.033	176			
Gender	Between	.127	1	.127	.470	.494
	Within	48.238	178	.271		
	Total	48.365	179			
Marital Status	Between	1.091	3	.364	1.345	.262
	Within	47.077	174	.271		
	Total	48.168	177			
Academic Level	Between	1.505	5	.301	1.097	.364
	Within	44.986	164	.274		
	Total	46.492	169			
Administration Leadership	Between	.947	3	.316	1.115	.345
	Within	42.162	149	.283		
	Total	43.108	152			

Table 4 shows the analysis of variance of burnout scale of the CSFT and comprehensive background of counselors. This indicates that there are no significant differences between age, gender, marital status, academic levels, and administrative leadership style and the burnout scale of CSFT. The finding indicates that existing stress is not due to administrative leadership and governmental entities.

Conclusion

In promoting wellness for rehabilitation officers and counselors, this study concluded that the principal factor contributing to the burnout and fatigue of the rehabilitation officers and counselors in Malaysia was stress related. This impacted several critical functions such as sleeping and eating. Additionally, the study also showed that age, marital status, and academic level have no impact on fatigue and burnout of the rehabilitation officers and counselors, which implies that the existing stress is not due to administrative leadership and governmental entities. This finding supports the idea that the officers and counselors have supportive immediate supervisors and job autonomy. The preparation of rehabilitation professionals for the future will clearly require innovative and imaginative training initiatives and curriculum developments which also focus on other themes in addition to issues of stress (Flett, Biggs, & Alpass, 1995). The implications of this study will contribute to the establishment of training initiatives to promote counselor self-care and wellness, aimed at system efficiency and personal competence.

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BOOK REVIEW

by

Youngsuk Chae, Ph.D.*

Understanding American Fiction as Postcolonial Literature: Literature in the Historical Development of a Fluctuating Cultural Identity by Patsy J. Daniels. Lewiston, NY and Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010. ISBN10: 0-7734-1435-5; ISBN13: 978-0-7734-1435-8. 180 pp. USA List Price: \$99.95; UK List Price: £64.95.

In *Understanding American Fiction as Postcolonial Literature: Literature in the Historical Development of a Fluctuating Cultural Identity*, Patsy Daniels argues that American literature is a postcolonial literature in the sense that the cultural values inherent in American fiction have emulated the mother culture. Daniels's construction of a postcolonial American literature fills a significant gap in the current discussion of postcolonial literature, which focuses mainly on literary works by the writers of the former British colonies in Africa and Asia.

The United States' weakened yet not entirely severed ties with England—the mother culture and the colonizer—led America to emulate England, becoming a colonizer within its own borders, and that provides a point of departure for Daniels's unique theory that American fiction “started as a colonial literature and has become a postcolonial literature” (vii). British literature, having taken the dominant canonical position, has in fact maintained the status of colonizer relative to the literary works of the subjugated and the disenfranchised.

Daniels takes account of American writers ranging from the early authors of the colonial period to writers from the politically, economically, and culturally

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marginalized segments of the population, including African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, Irish Americans, and women, as well as the Beats. Her text also reveals American minority literature as a “becoming” postcolonial literature that has an ongoing tie with the mother land yet is in a constant process of making and redefining what it means to be “American.”

Daniels’s book encompasses an enormous amount and prodigious scope of research on complex American history, political events, and cultural shifts that have conditioned the production of American fiction, and her examinations of individual works of the writers—Gerald Vizenor, Richard Wright, Richard Rodriguez, Maxine Hong Kingston, Flannery O’Connor, Diana Abu-Jaber, and Jack Kerouac—involve readings that are both acute and engaging. This is an invigorating exploration of American fiction that keeps expanding and realigning its paradigm, reflecting the ever-changing “American” identity as “becoming.”

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