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CANADIAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
FROM THE STANDPOINT OF GAY MEN

BY

Brian Joseph O'Neill

Bachelor of Arts, University of Windsor, 1968
Master of Social Work, Carleton University, 1971

THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Work
In partial fulfilment of the requirements
For the Doctor of Social Work degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
1994

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Abstract

This study explores issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in social work education from the standpoint of gay men. The literature suggests that the effectiveness of social services is limited by social workers' lack of knowledge and sensitivity regarding same-gender sexual orientation. This problem is significant because at least 10% of the population are sexually attracted to members of their own gender and because clients from this segment of the population may have service needs different than those of heterosexuals, particularly related to societal discrimination based on sexual orientation. The purpose of this inquiry is to identify changes needed in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation and to understand how these modifications could be implemented.

The investigation is based on feminist standpoint theory, a critical approach to epistemology which holds that knowledge reflects the social values of those who develop and ascribe to it. The design of this inquiry includes strategies drawn from institutional ethnography, an application of standpoint theory to the study of social institutions from the standpoint of marginalized groups, for the purpose of uncovering the determinants of oppression. The study also employs strategies of action research, an approach to stimulating change as well as developing knowledge, which involves collaboration with those who will be affected by the outcomes of inquiry.

The research participants were 37 gay men, including students and faculty members from 11 schools of social work in six Canadian provinces, as well as practising social workers and clients of professional social workers. Most respondents were white, anglophone, and middle-aged.

I collaborated with a committee of gay men during all phases of the design and implementation of the study. The investigation involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews of respondents about their experiences and perceptions regarding social work education, as well as examination of documents related to social work education policies and programs. Analysis of the data focused on identifying problematic aspects of social work education and their determinants.

The findings are that issues related to same-gender sexual orientation are excluded and marginalized in social work education discourse. Respondents perceived the climate in schools of social work to be unsafe for open discussion of same-gender sexual orientation and the curricula to lack accurate content on the topic. This silencing appears to be linked to accreditation standards which do not require schools of social work to actively address issues of same-gender sexual orientation in their policies, programs, and curricula.

The implications of the study are that there is a need for the adoption of social work education policies and programs which would create a safe climate within schools of social work for public discussion of same-gender sexual orientation. Policies should affirm acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation as a valid

expression of human sexuality and effectively counter discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation should be addressed in faculty recruitment and development, and student selection and support. As well, accreditation standards should mandate the integration of content related to same-gender sexual orientation into the core curriculum.

In this report, I use the term same-gender sexual orientation, which refers to both lesbian and gay male sexual orientation, because some respondents discussed issues which related to lesbian sexual orientation as well as gay male sexual orientation, or did not differentiate between lesbian and gay male sexual orientation. A consequence of this study being conducted from the standpoint of gay men is that its findings clearly apply to issues of gay male sexual orientation in social work education. In addition, the findings may also have some implications for the handling of issues related to lesbian sexual orientation in schools of social work. However, because perceptions from the standpoint of lesbian women may differ from those from the standpoint of gay men, who are socially located differently than lesbian women, there is a need for a separate study of social work education from the standpoint of lesbian women.

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My gratitude goes to the men who shared their experiences in relation to social work education and provided assistance in conducting the investigation. They pointed the way towards breaking the silence regarding same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work. I cannot individually mention all the colleagues and friends who provided support. However, I am particularly thankful to the members of my dissertation support group who helped me deal with anxieties which arose during the project. I am also grateful to my parents, who gave me many of the values which motivated me to become a social worker and to carry out this study. I would also like to acknowledge the financial assistance of Health and Welfare Canada in the form of a National Welfare Fellowship and of the Bettina Russell Memorial Scholarship Fund. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my partner, Alan Steen, whose patience, caring, and sense of humour sustained me throughout the process.

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Gripton and Valentich (1985/86) argue that social workers have a responsibility to address discrimination based on sexual orientation, because "... opposing social oppression and helping its victims are congruent with core social work values" (p. 3). Social work has the potential to reduce oppression based on sexual orientation, because it aims to improve the quality of people's lives by facilitating change at both the individual and societal levels (Schoenberg & Goldberg, 1985). To contribute to the achievement of this goal through the education of social workers, this study examines professional social work education from the standpoint of gay men.

Social workers could help individuals cope with the effects of homophobia and also promote social change to reduce anti-gay discrimination. However, although clients who are attracted to members of their own gender are served by most social agencies (Schoenberg & Goldberg, 1985), they are largely misunderstood or ignored by mainstream services (Rabin, Keefe, & Burton, 1986). Since the advent of the gay liberation movement, gay men and lesbians have begun to demand that social services become more responsive to their needs (Finnigan & Spiece, 1983; Pierce, 1992a). I hope that the findings of this study will facilitate social work training with respect to same-gender sexual orientation, thus contributing to the emancipation of those who are disadvantaged because of their sexuality.

Overview of the Research Design

In this study, I aimed to develop an understanding of professional social work education, from the standpoint of gay men, in order to generate recommendations for changes in this institution. I addressed the following questions:

1. What changes are required in social work education policies, programs, and curricula in relation to same-gender sexual orientation?
2. How can these changes be implemented?
3. What are the supports for, and barriers to, these modifications?

To answer these questions, I used strategies drawn from institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987), an approach for investigating organizations from the standpoint of marginalized groups. I conducted in-depth interviews with gay male clients, social workers, social work students, and social work educators about their experiences and perceptions regarding social work education. I also examined documents regarding social work education policies and programs. Using an action research approach, I collaborated with a research advisory committee (RAC) composed of gay men during all stages of the research process.

The Problem

Stereotypes and ignorance underlie most discrimination against gay men and lesbians (Marmor, 1980; Pierce, 1991). However, over the past 20 years, the gay rights movement has stimulated a re-evaluation of accepted knowledge regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Inquiries have shifted from studying same-gender

sexual behaviour as a symptom of pathology, to understanding issues in the lives of gay men and lesbians, particularly the effects of pervasive social and legal discrimination (Watters, 1986). Investigations have disproved earlier findings that gay men and lesbians were disturbed and dysfunctional (e.g., Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Berger, 1980; Gonsiorek, 1982; Risman & Schwartz, 1988; Weinrich, 1982; Wingrove & Rodway, 1985). However, although unbiased and accurate information is now available in professional publications, it appears to have been ineffective in changing the attitudes of some social workers about same-gender sexual orientation.

There is evidence that misinformation and negative attitudes persist among some social workers with respect to same-gender sexual orientation. Studies indicate that many social workers lack accurate information and sensitivity regarding the psychological, social and sexual aspects of the lives of gay men and lesbians. An informal survey of social service workers in Toronto (Schneider, 1988b) found a quarter of respondents harboured negative stereotypes about same-gender sexual orientation. This finding was consistent with the results of a survey of a random sample (n=500) of members of the American National Association of Social Workers (Peterson, 1992); only 20% of questions regarding gay men were answered correctly. Investigations by DeCrescenzo (1984), Rabin, Keefe, and Burton (1986), Wisniewski and Toomey (1987), and Dhooper, Royse, and Tran (1987-1988) indicated that significant numbers of social workers have negative attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Based on a survey of social workers, psychiatrists, and clinical psychologists, Graham, Rawlings, Halpern, and Hermes (1984) concluded that

members of these professions were not adequately trained to work with gay and lesbian clients.

There is evidence which suggests that attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation can influence clinical judgement. For instance, in a study involving 235 undergraduate psychology students, Davison and Friedman (1981) found that gay and lesbian clients' non-sexual problems were often attributed to their sexual orientation, despite a lack of evidence to that effect. Interestingly, Bergeron (1983) discovered that social workers assessed gay and lesbian clients to be better adjusted than heterosexual clients, perhaps compensating for unacceptable negative feelings about same-gender sexual orientation. In either case, professional judgement was distorted by the factor of sexual orientation. The result could be services which are ineffective and perhaps harmful.

Although there have been only a few, exploratory studies regarding the provision of social services to gay men and lesbians, their findings support concerns about the effectiveness of mainstream agencies in meeting the needs of these client groups. Several inquiries have found services to be insensitive and unresponsive to gay and lesbian clients (Gambrill, Stein, & Brown, 1984; Kourany, 1987; O'Brien, Travers, & Bell, 1993; Rabin et al., 1986; The Gay and Lesbian Youth, 1989; Vergara, 1985). Agency staff ignored or denied the existence of gay and lesbian clients on their caseloads, were unaware of their needs, and lacked knowledge regarding same-gender sexual orientation and gay community resources. The result is that many gay and lesbian clients feel that their needs are better understood by workers who share

their sexual orientation (Gay Counselling Centre of Toronto, 1984). These feelings are supported by studies which found that matching gay clients with gay workers contributed to therapeutic success (Gambrill et al., 1984; Liljestrand, Gerling, & Saliba, 1978; Rochlin, 1981/82). Managers and staff in youth residential services, for example, recognized that they did not have the knowledge and training to adequately respond to the needs of gay and lesbian clients (O'Brien, et al., 1993).

Social workers' lack of knowledge, negative attitudes, and inadequate skills for serving gay and lesbian clients may be due to deficiencies in social work education, given that social work students apparently receive little training regarding same-gender sexual orientation (Dulaney & Kelly, 1982; Newman, 1989). However, as far as I can determine, there has not been a systematic investigation of social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation. In this study, I address this problem from the standpoint of gay men.

Importance of the problem. Social workers' lack of accurate information and non-accepting attitudes about same-gender sexual orientation constitute serious problems, because they may contribute to inadequate services, support personal and systemic discrimination, and impact upon social work education. This is particularly important because persons who are sexually oriented to their own gender form a significant proportion of the population and have some social service needs which are different than those of heterosexuals.

Estimates of the number of gay men and lesbians vary. Kinsey's classic studies of human sexuality revealed that between 5% to 10% of men, and 3% to 5% of women, had participated predominantly in same-gender sexual behaviour for a significant period of their lives (Marmor, 1980). When respondents who had some same-gender experience, but identified as heterosexual were included, estimates doubled (Berger, 1987). These findings have been supported by more recent studies (e.g., Norris, 1991; Shively & De Cecco, 1978; Storms, 1978). However, some surveys have shown a lower rate of same-gender sexual behaviour (Harry, 1990; Hunt, 1974), a finding which may be explained by under-reporting due to the stigmatization of same-gender sexual orientation in our society. Whatever the exact number of persons who have some degree of same-gender sexual orientation, it is likely that most social workers serve gay or lesbian clients, whether or not they are aware of it. They may also be serving the parents, spouses, children, or friends of gay men and lesbians.

Inasmuch as social work is based on the systematic application of knowledge regarding clients and their problems (Bloom, 1969; Boehm, 1959), misinformation and prejudice about same-gender sexual orientation can cause workers to provide inappropriate service to a sizeable minority within the client population. All social workers should be aware that gay and lesbian clients have the same range of social service needs as do heterosexuals, although the context is different due to stigmatization (Gambrill, et al., 1984; Moses & Hawkins, 1982; Terry, 1992).

Gay men and lesbians have special needs for social services in certain areas. For example, gay men constitute the majority of persons diagnosed with AIDS in

Canada (Immen, 1994) and the United States (Peterson, 1992). In addition, many gay men and lesbians experience social problems which stem from the stress of living in an anti-gay society rather than from personal deficiencies. For example, gay people may require support in coping with physical and sexual assault due to their sexual orientation (Anderson, 1982; Bohn, 1983/84; Duncan, 1988; Herek, 1989; San Miguel & Millham, 1976; Wooden & Parker, 1982) and in dealing with vocational problems related to employment discrimination (Berger & Kelly, 1981; Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario, 1986; Etringer, Hillerbrand, & Hetherington, 1990; Olson, 1987). Some gay men and lesbians develop addiction problems resulting from the stress of anti-gay prejudice (Zehner & Lewis, 1983/1984). Families of gay people may need assistance in coping with the stigma which accompanies having a child or parent who is gay (Bozett, 1989; Neisen, 1987). Gay and lesbian youth often need support and information in establishing their sexual identity (Mercier & Berger, 1989; Ross, 1989; Schneider, 1988a; The Gay and Lesbian Youth, 1989; Tremble, Schneider, & Appathurai, 1989). Some seniors experience the need for gay-positive housing and supports as they become more dependent (Grenwald, 1983/1984; Lucco, 1987). Thus, social workers in virtually all fields of service should be skilled in responding to the needs of gay and lesbian clients.

Social work training concerning same-gender sexual orientation is also important, because social workers have a professional obligation to be non-discriminatory in their services and knowledgeable about their clients. The Social Work Code of Ethics (Canadian Association of Social Workers [CASW], 1994)

prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and requires social workers to be competent in the areas in which they provide service. Moreover, the human rights codes of seven Canadian provinces and one territory prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Misinformation about same-gender sexual orientation may support the prejudices of individual social workers. Given that social workers can have responsibility for policy and program development, management, training, and community organization as well as clinical intervention (CASW, 1994), lack of professional education may contribute to systemic discrimination in social services which exclude gay clients and are unresponsive to their needs.

Finally, negative attitudes and misinformation regarding same-gender sexual orientation are serious concerns because they hamper the incorporation of information about this issue into the knowledge base of social work. The existence of stereotypes and lack of recognition within the profession of the contribution of gay and lesbian social workers discourage gay men and lesbians from entering the profession (Dulaney & Kelly, 1982). Furthermore, fear of discrimination causes some social workers to conceal their same-gender sexual orientation, denying the profession the benefits of their knowledge and experience. Lastly, faculty members' lack of knowledge and interest hinder the inclusion of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in social work training and research (Brooks, 1992).

Assumptions

A number of assumptions underlie this study. Firstly, it is based on the conviction that same-gender sexual orientation is a positive, healthy, expression of human sexuality. Recognizing the virtual impossibility of accurately determining the prevalence of same-gender sexual orientation among the population because of its stigmatized status, I took for granted that gay men and lesbians form a significant minority within the client population served by social workers. I assumed that social workers have varying degrees of accurate knowledge and positive attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. From the Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994), I inferred that social workers have an ethical responsibility to be knowledgeable, respectful, and competent in serving gay men and lesbians. I speculated that gay social work students and faculty have some needs which differ from those of their heterosexual peers, and which are not addressed within social work education. Based on a review of the research literature of social work and related disciplines, I concluded that there is a sufficient body of knowledge on which to base training regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Finally, I believed that improved social work training regarding same-gender sexual orientation could make social work services more accessible and effective for gay men and lesbians.

Definitions

In the past, researchers defined same-gender sexual orientation simply as sexual behaviour between individuals of the same gender (e.g., Churchill, 1967; Kinsey,

Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). More recently, same-gender emotional attraction has been included in the definition of same-gender sexual orientation (Berger, 1987; Schneider, 1988a). Data indicate an individual's sexual interests and behaviour may vary from being exclusively same-gender focused, to being exclusively heterosexual (Harry, 1990; Hunt, 1974; Marmor, 1980; Shively & De Cecco, 1978; Storms, 1978). To further complicate matters, not all persons who participate in same-gender sexual behaviour consider themselves to be gay or lesbian (Paul & Weinrich, 1982). Wingrove and Rodway (1985) accommodated this diversity by defining gay male sexual orientation as a dominant, but not exclusive interest in men. For the purposes of this study, I considered same-gender sexual orientation to be dominant, but not exclusive, sexual and emotional attraction and behaviour directed toward persons of the same gender. Throughout this report, I have used the terms gay men and lesbian to refer not only to persons who identify as gay or lesbian, but also to individuals who have some degree of same-gender attraction, but may consider themselves to be heterosexual or bisexual.

In this study I did not use the term "homosexual," because it has long been used in labelling gay men and lesbians as deviant (Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, 1991). Furthermore, although the term homosexual may be used to refer to both gay men and lesbians, it is often assumed to refer specifically to gay men. As the American Psychological Association's Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns (1991) has pointed out, this practice makes communication ambiguous and furthers ignorance of lesbians. When discussing studies which refer to homosexuals, but

clearly are limited to gay men, I have indicated that the findings apply to gay men. Regarding inquiries which focused on both gay men and lesbians, I have reported that the findings are relevant to people of both genders.

Social Work Education

Lawrence (1986) describes social work education as "the systematic development and cultivation of a person's capacity to fulfil the purposes and values of social work" (p. 19). The Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994) identifies respect for diversity and opposition to discrimination as central values of Canadian social work. In the United States, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 1993) specifies the purpose of social work education to be the preparation of professionals "... who are committed to practice that includes services to the poor and oppressed, and who work to alleviate poverty, oppression, and discrimination" (p.1).

In Canada, the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) develops educational policy and accredits Canadian social work education programs at the university level. In addition, provincial education ministries also regulate schools of social work (Yelaja, 1990). Canadian BSW programs provide training for generalist practice; MSW programs require specialization in a particular method of intervention or field of service; doctoral programs prepare students for careers in social service administration, teaching, and research (Lecomte, 1986). There are currently 27 postsecondary institutions offering accredited social work education programs in

Canada. Of these, 24 programs are at the bachelors level, 20 are at the masters level, and 5 are at the doctoral level (CASSW, 1993).

Boundaries of the Study

In this study, I did not specifically explore issues related to lesbian sexual orientation or to other minority differences, nor did I investigate social work training in non-university settings. However, I recognize that the findings of this inquiry have some relevance to women, minorities, and other programs of social work education.

Standpoint theory (Harding, 1991; Harstock, 1983; Smith, 1987), the epistemological approach which I used in this investigation, suggests that research be based on the experiences of particular marginalized groups. In order to be consistent with standpoint theory, I focused on social work education exclusively from the standpoint of gay men. I realize that gay men and lesbians share some experiences, particularly in relation to discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, I believe that the standpoint of lesbians is different than that of gay men because of gender differences. The significance of gender differences in the development of knowledge is a central precept of standpoint theory. Consequently, I interviewed only gay men, with the goal of achieving an in-depth understanding of their experiences and perceptions. The inclusion of data from both gay men and lesbians would have blurred the picture, because they have different standpoints.

My conviction that the standpoint of lesbians is distinct from that of gay men is based on literature which suggests that there are differences in how lesbians and gay

men are oppressed (Neisen, 1990; Taylor, 1983). In the area of social services, O'Brien et al. (1993) found significantly different patterns in the treatment of gay and lesbian youths in group homes. With reference to the academic environment, lesbian faculty, staff, and students have reported more severe forms of discrimination, and more reluctance to reveal their sexual orientation than gay men (Norris, 1991; Ontario Federation of Students, 1991). Other inquiries have found male university students more hostile towards gay men than to lesbians (D'Augelli, 1989a; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Herek, 1988), and that gay men were more frequently threatened with violence on campus than lesbians (D'Augelli, 1989b). In either case, it appears that to some extent, the campus response to gay men is different than that to lesbians. The consistent pattern of differences in the experiences of gay men and lesbians suggests that to include data from lesbians would be to conduct investigations of social work education from two distinct standpoints. In fact, there is a precedent for my decision to gather data solely from gay men. Reidy (1993) studied Ontario community colleges in relation to issues of same-gender sexual orientation, basing his investigation exclusively on data from gay male respondents. He was able to develop an understanding of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation from the standpoint of gay men.

The second boundary I observed was not focusing explicitly on differences related to race, ethnicity, social class, age, or physical abilities. I recognized that these factors are entwined with sexual orientation issues and sought to maximize the diversity among the respondents I recruited. However, I concentrated on sexual

orientation in order to clearly identify issues in social work education with respect to that issue. I have reported data related to these differences which were relevant to the goals of the study.

The third boundary I observed was that I did not explore community college social service training programs. My reason for this limitation was that the purpose, content, and participants in community college programs are significantly different than those of university programs. Community college programs emphasize the development of skills for work in specific service areas such as addiction counselling, corrections, and developmental handicaps, whereas university programs focus on the application of theories to a diversity of practice settings. For that reason, in this study the term social worker is limited to persons with the degree of Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), Master of Social Work (MSW), Doctor of Social Work (DSW) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in social work, because these persons have received professional social work education.

Potential Usefulness of the Study

The primary contribution of this study is the identification of changes needed in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation. The inquiry has implications for social work education policy, particularly with respect to factors which influence the climate in schools of social work, such as anti-discrimination, pro-diversity programs, faculty recruitment and training, and student selection and support. The findings also provide directions for the inclusion of content regarding same-gender

sexual orientation in the curriculum, as well as in faculty development programs. The changes suggested may encourage gay faculty to contribute their knowledge and expertise within schools, and attract more gay students to the profession. The study may also contribute to greater understanding of the process of instituting change in social work education with respect to other oppressed populations. In addition, some of the findings may apply to the training programs of other helping professions such as applied psychology. Finally, dissemination of the report may increase research interest in sexual orientation issues.

According to Bloom (1969), "...knowledge is essential to effective social work practice. The better the knowledge, the more effective should be the practice" (p. 16). By contributing to the improvement of the education of social workers with respect to same-gender sexual orientation, the study may help make social services more accessible and supportive to gay and lesbian clients. As well, the findings may be useful in devising in-service training programs in social agencies.

My Perspective

I am a middle-aged, white, gay, man from a lower middle-class Catholic family which immigrated to Canada from Ireland many generations ago. I have had over 20 years of experience in social services and social work education. Concerns about inequities based on class, race, culture, gender, and sexual orientation motivated me to choose social work as an occupation and to work for improvement in services to minorities. I have been involved in the gay rights movement since the early 1970s,

primarily in the area of social services. Those interests coalesced in a study in which I explored issues in the lives of racial minority lesbians and gay men (O'Neill, 1993). A series of interviews revealed to me the effects of oppression on persons who are multiply stigmatized. The experience furthered my commitment to bringing about systemic change in mainstream social services to make them more responsive to gay men.

I am interested in this problem because of my own experiences as a gay man in social work education and social services. In courses for my Master of Social Work degree between 1969 and 1970, same-gender sexual orientation was described only as a developmental disturbance. The participation of gay men and lesbians in social services as clients, students, social workers or educators was ignored. No mention was made of the effects of discrimination against lesbians and gay men. When I discussed my own gay male sexual orientation with two faculty members, both reassured me that I was just going through a phase and would eventually become heterosexual.

After graduation from the school of social work, I found myself working for a social agency with a policy against hiring gay men and lesbians. I felt I had to conceal my sexual orientation in order to maintain my job security. This suppression of information about myself had a detrimental effect on my practice, since I felt constrained from discussing issues regarding sexual orientation as they arose with respect to clients. For example, on my caseload I had several teenagers who were gay but unable to openly identify themselves as such. They frequently acted out their

conflicts regarding their identity in self-destructive ways. Unfortunately, I did not reveal my sexual orientation to them, possibly denying them support and a positive role model. Later as a supervisor, I became so insensitive to same-gender sexual orientation that I failed to even suggest conflict about sexual orientation as a possible factor in an adolescent's persistent acting-out. In another agency which professed to be accepting of same-gender sexual orientation, I found my colleagues resistant to considering whether clients were gay and whether they had special needs related to their sexual orientation.

The result of these educational and professional experiences was that I felt frustrated and oppressed. I was unable to make full use of my knowledge and experience as a gay man in helping clients. Recognizing that prejudice against gay men and lesbians pervades society in general, I came to wonder how its impact could be minimized in social work, a profession committed to helping oppressed groups. I realized that data regarding gay men's experiences and perceptions in relation to social work education would be helpful in stimulating changes in schools of social work.

In undertaking this study, I hoped to better understand the forces which oppress me as a gay social worker. I expected to become more aware of my internalized prejudice regarding same-gender sexual orientation and how it limits my perceptions and understanding. I also expected to identify ways in which social work education could make social services more responsive to the needs of gay clients by providing accurate knowledge and training regarding same-gender sexual orientation. In Chapter 6 of this

report, I describe my reactions to the data gathered and the extent to which my expectations were met by the study.

Presentation of the Study

Chapter 2 is a discussion of standpoint theory, the epistemological approach which the study is based on. This chapter also includes a description of institutional ethnography, the particular application of standpoint theory which shaped the design of this inquiry. Chapter 3 provides an overview and analysis of the literature regarding social work education and same-gender sexual orientation. Chapter 4 outlines the research design and methodology used in the investigation, and includes a description of the respondents. Chapter 5 reports the findings which emerged from an analysis of respondent interviews and documents which regulate social work education. In Chapter 6, I compare the findings of the study with the literature. I also discuss the findings in relation to standpoint theory. Subsequently, I discuss the implications of the findings, put forth recommendations for changes in social work education, and make suggestions for future research. Finally, I present my reflections on the significance of the study for me, as a gay man.

Chapter 2. THEORY

I based this study on Smith's (1987) formulation of standpoint theory, a feminist approach to the development of knowledge. In this chapter, I first discuss the dominant and alternative paradigm regarding epistemology, comparing and contrasting their strengths and weaknesses. I then give an overview of standpoint theory, focusing on Smith's (1987) thinking regarding research. Next, I describe institutional ethnography, a research strategy based on Smith's (1987) standpoint theory which aims to reveal how oppressive ideologies are implemented through institutions. Finally, I discuss heterosexism, an oppressive ideology regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

Positivist and Phenomenological Research Paradigms

The predominant paradigm in social work research is positivism (Fraser, Taylor, Jackson, & O'Jack, 1991; Hick, 1991). Neuman (1991) defines "positivism" as "an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity" (p. 46). The alternative to the positivist paradigm is the phenomenological paradigm, which involves "... using qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context-specific settings" (Patton, 1990, p. 37).

Neuman (1991) divides the several forms of phenomenological inquiry into two categories. He defines the first category, "interpretive social science," as "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (p. 50). Among other approaches, hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, and symbolic interactionism fall within the interpretive paradigm. Neuman (1991) describes the second category of phenomenological research, "critical social science," as "... inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves" (p. 56). Marxist and feminist approaches are included within this approach.

Comparison of paradigms. Minton (1986) compares the assumptions of interpretive and critical research to those underlying positivist methods. In the former, reality depends on the perspective of the witness; in the latter, reality is a constant, appearing the same to all viewers. Interpretive and critical approaches assume that standards of behaviour are based on the cultural norms of particular social groups. Positivists believe there are invariant natural laws. Interpretive and critical researchers hold that knowledge is socially constructed and valid only in its cultural context, whereas positivists argue that valid knowledge is objective and applicable in all situations. In interpretive and critical approaches, theory is used to guide the collection of data to ground a specific understanding of events. Positivist science

seeks to demonstrate an explanation of reality. According to critical approaches, the investigator should become involved in improving the situation under study rather than remaining a detached reporter, as in positivist studies.

Criticisms of positivism. Positivist methods have been sharply criticized as inadequate for developing new knowledge in the social sciences and dehumanizing to research participants (Harding, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Minton (1986) and Walsh-Bowers and Parlour (1992) assert that positivist research can contribute to the oppression of minorities, including gay men and lesbians. They argue that positivist claims of neutrality and objectivity obscure how oppression occurs by diverting attention from the values of dominant groups, which are inherent in social structures.

There is an ongoing debate within the social work profession regarding approaches to developing knowledge relevant to social work practice (e.g., Mullen, 1985; Thyer, 1989; Weinberg, 1992). Imre (1984) contends that positivist methods of inquiry are too narrow to meet the needs of social work, which deals with the diverse needs of human beings in complex and ever changing social contexts. Heineman Pieper (1985) advocates the use of approaches which recognize the complexity of human behaviour, take account of the values inherent in research theories and methods, and recognize the influence of the investigator on the research process.

Rationale for use of an emancipatory research approach. Minton (1986) applies the term "emancipatory" to research which combines features of both the interpretive

and critical approaches. He proposes an "emancipatory social psychology" resting on the value that "social psychology should be prescriptive and committed to [the] value of human liberation" (Minton, 1986, p. 261). Minton (1986) argues for the use of emancipatory approaches in studies involving minority groups, because the goal of inquiry conducted within this framework is the reduction of oppression, and the methods used empower, rather than exploit, participants. This paradigm is applicable in social work research, because "... social workers are dedicated ... to the achievement of social justice for all" (CASW, 1994, p. 7) and therefore are particularly concerned with oppressed groups. My study uses an emancipatory approach based on standpoint theory, a critical epistemology which is applicable to the concerns of minorities. I implemented standpoint theory using strategies drawn from institutional ethnography and action research, methodologies which involve members of marginalized groups in the investigative process with the goal of reducing oppression.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Standpoint theory is a Marxist approach to epistemology developed by several feminist scholars (e.g., Harding, 1991; Harstock, 1983; Rose, 1983; Smith, 1987).

According to standpoint theorists:

... knowledge is grounded in particular, historical social situations. In societies where power is organized hierarchically--for example, by class or race or gender--there is no possibility of an Archimedean perspective, one that is disinterested, impartial, value-free, or detached from the particular, historical

social relations in which everyone participates. Instead, each person can achieve only a partial view of reality from the perspective of his or her own position in the social hierarchy. And such a view is not only partial but also distorted by the way the relations of dominance are organized. (Harding, 1991, p. 59)

The concept of "standpoint" differs from that of "perspective" (Smith, 1987, p. 107). As used by these theorists, standpoint refers to conducting research by beginning with the experiences of members of a particular group, whereas perspective suggests a set of attitudes assumed to be held by all members of a group.

Haraway (1988) argues that objectivity, in the sense of a lack of bias, is impossible to achieve in the development of knowledge because all inquiry is conducted from a particular location, using a specific data-gathering instrument. Standpoint theorists hold that knowledge developed from the standpoints of dominant social groups is particularly flawed because it omits information which could threaten the privileges of the powerful (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991). For instance, feminist theorists contend that because gender is a basis for marginalization in our society, research conducted from the standpoint of women results in knowledge which is more valid than that produced by approaches which ignore the gender of the researcher. Standpoint theories are particularly appropriate for use in studies regarding the relationship between attitudes and the social structures which support them (Harding, 1991).

Criticisms of standpoint theory. Positivists argue that research conducted from a particular standpoint is not objective. Harding (1991) and Haraway (1988) counter that such knowledge is more accurate than that developed according to positivist criteria for objectivity, because the social position and values of the researcher are made explicit.

Another criticism of standpoint theory is that it is essentialist, based on an assumption that all members of a group share the same values and experiences (Harding, 1991). Thus research from a particular standpoint may ignore the concerns of those who are differentiated from the majority by race, culture, age, sexuality, or other factors. While Harding (1991) recognizes that this danger exists, she argues that it can be avoided by conducting research from the standpoints of subgroups within oppressed groups. She points out that feminist standpoint theorists have been supportive of the struggles of various oppressed groups and that standpoint analysis has been used to conduct research from the standpoints of racial and cultural minorities.

Social Institutions from Marginalized Standpoints

In conducting this study, I drew on Smith's (1987) formulation of feminist standpoint theory, because she applies that approach to the study of the "ruling apparatus ... the institutions organizing and regulating society ..." (p. 3). Throughout the study I employ terms in the sense that Smith (1987) uses them. By institution, Smith (1987) means "... a complex of relations forming part of the ruling apparatus,

organized around a distinctive function - education, health care, law ..." (p. 160). Smith argues that oppressive ideologies are implemented by social institutions, with the result that certain groups are disempowered. Although Smith focuses on women, she recognizes that other groups, such as Native peoples, racial minorities, lesbians, and gay men are also marginalized. She comments, "From different standpoints different aspects of the ruling apparatus and of class come into view" (p. 107). Smith (1987) argues that in order for research to be emancipatory, it must be conducted from the standpoint of those who are subject to control by social institutions.

Smith's (1987) understanding of the concept of ideology is based on that of Marx and Engels (1847/1970). For her, ideology comprises "... those ideas and images through which the class that rules the society by virtue of its domination of the means of production orders, organizes, and sanctions the social relations that sustain its domination ..." (Smith, 1987, p. 54). Smith (1987) contends that the dominant ideology reflects the values of white men, but is presented as objective and universal. Thus, the links between social and material privileges and the factors upon which social stratification is based are rendered invisible. Smith (1987) sees this ideology as being implemented by institutions of social control, including education and social services.

Smith (1987) holds that oppression is not simply due to prejudice and discrimination. Rather, it is a result of the implementation of the dominant ideology, by which those who differ from the dominant groups are systematically marginalized and excluded from discourse. By discourse, Smith means "... those forms of

communication and interrelation that are mediated by documents ... " (Smith, 1984, p. 63). Discourse refers not only to verbal and written communication, but also to the social relations among those who are influenced by those communications (Griffith & Smith, 1991, p. 90).

Smith ascribes particular importance to the role of organizational and professional texts in ignoring and invalidating differences. By texts, Smith (1987) means not only written documents such as legislation and organizational policies and procedures, but also the "... mediating social relations" which flow from such documents (p. 210). Texts shape discourse at the local level to be consistent with the values of the dominant ideology, "... managing, administering and ordering the everyday world" (Griffith & Smith, 1991, p. 95) from extra-local sites. A result is the omission of issues of race, economic status, gender, and sexual orientation from discourse. This suppression of diversity forces individuals to conform to the abstract definitions of reality contained in institutional texts. Thus, members of marginalized groups experience contradictions between their own lives and the version of reality portrayed by ruling institutions.

Institutional ethnography. Based on her formulation of feminist standpoint theory, Smith (1987) has developed a research strategy for understanding how oppression occurs through the functioning of social institutions. The goal of this approach, which Smith (1987) calls institutional ethnography, is to "... explicate the actual social processes and practices organizing people's everyday experiences from a

standpoint in the everyday world" (p. 151). Institutional ethnography involves beginning inquiry by exploring the experiences of members of the oppressed group concerned in relation to the institution being studied. This aspect of institutional ethnography is consistent with the social work practice principle of beginning where the client is at (Siporin, 1975). The rationale for starting from the experiences of the oppressed rather than issues deemed important within the social sciences is to avoid the distorting impact of dominant cultural ideologies on these disciplines, a danger identified by Marx and Engels (1847/1970). The focus of investigation is the discrepancy between allegedly neutral and non-discriminatory institutional practices and the experiences of members of oppressed groups.

The first step in institutional ethnography is the development of problematics, conceptualizations of the "... propert[ies] of the social organization of the everyday world ..." (Smith, 1987, p. 91) which oppress members of the group from whose standpoint the study is being conducted. Drawing from ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), Smith (1987) holds that traces of oppressive organizational practices are reflected in how people talk about their experiences in relation to the institution being studied. She contends:

... the social organization and relations of the ongoing concerting of our daily activities are continually expressed in the ordinary ways in which we speak of them, at least when we speak of them concretely ... the way terms are used in their original context, including their syntactic arrangements, is 'controlled' or 'governed' by its social organization ... and that the same social organization is

present as an ordering procedure in how people tell others about that original setting. (Smith, 1987, p. 188)

In order to identify problematics, Smith (1987) suggests focusing on "... the social organization and relations implicit in how informants talk from their experience of their work ..." (p. 189-190).

Subsequent steps in institutional ethnography involve systematic investigation to explicate the social relations which determine problematics. By explication, Smith means showing how people's activities are knitted together into forms of social organization. As Smith (1987) uses the concept, social relations refers to the processes by which "... people's activities [are] coordinated in actual temporally concerted sequences or courses of action" (p. 183). Smith views texts as a form of social relations.

Institutional ethnography entails the identification of the extended pattern of social relations, particularly those included in texts, which determine the problematics described by respondents in order to understand how oppression occurs. For instance, Smith (1987) holds that the dominant ideology presents what is actually a patriarchal perspective, as objective, neutral, and universal. She demonstrates how the hidden "gender subtext" (p. 4) becomes visible when research is conducted from the standpoint of women, allowing the social relations of sexism to be explored.

Institutional ethnography differs from conventional ethnography, which is a description of the culture of an ethnic group or organization (Patton, 1990; Van Maanen, 1988). In contrast, institutional ethnography is an investigation of the social

relations which influence organizations from the standpoint of a particular group (Hick, 1991). Smith (1987) explains that institutional ethnography is "... an investigation and explication of how 'it' actually works, of actual practices and relations" (p. 160). The goal is to uncover the links between processes operating in these institutions and their roots in society.

By exploring the links between respondents' experiences and the social relations which determine them, institutional ethnography reveals oppressive aspects of society at large. Rather than simply describing an organization, institutional ethnography seeks to determine how oppressive aspects of it are created and maintained. The investigation is guided by the experiences of respondents rather than by theory which emanates from the dominant classes.

Heterosexism

Heterosexism, the dominant ideology with respect to sexual orientation, is based on assumption that all people are heterosexual (Neiberding, 1989). The concept of heterosexism refers to "the continued promotion by the major institutions of society of a heterosexual lifestyle while simultaneously subordinating any other lifestyles (i.e. gay/lesbian/bisexual)" (Neisen, 1990, p. 25). Heyward (1989) contends that heterosexism is a patriarchal ideology, one aspect of which is the stigmatization of gay men for not reinforcing male supremacy by participating in heterosexual relationships. (The other significant aspect of heterosexism is the subordination of women to men). In contrast to heterosexism, the institutional suppression of same-gender sexual

orientation, homophobia refers to individual prejudice regarding gay men and lesbians (Gramick, 1983; Herek, 1984; Morin & Garfinkle, 1978).

Kinsman (1987) used Smith's (1987) thinking regarding the oppression of minorities by social institutions in his historical analysis of the suppression of same-gender sexual orientation by Canadian social institutions. He identified institutional discrimination towards gay men and lesbians in the form of denial of human rights protection, selective enforcement of laws, censorship, conservative sex education, lack of legal recognition of long-term same-gender relationships, and denial of spousal benefits.

Kinsman (1987) argues that, inasmuch as the dominant group in society is comprised essentially of heterosexual men, social institutions such as education and social services exert control over gender and sexual relations, excluding same-gender sexual orientation as a legitimate option. He maintains that negative stereotypes about same-gender sexual orientation are not simply the result of lack of knowledge; they are intrinsic to processes of control aimed at sanctioning heterosexuality and condemning same-gender sexual behaviour. Further, he contends that heterosexism is the basis of most legal and social policies regarding family life and sexuality, and is disseminated to the general population by the media, schools, and the criminal code.

Chapter Summary

Smith (1987) advocates conducting research from the standpoint of oppressed groups in society. She argues that social institutions, such as the professions, implement oppressive ideologies, which marginalize and disempower certain groups. Smith (1987) holds that by examining the everyday experiences of marginalized people in relation to social institutions, one can uncover problematics, properties of the institutions which oppress. The goal is to conceptualize these problematics and describe the social relations which organize them. Smith (1987) contends that these social relations are organized by generalized rules which are promulgated through texts such as legislation, and official policies, which are implemented at the local level through institutional practices. The result is suppression of differences, forcing individuals to conform to abstract definitions of reality contained in texts. The proposition that heterosexism informs institutions of social control raised questions for me about how social work education deals with issues of same-gender sexual orientation. In the same way that Smith (1987) demonstrates that the hidden "gender subtext" (p. 4) within institutional practices can be surfaced by conducting research from the standpoint of women, in this study, I sought to determine if and how social work education is shaped by a "sexual orientation subtext," which promotes heterosexuality as the only valid expression of sexuality, and suppresses same sex sexual orientation. By conducting this study from the standpoint of gay men, I sought to identify changes required in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation, and how these changes might be implemented.

Chapter 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent reviews of the literature (Lee, 1991; O'Neill & Naidoo, 1989) have revealed the paucity of information regarding social work education in relation to issues of sexual orientation. In this chapter I provide an overview of this literature and compare findings about social work education with those of selected studies regarding the response to gay issues elsewhere within universities. Next, I present literature concerning the process of change in social work education with respect to minority issues. Finally, I identify the need for further inquiry and discuss this need in relation to the current study.

Social Work Education Regarding Same-Gender Sexual Orientation

Social work education policy. The need to address same-gender sexual orientation in social work training has been identified for over 10 years (DeCrescenzo, 1983/84; Dulaney & Kelly, 1982; Gochros, 1983/84; Newman, 1989; Schlesinger, 1983; Woodman, 1992). In 1983, the American accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), recommended the inclusion of curriculum content regarding gay men and lesbians (Woodman, 1992). However, there has been little evidence of implementation of this policy in American schools of social work (Murphy, 1991). In 1992, the CSWE strengthened its requirements, making content on same-gender sexual orientation mandatory in both BSW and MSW programs

(CSWE, 1992). Accreditation standards related to this policy are currently under development ("CSWE - Commission on lesbian women and gay men," 1992).

Canadian accreditation standards (CASSW, 1992) do not specify the inclusion of content regarding sexual orientation. There is a lack of data regarding the amount of content on same-gender sexual orientation in Canadian schools of social work. The first, and apparently only, Canadian social work course on gay men and lesbians has been offered at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute since 1986 (Bielmeier, 1992).

Data on social work education and same-gender sexual orientation. I have been able to locate four studies which focused on same-gender sexual orientation and social work education. In an examination of the content of medical social work courses in American graduate schools, Potter (1984/85) discovered only one course which contained content related to gay men and lesbians. In a more in-depth study, Humphreys (1983) surveyed all the faculty members of graduate schools of social work in California regarding curriculum content on gay issues as well as their attitudes about same-gender sexual orientation. Half of the respondents indicated that same-gender sexual orientation was not addressed in any way within their schools. Furthermore, they stated that the meagre material which was included was not systematically integrated into the core curriculum, most commonly being presented in the form of a bibliography. There was a consensus that content regarding same-gender sexual orientation was relevant to social work and that curricula were inadequate in the area. However, most faculty did not include any significant amount of gay-related

content in their teaching. The majority of informants advocated teaching students "tolerance of homosexuality" (Humphreys, 1983, p. 58) rather than imparting knowledge regarding the lives and concerns of gay people. Approximately 45% of the respondents had relatively neutral attitudes towards same-gender sexual orientation, while almost one third were more intolerant. The more homophobic participants advocated focusing on students' awareness of their own attitudes towards same-gender sexual orientation. Faculty who were younger, less homophobic, and who had more contact with gay men and lesbians, recommended the provision of accurate information about same-gender sexual orientation and developing students' advocacy skills relevant to the oppression of gay people. Humphreys (1983) concluded that the primary need in social work education with respect to gay issues was greater inclusion of content regarding same-gender sexual orientation, and that negative faculty attitudes are the most significant barrier to inclusion of this content. However, the inquiry did not reveal the dynamics which formed and maintained these negative attitudes, thus making it difficult to devise strategies to change them.

In a third relevant study, Weiner (1989) explored the influence of gender, race, and sexual orientation differences on students' clinical decision making. She surveyed a purposive sample of 125 senior BSW students in five American schools of social work. She gathered data regarding their attitudes towards women, Blacks, gay men and lesbians; their perceptions of the amount of course material they received regarding gender, race, and sexual orientation; and the amount of contact they had with members of these groups. The researcher asked respondents to provide clinical

ratings of case vignettes which varied only with respect to the gender, race, or sexual orientation of the client.

Weiner (1989) found that the majority of respondents had mildly negative attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation, although on average they scored in the non-homophobic range and were less prejudiced than other student groups. Informants were more negative about gay men and lesbians than about women or Blacks. Participants reported receiving twice as much course content on race and gender issues as on sexual orientation. They indicated that they had less social contact with gay men and lesbians than with Blacks. However, those respondents who were aware of gay or lesbian students in their classes were more homophobic than those who had not identified any gay peers. The findings revealed no consistent patterns in the relationships among attitudes, training, social contact, and clinical decision making with respect to gay men and lesbians.

Weiner (1989) recommended further research regarding the curriculum content and educational methods necessary to adequately prepare social worker students to work with gay and lesbian clients. She also identified the need for measures to protect gay students from discrimination within schools of social work.

The fourth study which focused directly on same-gender sexual orientation and social work education was that of Cullen (1994). The investigator administered Hudson and Ricketts' (1980) homophobia scale to an available sample (Seaberg, 1988) of graduate and undergraduate students (n=172) in five schools of social work in Ontario. The mean score of the sample fell in the mildly nonhomophobic range, with

almost 90% of the sample being unprejudiced. The data suggested that Cullen's (1994) respondents were less homophobic than those of Weiner (1989).

Some of the literature regarding social work education pertaining to HIV/AIDS supports the need for curriculum content regarding gay male sexual orientation (e.g., Diaz & Kelly, 1991; Silberman, 1991). A study of training related to AIDS in Canadian schools of social work (CASSW, 1988) gathered information regarding training about human sexuality. A review of the calendars and self-study reports of Canadian schools of social work suggested the influence of heterosexism in curricula (CASSW, 1990). The report recommended the integration of content regarding gay male sexual orientation and anti-gay discrimination in core social work courses. It also recommended that students be helped to develop awareness of their own values regarding sexuality, and that schools consider assessing applicants' values regarding sexuality prior to admission.

Curriculum content on human sexuality. The lack of training regarding same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work reflects the low priority accorded to human sexuality in general within social work education. Diaz and Kelly (1991) found that 40% of American MSW programs provided no training on sexuality, the same level as found a decade earlier (Welbourne, 1983). An inquiry by Gripton and Valentich (1985) revealed that the majority of schools of social work in Canada and the United States offered only elective courses on sexuality. However, social work education compared well with the educational programs of other helping professions

such as clinical psychology (Buhrke, 1989; Nathan, 1986) and educational counselling (Glenn & Russell, 1986; Gray, Cummins, Johnson, & Mason, 1989), which had even less focus on human sexuality. Furthermore, Murphy (1991) noted that the few sexuality courses available seldom included content on same-gender sexual orientation.

University Education and Same-Gender Sexual Orientation

My review of the literature suggested that students receive little accurate information regarding same-gender sexual orientation prior to social work training. Norris (1982) found that gay issues have been ignored in high school sex education courses. Content analyses of textbooks used in university courses on psychology (McDonald, 1981), sociology (Adam, 1986), and health sciences (Newton, 1979) revealed a lack of information about gay issues and bias in most of that which was included. The Report of the American Sociological Associations's Task Group on Homosexuality (1981) documented the dearth of course content on same-gender sexual orientation in undergraduate sociology courses. Schwanberg (1990) found that professional journals in health care and social sciences reflect negative attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. As far as I have been able to determine, there have not been more recent evaluations of the content of social science education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation.

Apart from the data reported above regarding the attitudes of faculty and students, there is a lack of information on the climate in schools of social work with respect to same-gender sexual orientation. However, research indicates that

universities, the institutions within which schools of social work are located, can be inhospitable environments for gay men and lesbians who are open about their sexual orientation.

There is evidence that the climate in universities is threatening for gay faculty, staff, and students. Studies of students' attitudes reveal prejudice against gay men and lesbians, and support for discrimination against them (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Herek, 1988; Kurdek, 1988; Ontario Federation of Students, 1991; Page & Yee, 1985). Lesbians and gay men have reported physical violence and verbal harassment on American campuses (D'Augelli, 1989b; Herek, 1989; Schoenberg, 1989). Gay faculty and staff have encountered employment discrimination (Norris, 1991; Report of the American Sociological Association's Task Group on Homosexuality, 1981). It is clear that widespread stigmatization of same-gender sexual orientation and victimization of people who are suspected of being gay causes gay men and lesbians to conceal their sexual orientation on campus.

The complex dynamics which underlie the hostile atmosphere in postsecondary educational institutions regarding same-gender sexual orientation were demonstrated by the findings of a survey of the entire faculty, staff and student population of a small, American, liberal arts college (Norris, 1991). The respondents in this study expressed strong support for human rights and acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation. However, these values were contradicted by data which revealed pervasive harassment and employment discrimination experienced by persons perceived to be gay, their exclusion from full participation in campus life, and the silencing of public discussion

of same-gender sexual orientation. Norris (1991) concluded that commitment to heterosexual orthodoxy prevailed over liberal sentiments of acceptance. He attributed the unsafe environment for gay men and lesbians to the college's failure to implement its anti-discrimination policies and officially sanction discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

Numerous college studies have reached similar conclusions regarding changes needed to improve the campus atmosphere in relation to same-gender sexual orientation (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Nieberding, 1989; Norris, 1991; Ontario Federation of Students, 1991; Schoenberg, 1989). Based on data from both gay and non-gay faculty, staff, and students, investigators identified the need for policies and programs which create a safe and supportive academic environment for gay men and lesbians. Consistently, they have advocated policies which support the acceptance of all forms of diversity on campus, the development of effective anti-discrimination programs, and the provision of training to faculty, staff and students regarding gay and lesbian issues. They have also identified the need for supportive policies and programs for gay and lesbian faculty, staff, and students.

Recommendations Regarding the Social Work Curriculum

Core curriculum. There is a consensus among educators that issues of same-gender sexual orientation should be integrated into the core curriculum (Murphy, 1991; Woodman, 1992). The core curriculum focuses on human behaviour and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, methods of intervention, research, and

field practice (Lloyd, 1987). In his classic study of social work education, Boehm (1959) proposed that content be integrated throughout core courses by developing mandatory learning objectives with respect to knowledge, values, and skills.

With respect to knowledge, educators have identified information related to same-gender sexual orientation which is relevant to social work (Berger, 1992; Bernard, 1992; Gochros, 1983/84; Grace, 1992; Lee, 1992; Murphy, 1991; Newman, 1989; Tully, 1992). These authors have suggested that professional education provide data regarding the development of sexual orientation, the process of identifying as gay, the social and sexual behaviour of gay men and lesbians, and mental health issues. They have also advocated providing social work students with an understanding of discrimination based on differences of sexual orientation, its effects on individuals, and social service needs related to such oppression. In addition, these educators have recommended making students aware of the need for information regarding gay and lesbian communities and support services.

Regarding values, the literature suggests that social work students should be helped to become aware of their feelings regarding their own sexual orientation, and their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians (Forrister, 1992; Murphy, 1991). Educators have proposed that students be helped to understand how their values regarding sexuality influence their professional practice. Moreau (1979) argued that social workers should oppose heterosexism, and that social work education should help students to develop self-awareness and to integrate their personal and political values.

Concerning skills development, educators have identified issues related to sexual orientation with respect to each level of practice. They recommend that gay issues be included in direct practice courses (Forrister, 1992) to develop skills in working with gay youth (Lenna, 1992), couples (Terry, 1992), and families (Gunter, 1992). With respect to community practice, Hidalgo (1992) has identified the need for attention to issues of sexual orientation in program planning and administration. Pierce (1992b) has suggested that students be helped to develop the ability to analyze the implications of policies and programs for gay men and lesbians. With respect to social work research, Brooks (1992) has argued that students be made aware of how the ideology of heterosexism shapes the development of knowledge. Finally, Woodman (1992) has recommended that field placements be developed which provide opportunities to practice with gay and lesbian clients.

Electives. With respect to elective courses, social work educators have identified the need for specialized courses which focus on sexual orientation issues and the needs of certain populations. For instance, Murphy (1991) has identified the need for specific courses which focus on the needs of visible minority and senior gay men and lesbians, as well as courses which respond to the learning goals of gay and lesbian students. She also has suggested that content on heterosexism be included in courses which focus on discrimination against other oppressed populations.

Teaching methods. With respect to techniques of presenting material regarding same-gender sexual orientation, educators have advocated a mixture of cognitive and experiential approaches (Gochros, 1983/84; Newman, 1989). They have suggested the provision of readings which describe the lives of gay men and lesbians, and discussion of research regarding same-gender sexual orientation. They have also recommended inviting gay speakers to classes, viewing sexually explicit films, and discussing current movies and television shows on the subject.

Issues in Implementing Change

Social values regarding sexuality. In their study of the functioning of gay men, Wingrove and Rodway (1985) argued that institutional change is the most effective approach to influencing social attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. However, barriers to implementing change in schools of social work with respect to controversial topics such as sexuality are evident in social work literature. Frankel (1990) argued that social work is shaped by its connection to the social welfare system, which implements public policy with respect to social issues. He asserted that the role of professional education is to prepare students to function within this system. An implication of the link between social work education and public policy is that schools of social work are under pressure to reflect mainstream social values.

The inhibiting impact of conventional social values regarding sexual issues has been identified by social work educators. Gripton and Valentich (1985) observed that social workers who advocate acceptance of stigmatized sexual practices, such as same-

gender sexual behaviour, encounter opposition from their colleagues on the grounds that such alternatives are immoral and a threat to the family. In discussing the resistance of religiously sponsored schools to the CSWE's prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, Dulaney and Kelly commented (1982):

... social work is most sensitive to contemporary societal pressures because of its sources of funding and orientation to community service. This sensitivity has led to a conflict in the profession regarding sexual issues and gay and lesbian clients that reflects society's dual value system, which consists of one set of values for heterosexuals and another for homosexuals. (p. 178)

Thus, the literature suggests that the extent to which schools of social work can incorporate positive training regarding same-gender sexual orientation is limited by the degree of acceptance of gay men and lesbians in society at large. The influence of increasing acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation on social work education has not yet been investigated.

Need for support from faculty and students. For change to be successfully implemented within schools of social work, particularly with respect to minority issues, support from the participants in social work education is necessary (Foster, 1971; Oliver, 1979). However, the data available suggest that faculty members and students are not highly motivated to make changes with respect to same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work (Humphreys, 1983; Weiner, 1989). Given

Russell's (1990) finding that social work training has little impact on students' values, it seems that a key method of building support within schools for change is the selection of faculty and students who are accepting of same-gender sexual orientation.

Resistance to training regarding minorities. Findings regarding changes with respect to ethnocultural minorities in social work education are relevant to the issue of change with respect to sexual orientation. The Task Force on Multicultural and Multiracial Issues in Social Work Education (1991) assessed the programs of Canadian schools of social work with respect to ethnic minorities and identified systemic impediments to change. The task force found that despite recognition of the need for social work training regarding ethnocultural minorities, accurate content was not systematically integrated into the core curriculum. They also determined that minority students felt uncomfortable and marginalized within schools of social work.

Barriers to change identified by the Task Force on Multicultural and Multiracial Issues in Social Work Education (1991) were the absence of requirements that schools address issues of ethnocultural diversity, the lack of programs within schools for responding to issues of diversity, the failure to plan for change, and the resistance and passivity on the part of university leaders and the directors and faculty of schools of social work. Other factors which the task force perceived to hinder change were generic curriculum frameworks, which allowed differences to be ignored, the lack of teaching resources, and the absence of links with minority communities. The task force recognized that ethnic and cultural issues interact with issues of sexual

orientation in schools of social work. Recommendations for change included integration of minority content into the core curriculum, the development of effective measures to protect students from discrimination and to counter racism, and provision of support programs for minority students. The findings of this study, that change in social work education is difficult to accomplish with respect to racial and cultural diversity, suggest that there would be significant barriers to the inclusion of issues of same-gender sexual orientation.

Major Issues Identified in the Literature

The literature presents contradictions within social work education with respect to issues of same-gender sexual orientation. Research findings suggest that the attitudes of participants in schools of social work are relatively accepting of gay men and lesbians, particularly in comparison to the larger university environment. Despite these positive attitudes, there is a lack of supportive policies and curriculum content with regard to same-gender sexual orientation. The literature contains recommendations for changes with respect to educational policies, curriculum content, student selection, and the creation of a safe academic environment for gay men and lesbians. However, to date, social work education accrediting bodies have been ineffective in encouraging schools of social work to address issues of same-gender sexual orientation. The literature suggests that a complex tangle of social, organizational, and individual factors present impediments to change in social work education with respect to this issue.

Evaluation of Research Findings

The most striking feature of the body of social work education literature regarding same-gender sexual orientation is the lack of inquiry in the area. The bulk of the literature is comprised of exhortations for the integration of content on same-gender sexual orientation into curricula and recommendations regarding material to be included. Investigations have focused on perceptions of curriculum content and the attitudes of faculty and students.

With respect to research designs, investigators used questionnaires to gather quantitative and descriptive data from available students and faculty. Methodological weaknesses of this body of research include a low return rate of questionnaires (Humphreys, 1983), lack of information regarding the validity and reliability of data-gathering instruments (Humphreys, 1983), and findings based on retrospective estimates (Humphreys, 1983; Weiner, 1989). However, the consistency with which the lack of curriculum content and the existence of moderately positive faculty and student attitudes were reported in both the prescriptive and research literature support the validity of the findings.

Significant gaps exist in the available information regarding social work education in relation to same-gender sexual orientation. There is a lack of in-depth, qualitative data regarding the perception of the participants in social work education about the curriculum and climate in schools of social work regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Nor is information available regarding factors which create and maintain the current state of social work education in relation to this issue. Finally,

there is a complete dearth of information gathered from gay men or lesbians.

Research Needs

There is a lack of information regarding goals for change in social work education in relation to same-gender sexual orientation and methods of achieving them. Specifically, data are required concerning:

1. The climate in schools of social work with respect to issues of same-gender sexual orientation;
2. Factors which create and maintain this climate;
3. Appropriate curriculum content regarding same-gender sexual orientation;
4. Effective methods of presenting such content;
5. Strategies and resources to bring about change in the climate and curriculum in schools of social work with respect to same-gender sexual orientation.

Brooks (1992) has identified the necessity of social work research which is not biased by heterosexist assumptions. Standpoint theory posits that researchers can mitigate the influences of dominant ideologies by conducting studies from the standpoints of marginalized groups. Given the nature of the current body of literature on social work education, there is a need for studies of social work training conducted from the standpoint of gay men and lesbians. This study contributes to filling these gaps in knowledge by investigating social work education in Canada from the standpoint of gay men, employing strategies drawn from institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987) and action research (Halpern, 1988).

Chapter 4. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I present the methodology I used to develop an understanding social work education through the eyes of gay men. I used techniques drawn from both institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987) and action research (Halpern, 1988) in carrying out the inquiry. I briefly review the steps in institutional ethnography and discuss the suitability of this research strategy for investigating social work education. I then provide an overview of action research and present the rationale for using methods from this research approach in implementing the institutional ethnography model. Next, I describe how I involved gay men in the design and implementation of the study. Subsequently, I discuss the processes of data gathering and analysis. Finally, I outline methods for communication of the findings.

Strategies Drawn From Institutional Ethnography

The design of this study was based on the procedures used in institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987):

1. Gathering information from members of a marginalized group about their experiences in relation to the institution being investigated;
2. Analyzing these data to formulate problematics (Smith, 1987, p. 91), questions about the institution related to contradictions between its official ideology and respondents' experiences;

3. Using the problematics as the foci of investigation to uncover the social relations (Smith, 1987, p. 183) which are linked to the respondents' oppressive experiences.

Data may be gathered from persons in various positions in relation to the organization and from regulatory texts such as legislation, policies, procedures, and forms.

Rationale for use of institutional ethnographic strategies. Institutional ethnography was an appropriate model for this investigation, because it is a research approach designed to identify the social relations within organizations which marginalize certain groups. In line with feminist standpoint analysis (Smith, 1987), the goal of institutional ethnography is to "explicate the actual social processes and practices organizing people's everyday experience from a standpoint in the everyday world" (Smith, 1987, p. 151). Smith (1987) proposed institutional ethnography to study organizations from the standpoint of women. However, researchers have demonstrated that the approach can be used to understand various institutions from the standpoints of diverse groups. For instance, Hick (1991) studied welfare services from the standpoint of welfare workers; Smith (1988) examined policing from the standpoint of gay men. More relevant to this study, O'Brien et al. (1993) investigated residential services from the standpoints of gay and lesbian youth. In addition, Mykhalovskiy and Smith (1993) examined social support services from the standpoint of people with AIDS, including gay men.

Another rationale for the use of methods drawn from institutional ethnography in this study was that institutional ethnography is consistent with the emancipatory paradigm of social science described by Minton (1986). Minton (1986) argues that to understand the minority perspective, a frame of reference based on the norms of the particular group must be used. Since research involving members of minority groups invariably impacts on participants, it was critical that the goals, methods, and outcomes of this inquiry not further the marginalization of gay men. Conducting the investigation from the standpoint of gay men made it possible for the study to focus on issues of concern to them and to incorporate their values. Since institutional ethnography is a method of discovering how oppression actually occurs, it was an appropriate approach for identifying systemic barriers to the full participation of gay men in social work education.

Strategies Drawn from Action Research

Action research was proposed by Lewin (1946, 1947) as a way to understand and resolve the problems encountered by minority groups. The goals and techniques of action research are consistent with those of participatory research, a critical response to oppression in the economically disadvantaged areas of the world (Hall, 1981; Tandon, 1981). Participatory research differs from traditional research approaches in that it combines the objective of stimulating change with that of developing knowledge (Halpern, 1988). Action research is an iterative process of data gathering, intervention, and evaluation in which the theory underlying the inquiry is

revised as information is collected. A key aspect of action research is the participation of those who will be affected by the findings in the implementation of the project rather than their limitation to the passive role of providing data.

Action research may entail collaboration with members of the community being studied in any stage of the research process. The methods of inclusion can ensure that the research process is emancipatory rather than oppressive (Walsh-Bowers & Parlour, 1992). For instance, the conditions of involvement should be negotiated with participants. Where relevant to the context, the sexual orientation, gender, age, discipline, setting, role, status, and contributions of investigators and participants should be reported. Finally, the contributions of community members in carrying out the inquiry should be documented.

Action research is an appropriate approach to studying social problems that are complex and caused by multiple factors, and which require the use of diverse interventive strategies, responsive to the particular situation (Halpern, 1988). It is effective when there is a lack of established theory in a problem area. Because of the tentative, emerging nature of the investigative process (learning by doing), action research contributes to theory and vice versa. Action research is useful in situations where there is resistance to change in the established order, and when stakeholders are threatened by reforms and doubt the potential effectiveness of intervention. Where significant change is unlikely and solutions are not apparent, the incremental approach of action research is preferable. Action research can clarify the conditions under

which tactics work and contribute to understanding the psychological and social aspects of problems.

There are benefits and disadvantages to action research. Participatory approaches have been found to be more effective in bringing about change than those in which the involvement of respondents is restricted (Tyler, Pargament, & Gatz, 1983). In addition, a collaborative relationship between the researcher and participants facilitates the sharing of resources and information. However, the emergent nature of participatory research places greater demands on the investigator to be flexible and creative in order to respond to events and information needs as they unfold in the community (Trickett, Kelly, & Vincent, 1985). In particular, the researcher must be alert to unintended effects, both positive and negative. Finally, community participation reduces the researcher's control of the project, possibly focusing on issues not on the original agenda and increasing costs (Chavis, Stucky, & Wandersman, 1983).

Rational for use of action research strategies. The focus of this study met many of the criteria for the use of action research. The oppression of gay men is complex, having both individual and structural dimensions. There is a lack of definitive theory regarding the oppression of gay men, and it is unlikely that massive change in society's beliefs and attitudes about gay male sexual orientation is imminent. The incremental approach to change which is inherent in action research

minimizes the resistance which discussion of sexual orientation issues may arouse within social work education.

Another rationale for the use of an action research approach in this study was that participatory research techniques have been successfully used to investigate issues in the provision of social services and related to same-gender sexual orientation. For example, a social worker collaborated with participants in evaluating a support program (Whitmore, 1990); an educator used action research to explore the experiences of gay and lesbian teachers (Griffin, 1991). With respect to gay men, in an inquiry regarding the psychosocial needs of men with AIDS, researchers sought sanction for conducting the study from gay community organizations, and involved gay men in all aspects of the inquiry, from formulating research goals to gathering, providing, and interpreting data (Joseph et al., 1984). In a study regarding seniors, gay men provided access to the respondents (Bennett & Thompson, 1980). Finally, in an investigation involving racial minorities, Chavis et al. (1983) formed a research advisory committee comprised of researchers and community members which ensured that the research process responded to the needs of the community and provided feedback to community members.

Combining Institutional Ethnography and Action Research Techniques

According to Harding (1991), a proponent of research from minority standpoints, "... knowledge-seeking requires democratic, participatory politics. Otherwise, only the gender, race, sexuality, and class elites who now predominate in

institutions of knowledge-seeking will have the chance to decide how to start asking their research questions ..." (p. 124). In this study, I used participatory research techniques to complement strategies drawn from institutional ethnography.

Institutional ethnography provided a framework for the involvement of gay men throughout the investigative process. It allowed me to move beyond the perceptions of participants, to investigate determinants of their experiences in social structures (Hick, 1991). Thus the institutional ethnography approach facilitated building on data gathered through action research. Strategies from institutional ethnography allowed me to unravel the web of social relations within schools of social work, thereby providing information for planning interventions at various levels in social work education.

However, institutional ethnography is a method of developing knowledge; it does not directly bring about change. Therefore, I used techniques drawn from action research in order to achieve the emancipatory goals of the study. The fact that the research process involved participants who were members of the gay community as well as participants in social work education enhances the credibility of the findings in both constituencies.

Overview of the Research Design

In this section of the chapter, I outline the steps I took in implementing the inquiry. In short, I interviewed gay men regarding their experiences related to social services and schools of social work, their perceptions about changes needed in social

work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation, and their recommendations for implementing reforms. Using these data, I formulated problematics regarding social work education. I investigated the determinants of these problematics by examining interview data and documents related to social work education. Consistent with action research principles, I collaborated with an advisory committee of gay men in implementing the study and developing recommendations for change in social work education.

Working definitions. For the purposes of this study, I defined a gay man as a person who stated that he was predominantly, but not necessarily exclusively, emotionally and sexually attracted to men (Wingrove & Rodway, 1985). This criterion allowed for the inclusion of men who have a degree of attraction towards women and may define themselves as bisexual. I designated client respondents as those who had received service from a social worker. I limited the term social worker to those who were eligible for membership in the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers (OAPSW). I specified that social work faculty and student participants be persons involved in Canadian undergraduate or graduate programs of social work education. My rationale for the last two criteria was that, since the goal of this study is to bring about change in professional social work education, the respondents should be current or past participants in this process.

Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

Rationale for use of research advisory committee. Hick (1991) argued that although it may not be necessary to be a member of the group in order to conduct an institutional ethnography from the standpoint of that group, being a member of the group would be a benefit in understanding the data. In her research concerning elementary schools from the standpoint of mothers, Smith (1987) found herself inadvertently shifting from investigating education from the standpoint of the women, to focusing on the mothers from the perspective of the schools. In order to avoid the possibility of conducting this study from the standpoint of social work education rather than that of gay men, and to contribute to the reflexive analysis which is central to institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987), I carried out the inquiry in collaboration with a committee (RAC) comprised of gay men. This decision was supported by the experience of Joseph et al. (1984), who found collaboration with gay men to be a key factor in successfully carrying out their study regarding AIDS. I felt that an advisory group of gay men would be supportive to me, and would facilitate making the connections with other gay men which would be necessary to implement this study.

Forming the research advisory committee. In addition to fitting the working definitions of client, worker, student, and professor, the criteria for membership on the RAC were an interest in improving social work education with respect to issues of same-gender sexual orientation and an ability to work cooperatively with others. I recruited four volunteers for the RAC through my personal contacts in schools of

social work and gay and lesbian community organizations.

When I contacted potential committee members, I explained the confidentiality provisions of the study and asked each candidate to sign a letter of consent which outlined the conditions of their participation and the confidentiality provisions of the study (see Appendix A). I met with each candidate in order to describe the purpose of the study and the role of the RAC and to assess their suitability for membership on the committee. I also asked candidates to discuss their experiences related to social services and social work education, and to outline their perceptions regarding needed changes. These interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Based on these interviews, I invited four men to serve on the committee. I selected them because they had extensive involvement with organizations which provided social services to gay men in Toronto and experience with both undergraduate and graduate social work education.

Training provided to the research advisory committee. Since confidentiality is a particular concern for members of a stigmatized population such as gay men (Walsh Bowers & Parlour, 1992), I took steps to ensure that RAC members safeguarded the anonymity of respondents and the confidentiality of data. I provided committee members with an orientation to the confidentiality requirements of the Wilfrid Laurier University Senate Policy on Ethics in the Conduct of Research with Human Subjects (1976) and the Code of Ethics (1983) of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW). Each RAC member signed a confidentiality contract regarding their

participation in the study (see Appendix B). In addition to the orientation regarding confidentiality, I provided the committee with an overview of qualitative research, institutional ethnography, and action research, as well as the semi-structured method of research interviewing (Mishler, 1986a).

Role of research advisory committee. I carried out this study in partnership with the RAC committee. Consistent with the dictum that design in qualitative research is emergent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I made decisions regarding all aspects of the research process in consultation with members of the RAC. The primary role of RAC members was to provide consultation during the inquiry, ensuring that the study responded to the needs of gay men. They gave me advice on the development of the interview guide and criteria for selecting respondents. The committee also discussed the analysis of data and the significance of the findings, and critiqued drafts of the research report. A secondary role of RAC members was direct participation in data gathering. They provided data themselves, recruited participants through their personal and professional networks, and interviewed four respondents. Finally, RAC members contributed to the communication of the findings by sharing the outcomes with their schools and agencies. However, while committee members provided consultation and assistance during the inquiry, I retained responsibility for all aspects of the research process.

Process and contributions of the research advisory committee. The committee met eight times, and in addition, individual members provided consultation on an ad hoc basis throughout the study. RAC meetings lasted approximately two hours and were audio-taped. Minutes of previous meetings and an agenda were circulated prior to each meeting. At the first meeting, we discussed our experiences and feelings related to gay issues in social work education and shared our expectations for the study. My sense was that, because all the committee members were gay and most knew each other at least slightly, the group formed quickly and began to work on the research issues. A limitation to the process was that due to the work responsibilities of the members, it was difficult to arrange meetings of the committee. The only possible time for meetings was over lunch, either in the office of one of the RAC members, or at my home.

There were several important contributions made to the design of the study by the RAC. One was the decision regarding the selection of respondents. Initially, I had considered interviewing non-gay participants in social work education in investigating the determinants of problematics. However, after discussion with members of the RAC, I decided to limit data gathering to gay respondents, in order to obtain a clear understanding of the problematics. I was able to collect data regarding the determinants of problematics from the group of gay respondents, which included men who participated at various levels in social work education. Instead of interviewing heterosexual respondents, I decided to examine documents which were indicated by respondents as influencing social work education.

Discussion in a RAC meeting also helped clarify the criteria for selection of respondents. We determined that by defining "gay" as meaning people predominantly, but not exclusively, attracted to men, bisexuals could also be included. The involvement of RAC members in the design of the interview guide is described below.

RAC members were directly involved in data gathering. They contributed data through my individual interviews with them and through meetings of the committee. Consistent with the action research principle that participants be involved in all aspects of the investigation (Halpern, 1988), RAC members also conducted four of the individual interviews. Three of these four participants were either clients or students of the RAC members who interviewed them. I had hoped that RAC members would be able to conduct more of the interviews, but their time constraints precluded this.

The RAC also assisted in the analysis of the data. As the interviewing proceeded, I provided summaries of the patterns emerging in the data at RAC meetings. In order to familiarize RAC members with the nature of the data, each committee member reviewed the transcript of the interview I conducted with him, as well as transcripts of his interviews with respondents. RAC members were surprised at the intensity of the feelings that they had expressed during the interviews. They returned the transcripts to me with their reactions to them. In discussion of the interviews, RAC members identified key issues that led to the formulation of the problematics to be investigated. The RAC members reviewed drafts of the findings and discussion chapters, making suggestions for clarifications. They also made recommendations for implementing the changes which the study indicated.

With respect to collaborating with a committee of community members, I discovered that it is important to involve individuals who have the time to participate regularly in the process. It would be useful to contract with potential RAC members to have regular meetings of the committee on a frequent enough basis to allow the development of a deeper group process, which would facilitate the implementation of the action research goals of the study. However, while it is desirable to negotiate for the maximum involvement of participants, it is not always possible to achieve the ideal.

Respondents

Recruitment. I used the "purposive sampling" approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 199) in the selection of participants. Rather than attempting to draw a random sample of gay men in order to generalize to the gay population, I sought respondents who could contribute to developing an understanding of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in social work education. This approach is appropriate because the goal in institutional ethnography is to understand how an organization works from a particular standpoint rather than to determine the qualities of a particular group (Smith, 1987). In this study, the intention was to gain an understanding of social work education from the standpoint of gay men, rather than to generalize to the gay population. I attempted to achieve diversity with respect to respondents' personal characteristics such as age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation (exclusively gay or bisexual), and level of social work education. I also sought informants from as many

different schools of social work and regions of Canada as possible.

I recruited informants by means of appeals to social agencies and schools of social work, as well as through personal and professional acquaintances. With respect to recruitment through social agencies and schools of social work, I contacted administrators in social agencies which were likely to have gay men on their caseloads. I asked these administrators to post and distribute, where appropriate, a flyer soliciting participants (see Appendix C), and to bring the study to the attention of workers. However, a common reaction was that although there probably were gay men on caseloads, for the most part, agency personnel were unaware of them. In fact, this method of recruitment of gay clients was unsuccessful, with the exception of one respondent from an agency which serves people with AIDS. I used a similar approach to recruit participants from schools of social work. Again, I had only one response from a flyer geared to students and faculty members (see Appendix C) which I circulated to 10 schools. An appeal to gay groups which were likely to have contact with men who had used social services was also unsuccessful.

I found the "snowball approach" (Seaberg, 1988, p. 253), in which information is gathered from persons known to the researcher and from respondents recommended by these initial informants, to be much more productive. This method is appropriate for gaining access to hidden and stigmatized groups. I recruited informants through my personal and professional contacts as well as those of the RAC members. I consulted with RAC members as interviewing proceeded and ceased recruiting informants when we determined that enough information had been gathered to provide

an understanding of key issues. In reality, we interviewed all the gay men associated with social work education whom we were able to contact.

In retrospect, I came to the conclusion that it is most effective to only gather data from respondents who have had direct experience with social work education. Client respondents identified social workers' lack of knowledge and insensitive attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. These data were consistent with those from respondents who had experience as students or faculty members. However, their comments regarding changes needed in schools of social work did not add significantly to understanding organizational processes in social work education. Therefore, in order to be consistent with Smith's (1987) model of institutional ethnography in which research begins with the experiences of members of the oppressed group in relation to a particular social institution, I would not interview clients if I were to replicate the study.

Description of research participants. Over a period of six months, I gathered data from 37 informants. The respondents were predominantly middle aged, only six being younger than thirty, most of whom were clients. All informants identified themselves as gay at the time of the interviews, although five had previously been married and of those, four were parents. Three of the respondents were from racial minority groups, four were from ethnic minorities, and two were francophone.

The research participants included six clients, who had received services related to mental health problems, addiction, coming out, and AIDS related issues. The five

respondents who were students included two who were pursuing a BSW, and three an MSW. In addition to current students, the informants included 17 social workers who had completed their social work education. Of these, two had a BSW, three a BSW and an MSW, 11 an MSW, and one an MSW and Ph.D. These respondents had recent experience within social work education, seven having received their degrees since 1990, five since 1980, and five prior to 1980. In addition, five of the participants were field practice instructors. I felt that the data from these respondents were particularly valuable, because they were able to comment on social work education in light of their practice experience. Of the nine faculty members, three had doctorates and six had MSW's. Two were part-time faculty. I had planned to restrict the study to Ontario schools of social work. However, as a result of using the snowball approach, the inquiry included informants who had experience with 11 schools of social work in six Canadian provinces. Represented among these schools were ones that had programs at the BSW, MSW, and doctoral levels.

Gathering Interview Data

Interviewing theory. During the planning stage of this study, I had considered using focus-group interviews (Krueger, 1988). However, since I came to rely on the snowball approach (Seaberg, 1988) for recruitment of participants, I decided it was more feasible to conduct individual focused interviews (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956). In this form of interviewing, which is appropriate for informants who have had

similar experiences, the general topics for discussion are identified in an interview guide, but questions are not specified.

Walsh-Bowers and Parlour (1992) criticized social scientists for treating gay men and lesbians primarily as passive sources of data. Consistent with the collaborative theme in this study, RAC members and I approached the interviews as jointly constructed conversations (Mishler, 1986a), shaped but not limited by the interview guide. This data-gathering strategy empowered participants by allowing them to be active in the research process and by establishing a more egalitarian relationship between interviewer and respondent. By being minimally directive, interviewers gave informants the opportunity to present the information they felt was important and to describe the context of their experiences.

I chose this approach to interviewing because it is a particularly effective method for an institutional ethnography. In discussing interviewing, Smith (1987) suggested that respondents be asked to talk about their daily experiences related to the institution being studied. Smith holds that traces of oppressive social relations will emerge in data if interviewing techniques are minimally intrusive. O'Brien (1992) and Mykhalovskiy and Smith (1993) successfully used this approach in conducting institutional ethnographies involving gay men and lesbians.

Development of the interview guide. I developed a draft interview guide based on the unstructured interviews I had conducted with RAC members when I recruited them. In those interviews, I had simply asked the participants to tell me about their

experiences relevant to social work education. The format for the interview guide was modelled on the guide used by O'Brien (1992) in an institutional ethnography of residential services from the standpoint of gay and lesbian youth. Incorporating suggestions from RAC members, I developed one guide for interviewing clients, and another for students, workers and faculty (see Appendix D).

I found that some participants would have preferred to have an understanding of the topics to be covered in the interview beforehand. As well, some respondents presented data regarding their experiences in practice that were not directly relevant to this study. Thus, I believe it would be useful to provide participants with a copy of the interview guide prior to data gathering.

Interview Process. Interviews took place at a time and place convenient for the respondents. With respondents who lived within driving distance of Toronto, I conducted the interviews in person, most occurring in informants' homes and offices. Several meetings took place in my home and at restaurants which allowed for confidentiality. I conducted interviews of informants who lived more than a day's drive from Toronto by long-distance telephone calls. The interviews, which lasted between one and two hours, were audio-tape recorded and transcribed. Codes rather than respondents' names were used in transcripts and access to the transcripts was limited to the interviewer and the research advisors. Because most of the data were gathered from a relatively small group, gay men currently or recently involved with

schools of social work, I have reported interview excerpts without identifiers in order to preserve respondents' anonymity.

Prior to focusing on the research question, I discussed the confidentiality provisions of the interview with each respondent, asking if he required clarification or had any concerns. All participants were satisfied with the procedures and signed a letter consenting to participation which outlined the purpose of the study, its potential benefits, inconveniences anticipated, the nature of the data-gathering process, provisions for maintaining the confidentiality of the data and the anonymity of respondents, and feedback procedures. (See Appendix A.) The research design and data gathering methods were approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Committee on Research Ethics.

To commence the interview, I gave a brief description of the purpose of the study. I emphasized that the research was a study of social work education, not of gay men. Generally, the atmosphere at the beginning of the interviews was relaxed and informal. Largely, this social climate was due to the fact that I knew many of the informants, at least superficially, from my experiences within the gay community and with social services and social work education. I established a rapport with participants whom I had not met previously by exploring their background related to gay issues, the provision of social services, and social work education. I also shared my experiences related to these topics. I found that this approach helped establish a comfortable, egalitarian relationship with the respondents. The interviews unfolded as guided conversations, with both participants contributing to the topics discussed, rather

than as formal interviews, in which the researcher asks questions and the informant is limited to answering them.

To focus discussion, I asked each respondent to tell me about his experiences related to social services or social work education. Initially, I used the interview guide extensively during interviews. However, after several meetings, I determined that the student, worker, and faculty respondents usually were able to describe events related to social work education with minimal prompting from me. Furthermore, I found that asking questions often interrupted or diverted the informants' flow of thought. However, I found it was often necessary to use the interview guide to help client respondents to identify issues to discuss. I reviewed the guide at the end of each interview and raised any issues which the respondent had not touched on.

The fact that the interviewer and respondent were both gay facilitated open communication, since we had confidence that we shared at least some understanding of the experiences of being gay in the context of social services and social work education. The experiences participants described often triggered memories and feelings about similar incidents in my life. I usually shared these reactions with respondents, which often stimulated further disclosures. Some respondents expressed a great deal of anxiety, anger, and sadness regarding their experiences. Sometimes, when I found these revelations upsetting, my reaction was to defend myself by the use of humour or diverting the conversation to another topic. I found that this pattern diminished as I became aware of it and was prepared for emotionally disturbing material.

At the conclusion of the interviews, the research participants were debriefed and provided with feedback. In debriefing, the interviewers asked respondents about their feelings concerning the content and process of the interview. Most participants found the conversational style of the interviews comfortable. Many informants commented that recounting their experiences helped them clarify their feelings regarding gay-related issues in social work. A few participants were uneasy with the expectation to respond spontaneously. Interviewers also solicited participants' recommendations for future data-gathering. Those who were uncomfortable with the unstructured format recommended making the interview guide available to respondents prior to the interview.

Feedback entailed sharing with each participant a summary of the main points in the interview and asking whether the summary reflected the informant's experiences and views. Discrepancies and clarifications identified by respondents were noted. Interviewers also shared their feelings regarding the interview and impressions of how the interview data would contribute to the study. In providing feedback, interviewers answered informants' questions regarding the study in general and the interview in particular. A commitment was made to provide all participants with a summary of the findings when the study was completed and to make the full report available to those who requested it.

Establishing the Trustworthiness of Interview Data

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings can be judged by their "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (p. 300). They argue that these qualities are analogous to the positivist research criteria of validity, generalizability, reliability and objectivity. They also recognize that the quality of findings is related to the skills, experience, and values of the researcher. I used techniques recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990) to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings of this study.

Credibility. Credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296) refers to the extent to which the findings of a study make sense to respondents. The credibility of this study was supported by prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301) in the field during the data gathering process. The use of in-depth interviewing provided respondents with the opportunity to relate their experiences and perceptions regarding social work education in detail. As well, interviewing of respondents continued until the pattern of findings became well established.

The credibility of the findings was also bolstered by the technique of triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305; Patton, 1990, p. 464), in that interview data were gathered from diverse informants by RAC members as well as myself. In more conventional qualitative research, triangulation implies the verification of findings by reference to data gathered from diverse sources or by various methods. However, in institutional ethnography, Smith (1987) asserts that "From different

standpoints different aspects of the ruling apparatus and of class come into view" (p. 107). Therefore, the triangulation of data in this study served to reveal various features of social work education in relation to gay male sexual orientation.

The credibility of the findings was also strengthened by member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314) with participants throughout the investigation. This procedure involves asking members of the groups from which data were gathered to confirm the accuracy of the data, and that the findings adequately reflect their perceptions. Member checks occurred in several ways. Respondents were given feedback at the end of interviews regarding interviewers' perceptions regarding the main points in the informants' testimony. In order to verify that the data reflected their experiences and views, I provided transcripts of their interviews to six respondents and a draft of the findings chapter to 11 participants. Subsequently, I incorporated the clarifications and comments they offered. However, the primary method of member checking was the involvement of the RAC in gathering and reviewing the findings as they emerged. Most importantly, the ongoing meetings of the RAC provided a forum for discussing the meaning of the data and ensuring that their description and analysis were consistent with the experiences of gay men in relation to social work education.

Transferability. Transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) alludes to the applicability of findings to other situations. Transferability may be assessed by comparing the context of the study with that of the proposed site of application. In

order to facilitate such an assessment, I have provided thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) of respondents' experiences and perceptions regarding social work education. This detailed description of content and process was facilitated by the taping and transcribing of interviews and the recording of observational notes. As well, transferability is supported by a description of the respondents in this report.

Dependability. Dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) considers the stability of the phenomenon under study as well as methodological errors. The dependability of these findings was supported by the use of an interview guide and the use of a coding system in the analysis of the data. The use of the interview guide and coding system would allow replication of the study. However, given the assumptions of standpoint analysis on which this study is based, I would expect that the findings may be similar, but not necessarily the same.

Confirmability. Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318) refers to the extent to which the data upon which the conclusions were based can be substantiated. Each finding of this study was supported by several quotes. In order to allow the tracing of data back to their sources, I labelled each quote with initials which I had arbitrarily assigned to each respondent and with the line numbers which referred to the location of the quote in the interview transcript. However, the codes have been deleted from the final report in order to safeguard confidentiality and anonymity. I

have retained the interview transcripts, journal notes, and related documents to provide an audit trail by which findings can be substantiated.

Journal notes. In order to allow an assessment of the impact of my values and experience on the research findings, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990), I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the research process. Immediately after interviews, I recorded my reactions and feelings relevant to issues which emerged during the interviews, and my speculations regarding possible effects I may have had on respondents. In addition, as recommended by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), I made observational notes regarding significant non-verbal communication during interviews, and theoretical notes about my understanding of the meaning of the observations, my feeling reactions and spontaneous insights. I also maintained notes on the research process itself, as it unfolded.

Gathering Documentary Data

Based on the recommendations of the RAC and analysis of the interview data, I gathered textual data regarding the official values, policies, and procedures which influence social work education in Canada. I examined the Manual of Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Canadian Programs of Social Work Education (CASSW, 1992), descriptions of Canadian social work education programs (CASSW, 1993), and the university calendars of schools with which respondents had experience.

Data Analysis

The analysis phase of this study involved examination of interview data as well as documents which influence social work education. I employed the constant comparative method of data analysis (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to organize the interview data. Subsequently I examined data for traces of the social relations which organized the experiences described in order to establish problematics for further investigation (Smith, 1987). I then used textual analysis (Smith, 1987) to examine documents related to Canadian social work education.

I considered using narrative analysis (Mishler, 1986b; Polkinghorne, 1988) with respect to the interview data because that approach maintains the "wholeness" of the experiences of the respondents. However, when I reviewed the transcripts of the interviews, I found that only a small proportion of the data was in the form of stories. If I had restricted the analysis only to narrative data, I would have lost useful information. For instance, respondents did not present their recommendations for change within narratives. Another factor in my decision to abandon the narrative approach was the risk that by focusing on respondents' stories, the analysis could shift to examining the lives of gay men rather than the institution of social work education. As recommended by Smith (1987), I found that I was able to identify traces of the social organization of social work education within the data categories which I developed using the constant comparative method of analysis.

Analysis of interview data. The first step I took in analyzing interview data was to listen to the tape recording of an interview while reading the related transcript. I made notes in the margin regarding my emotional reactions, implications for future data gathering, as well as my speculations as to the theoretical significance of the data. Next, I developed a scheme for coding the data. Smith (1987) discouraged the use of coding procedures in institutional ethnography because of the danger that the focus of the study could be shifted away from respondents' experiences to issues defined by the institution being studied. However, in developing the coding scheme, I did not use categories based on sociological or social work theory. Rather, I used categories which emerged from the interviews themselves. I used coding primarily as a method of organizing the data, and preserved the presence of the respondents by reporting their testimony in detail.

To develop categories, I used the constant comparative method of data processing described by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p 339). In this approach, interview data are systematically compared, leading to the emergence of categories with common properties. I began by reviewing the audio tapes, transcripts and process notes regarding the first four interviews. Next, I sorted the data from these interviews into sets which I judged to be similar using the constant comparative method. Then, I developed a coding scheme based on these categories and the items in the interview guide (see Appendix E). I reviewed this scheme with the RAC members, who felt that it could accommodate the data. Subsequently, I analyzed the remaining data by reviewing the transcripts and audio tapes of interviews, and coding them using the

category scheme. I did not find it necessary to modify the coding scheme to categorize these data.

In order to select data for further analysis, I prepared descriptions of the contents of each category. I decided to focus on informants' descriptions of their experiences directly related to social work education and their understandings of the determinants of these experiences. These data were included in the categories identified in Appendix F. I then examined these data to determine those categories which overlapped. After discussing these patterns with the RAC, I identified the pattern of relationships among categories which is indicated in Appendix F. The RAC members concluded that the scheme adequately reflected their experiences and understanding of the determinants of those experiences.

Next, by examining the data within the categories which were retained, in consultation with members of the RAC, I formulated problematics regarding social work education which guided subsequent data gathering and analysis. This step was based on Smith's (1987) contention that the ways in which people talk about their experiences in relation to a particular institution reflect the social organization of the institution. I read respondents' descriptions of their experiences, searching for indications of how issues related to same-gender sexual orientation are dealt with in schools of social work.

For example, I found that respondents directly stated that the climate in schools of social work discouraged open discussion of same-gender sexual orientation. In addition, respondents indirectly revealed how this silencing occurred, in the language

they used to describe their experiences. They used words and phrases such as "scared," "survival in institutions," and "he was giving me a warning," suggesting that the discouraging of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation occurred through direct and indirect threats. In discussing how gay curriculum content is handled in schools of social work, respondents mentioned professors' " ... refusal to allow gay and lesbian issues to come up, or the invalidation of those issues ... [saying] it was an illness to be gay or lesbian." Participants also reported evocative comments from students that "we don't want to have gay stuff shoved down our throats." Research participants described curriculum content on gay issues as being comprised of "excuses why it should be accepted as being okay, they can't help it ..." and "... bizarre conceptions ... "

Based on the analysis of the interviews and discussion with members of the RAC, it became clear to me that issues of same-gender sexual orientation are for the most part silenced within social work education. As RAC members commented, the climate in schools of social work is unsafe for gay men to come out. I formulated two problematics regarding social work education:

1. How is the climate in schools of social work organized to discourage open discussion regarding same-gender sexual orientation?
2. How are curricula in schools of social work organized to allow the omission and marginalization of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation?

I sought answers to these questions within the interview data and by examining documents which respondents suggested influence schools of social work. This

investigation allowed me to relate the personal concerns of respondents to structural features of social work education.

Analysis of documents. Smith (1984) sees texts as central to the standardization of social relations influenced by institutions of social control. In order to investigate the determinants of the problematics in social work education which emerged from the interview data, I examined documents which influence Canadian schools of social work and describe their programs. I analyzed official publications referred to by respondents as significant in the regulation of Canadian social work education, as well as those which I suspected to be significant. I reviewed the calendars of those schools of social work which respondents were associated with, and the Description of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work and Directory of Programmes in CASSW Accredited Schools, Faculties & Departments of Social Work in Canada (CASSW, 1993). I also studied the Code of Ethics (CASW, 1983), the Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994), and the Manual of Standards and Procedures for Accreditation of Canadian Programs of Social Work Education (CASSW, 1992). Finally, I read the Framework Regarding Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination in Ontario Universities (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993).

Textual analysis entails examination of both the content and form of documents to determine their implications (Hale, 1990). As recommended by Smith (1990), I read the documents to identify content directly related to social work education with

respect to sexual orientation issues. I also considered the format of these documents with respect to provisions relevant to issues of sexual orientation. Finally, I focused on how the provisions of the texts impacted on the participants in social work education.

Communication of Findings

In order to stimulate discussion regarding changes in social work education, I will publicize the findings of this study widely within the gay community as well as to organizations related to social work education and professional training. I will provide a summary of the findings to all research participants and ask RAC members to discuss the findings in their work settings. I also will distribute summaries of the findings to social service organizations which serve the gay community. I have made plans to present the findings at an annual meeting of the CASSW and will provide written summaries to the CASSW and the CASW. I will also share the findings to caucuses of gay and lesbian students in schools of social work. I will loan a copy of the full dissertation report to those who wish to review it.

Chapter Summary

I conducted this study using strategies drawn from institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987) and action research (Halpern, 1988) to investigate social work education from the standpoint of gay men. I worked with an advisory committee of gay men in implementing the inquiry. We conducted in-depth interviews of gay social work

clients, practitioners, students, and faculty regarding their experiences relevant to social work education. In consultation with RAC members, I analyzed the interview data and documents identified in the interviews as being significant influences on Canadian schools of social work. The findings will be shared widely within Canadian social work education and gay social service organizations. This chapter provides a clear description of the steps I took in implementing this investigation.

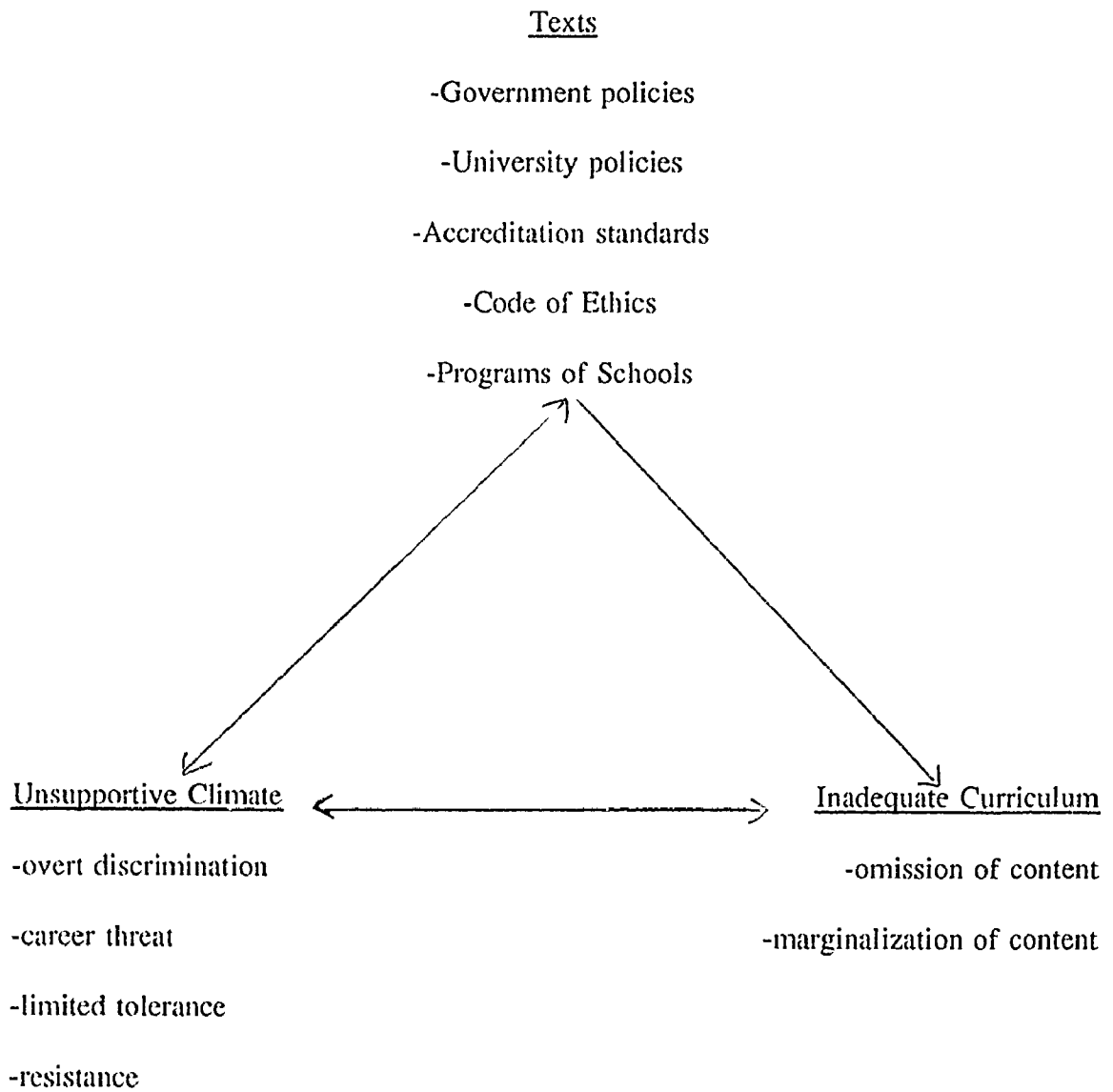
Chapter 5. FINDINGS

In this chapter I present findings regarding social work education as seen from the standpoint of gay men, the social relations which determine these features of social work education, and recommendations for change. One criterion I used in selecting data to present was that the information be directly relevant to social work education. For example, I did not include data regarding experiences in relation to social agencies which did not in some way influence social work education. Because my goal was to study the current state of social work education, another criterion for inclusion was that data refer to experiences within the last 10 years. I included some earlier data for historical comparison or because of their uniqueness and continuing relevance. I edited the data to make them more readable and omitted words and phrases which do not add to the meaning.

Table 1 illustrates the relationships among major findings. It shows that the social climate, curriculum content, and official policies of social work education reinforce each other to exclude and marginalize issues of same-gender sexual orientation from discourse within schools of social work. I have organized the presentation of findings to move from respondents' experiences within schools of social work, which are identified in the lower portion of Table 1, to their perceptions of factors which influence social work education with respect to issues of same-gender sexual orientation, which are identified in the upper portion of the table.

Table 1

The Silencing of Issues of Same-Gender Sexual Orientation Within Schools of Social Work



I first report data regarding incidents of overt discrimination, and the impact of being openly gay on the careers of faculty and students. Subsequently, I describe research participants' perceptions of limited tolerance of openly gay men, passive resistance to discussion of same-gender sexual orientation, and denial of the seriousness of anti-gay discrimination by social work faculty and students. Then I outline consequences of the negative climate in schools of social work regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

In the following section, I present data regarding curriculum content on same-gender sexual orientation and its evaluation by informants. Next, I depict the impact which openly gay men have within schools of social work, identifying their contributions to knowledge about same-gender sexual orientation, to the understanding of oppression, and to the provision of support to gay faculty and students.

Subsequently, I describe respondents' beliefs regarding the determinants of the negative climate and lack of curriculum content regarding same-gender sexual orientation. I outline informants' perceptions regarding the influence of social work values and institutional policies and procedures on the open discussion of same gender sexual orientation within schools of social work.

In the closing sections of the chapter, I outline informants' recommendations for changes in social work education. I present suggestions for changes in university policies, social work education accreditation standards, and policies of schools of social work. I set out suggestions regarding faculty recruitment and training as well as student admission and support. Next, I present respondents' recommendations for

curriculum content, teaching methods, and implementation of changes and outline perceptions regarding supports and barriers to these changes. Finally, I present findings based on a review of documents related to social work education.

Respondents' Experiences in Schools of Social Work

Respondents described threatening and unsupportive experiences in schools of social work which discouraged discussion regarding same-gender sexual orientation. A man who graduated from a Masters of Social Work (MSW) program in 1991 said he knew gay students at his school:

... who were just scared about coming out, and scared about revealing who they were ... but this should be a safe environment, a sort of environment for exploration, and it wasn't ...

The seriousness of the perceived threat was implied in the identification of the issue by a faculty member as "... survival in institutions ...". The data suggested that this climate of fear was the result of experiences of overt discrimination and perceptions of covert discrimination, passive resistance, and marginalization.

Overt discrimination. Respondents reported that the universities within which schools of social work are located often provide a hostile environment for gay men. An informant who was an MSW student between 1988 and 1991 commented:

Well, I can also recall when I was there, anti-gay stuff in the student newspaper ... [which] doesn't make a person feel safe.

A Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) student described how in 1992, signs related to gay issues were defaced in his university:

... there was a sign to advertise for meetings [of the lesbian and gay student group] ... and it was getting ripped down every week.

Although informants felt there was less overt prejudice regarding same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work than in other university departments, they reported some evidence of prejudice. For instance, a respondent found anti-gay graffiti in the school of social work in 1987:

... I recall the bulletin board outside of [an office in the social work department] ... there was a notice about a meeting about AIDS, and someone had written 'faggots' across it.

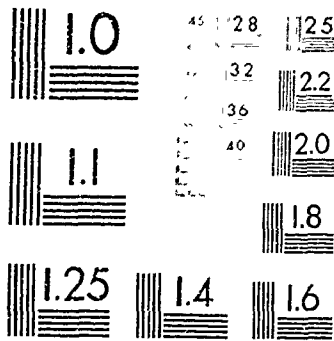
As much as such incidents poisoned the atmosphere, respondents were more concerned about the negative behaviour of social work faculty and students. A research participant reported that in 1988, his school had a reputation of being unsafe for the discussion of gay-related issues:

... I went to this meeting and [former students] were talking about being gay and lesbian and a social work student and being a social worker. The message that I think many of us who were there took ... out of the meeting was [the school] is a very conservative school, be careful about what you say, who you say it to, because if they find out, meaning the powers that be, you will be punished somehow.

The warning was supported by data which indicated that some faculty members

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directly expressed prejudice in class. A professor reported:

... I get students all the time ... coming to me about issues that they're dealing with around homophobic or heterosexist remarks, comments, judgements made by professors that they have in their classes and the refusal to allow gay and lesbian issues to come up, or the invalidation of those issues, and we had one professor last year who was teaching from a psychoanalytic point of view and basically said that it was an illness to be gay or lesbian ...

An MSW student described how in 1992 a professor told a joke alluding to same-gender sexual orientation:

... I'm in class, he knows I'm gay ... he's talking about an incident that happened in one of his classes ... he turned it into a gay joke, sort of like, 'Oh, I didn't want to bend over in front of him ...'

The response from most of the students was laughter. The respondent was shocked and humiliated by the professor's behaviour and the students' reaction since he was openly gay in the school.

Participants also described negative experiences involving students. Some behaviour was justified by religious values. A student reported:

... homosexuality came up [in class] ... [a student] started going on about 'oh, well, I would have difficulty working with those people because they're against Christian values' ... [some] others were in agreement, nodding their heads with her.

Professors reported that some fundamentalist students opposed gay men teaching in

schools of social work. However, these objections were not supported by most students. Fear of stigmatization caused some students to object to the location of a sign for a campus group for gay men and lesbians at the entrance to the school of social work. A professor recounted that in 1992:

... there was some comment given by some students in the program that it associated the school of social work with lesbians and gays and the desire to disassociate from that on the part of some people. Now it raised major conflicts among the students in that a number of students were very upset about this particular view ... but by association, people were feeling threatened. There were some people who were going 'we are perceived as being lesbians and gays ...'

Even though these objections were not supported by most students, the fact that they arose contributed to anxiety about revealing same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work. These overt incidents thus supported the suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Respondents also described experiences which were more indirectly threatening to gay men.

Negative impact on faculty careers. A recently retired faculty member maintained that revelation of same-gender sexual orientation could have negative effects on building a successful career. He commented that he had been able to be open in his school because he had tenure and was near retirement:

...if I were a lot younger, had my whole career ahead of me, I would think twice about it ... it was only because of circumstances that I did it ... I had tenure, I had job security, I was at the end of my career.

This man's view is supported by the experiences of several research participants. A respondent who recently was a candidate for a faculty position reported that a senior university administrator attempted to intimidate him into silence about gay issues.

He was basically giving me the warning that ... this is no place for political types, and political agenda need to be set aside for intellectual work ... he included in his sweep of academics he has problems with not only gay activist types, but also feminists and Jews ... so he was basically giving me a warning to behave myself ...

Another openly gay professor perceived negative reactions from colleagues when he was given recognition within his university for his teaching expertise:

... people were absolutely shocked too, in terms of those particular people who are not comfortable with the idea of some gay person teaching within [university].

The same man attributed his failure to obtain a promotion in part to prejudice:

Although I said right away that I'll never get this position and I know exactly why, they don't want a gay person as head of the school, and when it came to the final analysis, that's exactly what the politics work[ed] out to be.

He felt that the facade of tolerance shattered because of concerns about the image of the school of social work if it were led by a gay person:

... given the social profile I think the school wanted to have, I don't think that many people were even comfortable within, even the people that I was very close to, who overtly supported me, I don't think in the final analysis were there.

Thus, the data reveal potential negative impacts on academic careers related to revealing same-gender sexual orientation.

Negative impact on student admission and evaluation. Some respondents contended that revelation of same-gender sexual orientation may have a negative impact on students' success in schools of social work. A faculty member commented that these fears may be justified given professors' power over students:

... I think that's related to people's relative positions of power in the system ... if I'm ... a gay student ... is my sexual orientation going to play a role in the professor's evaluation [of] my performance or in the kinds of papers I write? ... if I want to focus on gay and lesbian relationships [in] a sociology of the family course as an example, ... will that be accepted ... or will it be looked upon somewhat negatively? And so I think there's something more considerably at risk for students than for me ...

Some applicants for admission to schools of social work feared that revelation of same-gender sexual orientation would diminish their chances of admission:

...if you're not careful you could get stigmatized at that stage and excluded ...

because again, I knew I wouldn't be accepted, and it was just something I felt, that I wouldn't be accepted.

This belief was supported by the experience of a respondent who was rejected when he applied for admission to a school in 1987:

... I had been very open in my application with the fact that I was gay ... and in my mind I was really wondering why I was turned down cause I had a lot of very positive backing and undergrad experience and life experience, so I had an interview ... with [an admissions officer] ... I was ... told that they could not tell me why I had been turned down. The reason given for that [was that] every year the cut off is different, vague stuff of that nature. I very specifically spoke up and said does it have anything to do with being gay. The response ... was of course not.

That the school official was not specific about the reasons for the rejection of the application left the respondent suspecting that it was due to his sexual orientation. A similar pattern occurred when a student received a failing grade on a paper in which he had explored an issue related to gay male sexual orientation. When the student was unable to obtain a reason for his mark, he concluded that it was related to his openness about his sexual orientation and the topic of the paper. These incidents, in which the impact of faculty values about same-gender sexual orientation was not clear, had the effect of creating an intimidating atmosphere for gay students.

Public tolerance, private rejection. Several research participants found that direct expression of negative attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation is inhibited within schools of social work. A professor asserted:

... I have no doubt that there is a public ... tacit kind of acceptance [with respect to same-gender sexual orientation] and a ... private rejection or judgement ... students quickly learn to pull in the politically correct reins ...

Several students reported that faculty expressed support regarding issues of same-gender sexual orientation. However, respondents found that such statements were not backed up by professors' behaviour. A faculty member professor reported that, although his colleagues were tolerant of his sexual orientation, they denied the seriousness of anti-gay discrimination:

... [it is] considered a non-issue, 'like what are you really talking about, like who really cares' and sort of denying that there might [be] any particular difficulties or problems.

He perceived that his peers ignored issues identified by gay professors but denied this interpretation of their behaviour:

... at a faculty meeting ... we raised the issue of the students saying something to us in terms of being gay or lesbian and what impact that has had upon him or her in a classroom situation. The rest of them would just close their ears, ignore the whole conversation ... Yet, if we ever went directly to somebody

and said 'we've been thinking you didn't take our concern very seriously,' [the response would be] 'oh, no, no, no, that's your impression, that's your thoughts, that's your opinion. That's not the case at all.'

Data suggested that a veneer of tolerance covered faculty's negative attitudes about same-gender sexual orientation. A professor noticed prejudice against a colleague who did not exhibit traditional masculine behaviour:

... I saw it in my department, when there were two homosexuals ... [one] was a 'queen,' and I was 'correct.' It was no problem with me because ... 'you don't look like a homosexual ... I can invite you home with many people because you are gay, but you are like me.'

Claims of being non-judgemental were betrayed by comments which professors made about gay students. For instance, a professor recounted a colleague's opinion of a student's attire:

... that one particular student does a disservice to gays by the way that he presents himself ... these kinds of comments being made by people who would probably define themselves as being very open-minded about this, but think that there's a certain mould you should fit into, and if you don't you're doing a disservice to the gay community by making it less acceptable to the general population.

The implication was that acceptance of gay men was conditional on compliance with conventional gender norms.

The data indicated that faculty members' limited tolerance of same-gender sexual orientation was often expressed indirectly. In 1980, a professor disapproved of a student's research on a gay-related issue:

... there was at least one faculty person that had stated, not to me, but to someone else, that she felt that this was an inappropriate topic for masters research ...

A respondent who took time off from work to look after his partner who was ill, perceived that his colleagues resented his absences, which he believed would not have happened had his partner been a woman:

...they'll tolerate gay related issues, HIV and AIDS, as long as it's convenient to their safe little worlds, but as soon as it creates a disruption for their world and what they want accomplished ... to hell with you ...

Thus, the perception of respondents was that beneath the facade of tolerance, social work faculty harbour negative attitudes which surface indirectly, particularly when active support is sought.

There was a similar pattern of public expression of tolerance and private expression of prejudice regarding same-gender sexual orientation by students. A faculty member reported that students deny holding negative attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. For instance, a respondent found his students were interested in receiving information about same-gender sexual orientation:

... I devoted one class only to gay and lesbian issues ... but the reaction I got from the students around the whole course was related almost entirely to that class... and it was all very positive ...

However, a 1991 MSW graduate reported that his peers questioned the need for inclusion of information about sexual orientation in social work education. Another respondent commented that in the BSW program he attended in 1991:

... I've heard people say to other students ... [certain professors] shouldn't be allowed to teach because they're gay ... a lot of people would say ... gay professors ... have their own agenda, we don't want to keep hearing about AIDS, we don't want to have gay stuff shoved down our throats ...

Thus, this respondent's experience was that students' prejudice against gay faculty and opposition to discussion of same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work is expressed privately.

Passive resistance. Rather than either overt or covert expressions of prejudice, respondents perceived that many faculty and students expressed their negative attitudes by ignoring the presence of gay men and lesbians in schools of social work, and by avoiding learning about, and discussing, issues related to same-gender sexual orientation. For instance, in 1987, a social work student had difficulty in getting someone from another department in the university to chair his dissertation defence. He perceived that:

... it was just the topic, people didn't want to deal with a gay related thesis.

In describing responses when he raised issues of same-gender sexual orientation in his MSW program, a 1982 graduate said:

... I think they were generally received, were at least heard, if not sort of actively supported by faculty and other students ...

A current student related similar passive reactions:

... lesbian and gay issues ... weren't stopped, but they weren't encouraged. If the student brought it up, it was discussed, but it wasn't brought up by the faculty generally.

Current and recent students reported that professors were uninformed about sexual orientation and uncomfortable when gay related issues arose in class. An informant described his experience in 1990 when he confronted a professor in his MSW program about the lack of examples related to sexual orientation in his course:

... the response I got from him was very defensive and not really encouraging.

It was sort of, well, that's my practice and that's who I work with, so ...

The professor's dismissal of the need to become knowledgeable about sexual orientation gave the message that the topic was not significant. However, some respondents reported instances in which faculty members challenged homophobic remarks made by students, invited gay speakers to classes, and supported student research on gay topics. These data suggested that passive resistance on the part of faculty was not universal. However, support occurred as a response to sexual orientation issues when they arose, rather than as initiatives on the part of faculty.

Data suggested that students were also resistant to exploring same-gender sexual orientation issues. Despite the upsurge in publicity about gay men and lesbians over the last decade, a current BSW student remarked that many of his peers continue to be unaware of issues related to sexual orientation:

... when they run up against homosexuality, some of them are terrified, some of them can't accept it, or some of them, they're just plain ignorant. They don't know because they never have been exposed to anyone who was gay, probably they have, but they never picked up on it.

A professor reported that he encountered rigid adherence to traditional values whenever he proposes considering same-gender partnerships as falling within the definition of the family. In classes he has argued that:

...we have to open up the definition of family to include other ideas of what families are, not just mom, dad, and the two kids. That oppresses all kinds of people, and not just gays and lesbians, but anybody who wants to talk about ... whatever other variant it may be of our traditional definition of family. I get incredible resistance from students for just throwing the idea out.

A more common reaction was that students ignored gay issues when they were raised.

A student observed:

... when a discussion [about same-gender sexual orientation] does come up, there's never a follow up and there's never any other discussion amongst ... the other students ... basically it drops ... the question's asked, the prof deals with it, and then there's no discussion afterwards.

A respondent, who was a BSW student in 1991, noticed that even though he was open about being gay, his peers avoided the issue:

... it wasn't until fourth year that any straight people would acknowledge that they knew ...

An informant who graduated from a MSW program in 1988 concluded that the general lack of response when gay issues are raised was a form of discrimination:

... what I did find was a lot of deaf ears ... and a lot of ... silence, and that if I didn't raise the issue, it wouldn't be raised, if I didn't object, there would be no objection ... do I think that that's homophobia? ... yes, because it's a homophobia by omission ...

In general, the pattern was one of passive resistance to discussion of same-gender sexual orientation.

Trivialization of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Respondents' experiences suggested that within schools of social work, discrimination based on sexual orientation is treated as irrelevant and unimportant, in comparison with the oppression of other groups. A faculty member commented:

... I don't think it's seen as being as legitimate [as other minority groups]. And nobody will say we should be oppressing gays and lesbians ... I think heterosexism is still operating at very high levels.

An MSW student encountered resistance to including sexual orientation with other categories of oppression:

.. any time I ... tried to attach [gay and lesbian issues] to the umbrella of multiculturalism, it was always pushed out, it was never recognized as such ...

This assessment was supported by the experience of a professor at another school. When he asked in 1992 that homophobia be included in a workshop for faculty regarding racial and ethnic discrimination, the director of the school refused:

[The director said] that ... with only two days available, we would only be able to deal with three or four different groups at most ...

Part of the administrator's rationale for excluding gay issues was that:

... gay and lesbian people have a choice about whether or not to be visible.

This response revealed a conviction that the concerns of gay men and lesbians were not as valid as those of other oppressed groups. The position seemed to be based on the belief that because revelation of same-gender sexual orientation is, to some extent, a matter of choice, openly gay men are, therefore, responsible for the discrimination they encounter. This reasoning was an attempt to discredit the informant's claim that oppression based on sexual orientation was a serious matter.

Other respondents also found that some faculty and students did not consider anti-gay discrimination to be deserving of attention in social work education. A faculty member found a lack of support in the early 1980s when he proposed developing a course on gay men and lesbians. Despite the school's policy of addressing minority issues, his colleagues questioned the focus:

... why this specific group, instead of Jamaicans or ... the disabled? ... they agreed it was part of the policy, but why this specific group instead of all these others and how can you justify that ...

A former student reported that in the mid 1980s, a faculty member refused to consider gay men and lesbians as oppressed groups:

... we were told very clearly by the professor that ... [gay men and lesbians] was not a legitimate minority and it was not going to be included on the same level with Blacks and racial minorities and women.

A professor reported that recently a colleague teaching a cultural minorities course refused to allow a student to write a paper on gay and lesbian issues:

...she was told that ...there was no such thing as the gay and lesbian culture... which I think may be debatable but certainly explorable.

However, there appeared to be a split in student attitudes regarding inclusion of sexual orientation issues with other minority content. In a class which included students from various backgrounds, a BSW student indicated acceptance of sexual differences as part of that diversity:

... He said, 'well, all that we need now is to have somebody that would represent a sexual minority group and our group would be really complete ...

However, a recent graduate from the same school asserted:

There's more tolerance for education about racism than there is for education on gay issues.

In fact, one informant reported that in 1992, minority student members of the

admissions committee at his school objected to the admission of gay and lesbian applicants:

... the folks ... who were representing aboriginal people ... incorrectly, felt that the inclusion of 'rich gays and lesbians' would deny access to the school for deserving native people. So a whole hierarchy of oppression was articulated in the admissions committee ...

It seemed that the commitment to diversity in social work education did not extend to issues of sexual orientation.

Informants also reported that some faculty and students, who espoused feminist values, contributed to the silencing of issues regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Many respondents had expected women with feminist views to be open to the concerns of gay men. However, a participant, who had graduated from a MSW program in 1988, reported being silenced by a feminist professor who did not distinguish between gay and heterosexual men:

... the instructor said ... for the men in this class, you will talk when you are spoken to ... and I was in tears, and after that comment I came out and I said I really take issue with what you say, I resent being painted with the same brush, I feel like I'm being lumped in with all men that are your oppressors ... I'm gay and I feel a strong sense of kinship with women in their oppression, and she never did respond to any of my objections ...

Similarly, a current MSW student perceived that some of his female peers were uncomfortable with his suggestion that there are similarities in the experiences of

women and gay men, in that both groups are oppressed by heterosexism. He believed that the heterosexual women did not want to be associated with gay issues.

Summary. The data revealed relatively few overt expressions of anti-gay prejudice within schools of social work. More common were experiences of limited tolerance of openly gay men, passive resistance to discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation, and denial of the gravity of discrimination based on sexual orientation. In the next section, I demonstrate how this social climate influenced the behaviour of participants in social work education.

Impact of the Climate in Schools of Social Work

Limited disclosure of same-gender sexual orientation. The data indicated that an effect of the negative climate in schools of social work is that participants in social work education are not open about their same-gender sexual orientation. Informants reported that they seldom encountered openly gay faculty members in schools of social work. However, respondents believed that there are a significant number of professors who either hide or selectively disclose their same-gender sexual orientation because of their fear of negative career consequences. For instance, a research participant recounted that recently when he was being interviewed for faculty positions, he varied the extent to which he disclosed his sexual orientation, depending on his assessment of the climate in the school. At one school, he did not state his sexual orientation:

... I did not, and I consciously did not, come to the interview saying I am a gay man and here's what my interests are ... I presented ... some of my [research on a gay issue] ... I never made a direct personal disclosure, either individually or to the faculty group when I did my presentation ...

In contrast, at a school with a feminist philosophy, he made his sexual orientation explicit:

... it was just a political strategic move on my part and I figured [school of social work] would more actively pursue me if I were a gay man than if I were not ... I made a point of saying, as a gay man, here are my concerns, and here's where I see myself going in research and teaching, here's where I see it connecting with ... the feminist concerns of the school, and it was I believe, ... seen in ... more welcoming kinds of ways ...

Apparently, the respondent believed that depending on the climate in the school, identifying one's sexual orientation could have an impact on obtaining a faculty position. Thus, he shared or withheld information about his sexual orientation depending on his perception of the climates of the schools. These data illustrated how the perception of negative career effects suppressed information about faculty members' same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work.

As with faculty members, respondents who had had recent involvement with schools of social work indicated that they were aware of few gay and lesbian students in their programs. It appeared that the environment in schools of social work created anxiety in students which caused them to conceal their same-gender sexual orientation:

... that's how the silence is maintained, because I may not want to take a chance and publicize my orientation, because if I do ... I may suffer all kinds of consequences. So I think people, knowing the possible adverse effects, don't talk about their sexuality ...

This fear influenced applicants for admission to schools of social work. A current student said he did not reveal his sexual orientation on his application because he feared negative effects later in his education:

... because I think there will be some discrimination at a certain point ... that's a bit scary.

In contrast, a faculty member doubted that sexual orientation would affect admission:

... it would never be an issue now. Students are now more open ... some of them will openly state that, 'I am gay,' and that would never affect their being admitted.

However, since the data suggested that disclosure of same-gender sexual orientation was limited, it was virtually impossible to estimate the number of participants in schools of social work who were gay or lesbian.

Avoidance of discussion of same-gender sexual orientation. The negative climate in schools of social work also deterred faculty and students from including issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in their teaching and research. A professor stated that he believed his colleagues feared being labelled as gay if they were to show interest in sexual orientation issues. This perception was supported by a

student who contended that faculty were afraid of being stigmatized:

... I think if a male were to teach a course, sensitivity to gay and lesbian issues, it'd be an automatic assumption that that person was gay, ... and I think some would not want to teach the course because of that.

He also believed that this would be true of some gay faculty:

There actually may be some gay male profs who don't want that out and then certainly wouldn't want to have to teach the course ...

The climate in schools of social work also suppressed students' interest in issues related to same-gender sexual orientation. A respondent commented:

... it stifles initiative in even getting to know more about the gay and lesbian community, relationships, or the services that are required in the community ...

A factor which deterred students from exploring gay issues was their fear of negative reactions from professors. The power which faculty have in relation to students caused students to avoid controversial issues, such as same-gender sexual orientation, about which the professor may have held negative opinions. For instance, a student, who had done a paper on a gay topic as an undergraduate, felt it was too risky to pursue that interest as a graduate social work student in the early 1980s:

... of course, I wanted to do more advanced studies, but then, in doing graduate work, I just could not take that chance.

Data from a current student revealed that some students continue to be intimidated by faculty members. The informant who witnessed a professor make an anti-gay joke in class in 1992 was silenced because of his fear of the teacher's power over him:

... I should have stood up and said that's totally inappropriate, but yet here is somebody who is going to be my boss for the next two years. What am I going [to do], going to start stirring [up the] water now? Forget it.

He related his silence to the lack of rules about accountability of faculty to students:

... at what point would I hold him accountable ... would I do it in front of the class, would I do it in his office, or what would I say?

The incident had the effect of discouraging the respondent from pursuing his research interest in gay issues:

... is he going to be more hard on my work because my work is going to involve issues of homosexuality? ... am I going to feel comfortable going to him? Is he going to be looking at me going, 'oh, this research is a joke anyway?'

Thus fear of confronting professors resulted in the suppression of discussion regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

Anxiety and isolation among faculty and students. The climate in schools of social work left gay faculty and students feeling anxious and isolated. Openly gay faculty were inhibited in their interactions with students by the stigma which is attached to gay male sexual orientation. For instance, a professor revealed that, because he was fearful of being accused of sexual activity with students, he became self-protective in his contacts with students:

... how the social construction of homophobia affects me as a teacher is that I find myself being guarded, and I wish it weren't true, but I do find myself being guarded around gay students, around gay male students in particular. I'm so anxious that there not be any perceived favouritism that, if anything, I'm probably more formal and more reserved around them than I am around the other students. It's the mythology of us being predators that makes me over-correct. If anything, I'm probably not as helpful to them as I should be and not as useful a role model or anything else because of this distance.

He said he felt the need to protect himself because he was open about being gay:

... maybe we are more cautious, because if we're going to be out ... you are in a sense marginalizing yourself. For me to be an effective teacher, the balance that I have to learn to strike is being available enough to be useful to all students, and still be self-protective ...

Thus, the climate in schools of social work had the effect of inhibiting gay professors, reducing their ability to support gay students and preventing them from teaching to the best of their ability.

The lack of participants in schools of social work who are open about their same-gender sexual orientation had the effect of isolating gay students and making them cautious about coming out. A social worker who graduated from an MSW program in 1980 described his experiences:

I was not out to any other students, not even any gay students, not the first year. Second year, when I was at my placement, I was. [Another student] came out to me, though I didn't come out to him ... I came out when we were on placement ...

It appeared that there has been little change in the ensuing 13 years. A current student remarked:

... there didn't seem to be any other gay men in the program at all, and when I had entered the program I thought that there would be a number, or at least some. So for me personally there was a bit of a feeling of isolation because I had anticipated more ... is it a safe thing to come out in this environment, given that I'm the only one, from the sounds of it ...

The climate in field placements also created anxiety in gay students. A student described his practicum experience:

... I was in an agency that ... stated that they would deal with all issues, all sexual orientations, which is written right into their mandate of their agency ... at the same time ... the executive director pretty much demonstrated behaviourally his lack of comfort with the same-sex issues ... which made me step back ... I ended up coming out to some of my co-workers but not all of them ...

The stated policy of the agency was contradicted by the behaviour of the executive director, causing the student to selectively disclose his sexual orientation.

Summary. These data indicated that few faculty and students are open about their same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work. In addition, the climate in schools discouraged teaching and research about same-gender sexual orientation. However, despite feelings of anxiety and isolation, some gay men were able to come out and pursue their scholarly interests in issues of same-gender sexual orientation.

Curriculum Content

Description of content. Respondents were more concerned about the climate in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation than about curriculum content. However, informants consistently reported a dearth of content regarding gay issues in the curricula of schools of social work. Respondents noted that prior to 1980, there was virtually no content regarding same-gender sexual orientation, and that today there continues to be little reference to the topic in core curricula. However, data indicated the presence of content on same-gender sexual orientation in some elective courses.

A professor commented that when gay and lesbian issues are addressed in schools of social work, they are usually dealt with together. Respondents identified only one instance of a course focusing exclusively on same-gender sexual orientation. Informants reported instances of gay issues being addressed in courses regarding HIV infection, relationship counselling, and social policy. Interestingly, little mention was made of gay content in human sexuality courses. A professor reported:

... the approach to sexuality at the school really excluded gay and lesbian experience to a large degree ...

Based on these data, there was a lack of course content on same-gender sexual orientation, and what little content there was, was not systematically integrated into curricula.

Evaluation of content. A student asserted that the social work training available in the BSW program he attended would not adequately prepare social workers to serve gay clients. A recent graduate felt that most of the content which was offered in his school would not be useful in working with gay clients:

... what you get is general information about homosexuality, the history of it, excuses why it should be accepted as being okay, they can't help it, or whatever, and what you really need to do is give them some understanding of what it's really like, what are the real key issues when you're dealing with gay clients.

A respondent who completed his MSW in 1992 perceived that some curriculum content presented same-gender sexual orientation as pathological:

... those people who focused on ... direct intervention seemed to get worked up with all kinds of bizarre conceptions of various processes, social constructions of what homosexuality was all about, not a lot but occasionally.

A student reported that a worker at his field placement told him:

... if [clients] reveal sort of confusion around sexuality ... or if they think they might be gay ... this was going to [be assessed] as a high risk [client].

The implication was that same-gender sexual orientation was seen as a negative factor in the assessment of clients. Thus, the practicum experience supported the view that same-gender sexual orientation is evidence of disturbance.

Several respondents criticized the "generic" approach to training which is used in some schools. The generic approach aims to provide students with skills which can be used with all clients, without focusing on differences in specific groups. A student who had also been a client found this approach ineffective because of the worker's lack of knowledge about same-gender sexual orientation:

... [regarding] the sexuality questions, she was absolutely clueless, clueless of what to do, where to go, other than to ... affirm and repeat, Rogerian style counselling, ... so I cut it off, I was getting no benefit out of it ...

A professor argued that the generic approach is ineffective, because it fails to help students develop emotional comfort in dealing with same-gender sexuality. This criticism was confirmed by clients who indicated that they expected workers to have the knowledge and skills to work with problems related to same-gender sexual orientation. A man who was receiving service from a heterosexual social worker commented:

You don't want to ... feel that you have to teach them about gay life. You want to assume that they're familiar with all that and it doesn't bother them, because I think if you were telling them and they weren't, they'd be too caught

up with being freaked out by it to really get past that to help you.

The data implied that schools which emphasized working with diverse clients were more likely to incorporate content regarding same-gender sexual orientation. For example, two schools had a core courses which address differences of various kinds including race, gender, class as well as sexual orientation.

Respondents criticized the haphazard inclusion of content regarding sexual orientation in curricula. Rather than being systematically presented, the data indicated that content on same-gender sexual orientation was usually contributed by gay and lesbian professors and students on an ad hoc basis. A faculty member contended that:

... it'll happen because the individual prof does it ... or a few students do some brown bag lunches, but it never gets ... incorporated, never gets institutionalized, it never gets into the core curriculum or maybe even an elective.

Thus, without pressure from gay men and lesbians, content related to sexual orientation was omitted. Informants saw the relegation of gay content to electives as tokenism, because it reached only a minority of the students. For instance, a student commented that the elective course offered in his school on gay and lesbian issues would probably not appeal to most heterosexual students:

... the only people that are going to take it are the converted ...

Often those who take electives are those who are already interested and knowledgeable about the topic.

Summary. There was a lack of content regarding same-gender sexual orientation in curricula. The content which was included was largely irrelevant and sometimes negative regarding gay related issues. There was no systematic integration content on sexual orientation into curricula, due in part to the fact that content on sexual orientation was primarily contributed by gay faculty and students on their own initiative. The combination of an unsafe climate and lack of curriculum content made it difficult for gay students to fully participate in social work education both as contributors and recipients. In the next section, I present data regarding the impact of faculty and students who are open about their gay male sexual orientation on social work education programs.

Impact of Openly Gay Faculty and Students

While the climate in schools of social work had the effect of suppressing awareness of same-gender sexual orientation, the presence of openly gay faculty and students promoted learning about the topic. Faculty and students who were out brought discussion of gay issues into the classroom, helped students become aware of the oppression of gay men and lesbians, and were a source of support for faculty and students.

Contributions to knowledge. Respondents indicated that faculty members who were out were the primary sources of curriculum content on same-gender sexual orientation. A recent graduate observed:

... if you didn't have gay professors, the issue would never have come up.

A professor reported that he actively advocated for the inclusion of content regarding sexual orientation in the curriculum. Another faculty member recounted that he initiated a course on gay and lesbian issues. Informants related that they integrated gay content throughout courses they taught, often through personal disclosure about their lives. A professor described how he referred to his sexual orientation in class when discussing the impact of personal differences on social work practice. He said:

... I am speaking as a gay man, speaking as a man with political concerns, I am speaking as a man also. I'm speaking as a middle class man, I'm speaking ... yeah, go through a list of things that I am, and talk about, well what does that mean then in terms of the kinds of things that I see as issues or the kinds of responses that I see as appropriate and the kinds of roles that I see for social workers ...

By coming out in class this informant made his values and experiences explicit, and illustrated how all social workers have differences which shape their approach to social work. Another faculty member reported that revealing his sexual orientation helped students become more aware of their attitudes regarding sexual orientation:

... I think it does raise their own issues around their own ... homophobia or ... at least lack of understanding of homosexuality. For many students, they have not been exposed to this before, not in a personalized sense, that is, being able to look at somebody who happens also to be a professor and to see me as a gay man.

A professor reported that he used self-disclosure to help students overcome misperceptions about gay men:

... I say I'm gay and this is the perspective that I come from, and I also say ... that I grew up in a family ... [which was] ... straight ... and that is my context, because my fear is that when you come out as gay, that all of that is never understood ... that nothing exists other than my gayness and the fact that I sleep with men. So, I contextualize that in the first class and ...

Thus, faculty and students who were out provided positive role models which countered negative stereotypes regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

Similar to the impact of gay faculty members, openly gay students promoted the inclusion of gay-related content in social work education. Student informants reported that they often acted as sources of information about same-gender sexual orientation for their non-gay peers. For instance, several respondents commented that they mentioned their male partners when opportunities arose, in order to make other students aware of the nature of same-gender relationships. Informants indicated that as students, they often raised gay-related issues in class. Several participants recalled that they had done papers on same-gender sexual orientation which at least made faculty aware of the issues. A professor commented that the presence of openly gay students led to increased discussion of gay issues in class, to the benefit of non-gay students:

... students themselves ... in class would openly say, 'by the way, I'm gay ... [and] ... I'm presenting something from the family service issues area and it's about a woman that was involved in a gay, in a lesbian relationship' ...

He reported that students also began to write papers on issues related to same-gender sexual orientation.

Contributions to understanding of oppression. Faculty informants reported that discussion of their experiences of discrimination helped students become more aware of the nature of discrimination:

... students who are straight or ... a visible minority sometimes ... become in touch with their own oppression and their own minority status as a consequence of me tuning ... them in to my own experience as a gay man, for example, in a ... heterosexual culture.

A professor described how he used disclosure of his sexual orientation to demonstrate the complexity of oppression. He told students:

... part of my commitment to doing this [coming out] reflects my status as a member of an oppressed minority ... but at the same time, part of me making the disclosure today also reflects the privilege that I have as a faculty member in a university ... it goes beyond simply making the disclosure. Part of what I do is to show the complexity of these kinds of relationships of power, that on the one hand I'm claiming status as an oppressed person yet I'm using the privilege of my position to do it ...

He thus made the point that he had privileges related to his class, race, and gender which made it safe for him to reveal his sexual orientation.

Students who were open about their same-gender sexual orientation helped to counter prejudice in schools. A professor reported that when heterosexual students expressed discomfort regarding affection between men, some gay students responded, and a positive discussion followed. Similarly, a student confronted a professor who ignored the possibility of same-gender relationships:

... I would ... say, well, I can see how this would pertain to a heterosexual couple, but I'm wondering how would we deal with gay or lesbian clients in this issue ...

Subsequently the professor used more inclusive language in class:

... At the beginning it was very much heterosexual based and heterosexual language. Now ... she does say things like ... we're dealing with a relationship here that, whether that be between a man and a woman, a man and a man, or a woman and a woman, so she's broadening her language ...

Thus, gay men had a leading role in increasing understanding issues of oppression among faculty and students.

Support for faculty and students. In addition to their direct contributions to curriculum content and awareness of oppression, openly gay faculty and students caused change within schools of social work by providing support to other participants in social work education. A respondent reported that the presence of professors who

are open about their gay male sexual orientation encouraged other teachers to incorporate material on gay issues into their courses:

We have a function in keeping these issues alive and visible with the hope that eventually other people will pick up on them and introduce them within their areas of teaching ...

He indicated that he also provided consultation to colleagues:

... faculty members will come to me and ask how they can incorporate this into their course. Sometimes when they're first teaching material, they'll say would you mind coming in and talking to my class, and I say sure ... or I'll say so and so in the community would be really good ...

Out faculty and students also provided support to other gay professors and students. A faculty member commented that his feeling of safety in his school came from knowing that he was not alone:

... what really has made the difference for me is ... having some sense of other gay people around who are doing OK, having the network around of other people you can speak to, and go to lunch with and have a coffee with ...

He also contended that the presence of faculty who were openly gay made the climate safer for gay students:

... I also work on the assumption that just the fact that I am here, even if I don't know them and they don't know me, ... then [they may feel that] it must be reasonably safe and OK ...

Another respondent perceived that openly gay professors provided gay students with support:

... I think they saw me as one of them ... as a prof with whom they could identify, uh, and someone who would, you know, listen to their needs ...

He indicated that gay students sought support from gay faculty:

... I've often been approached by gay and lesbian students who have come to me to talk about their concerns they have about their own coming out, let's say, in a field practicum setting and how that ... might be looked upon, whether I should or whether I shouldn't ...

A recent graduate recounted that with the support of gay faculty, some students felt comfortable enough to come out:

... and it was with the gay professors that we had gay students that were out and on the student union ...

A student commented that when gay faculty were not open about their sexual orientation, there was a loss of positive role models and learning resources for both gay and straight faculty and students.

Student informants reported that other gay students were also a primary source of support to them during their social work education. For instance, an informant noted:

... there [were] two gay students who were on the social work student union who were out and that did make a big difference ...

Thus, the presence of high profile gay students made the climate safer for other gay students.

Summary. Openly gay faculty and students influenced change in social work education from within schools of social work. They contributed to knowledge about same-gender sexual orientation, increased awareness of oppression, and provided support to both gay and heterosexual professors and students in dealing with issues related to sexual orientation. The visibility of gay men made the climate in schools of social work safer for revelation of same-gender sexual orientation, while their silencing reduced the information available regarding diversity in sexual orientation as well as various forms of oppression.

Sources of silencing of same-gender sexual orientation issues

Social work values regarding sexuality and the family. Respondents contended that discussion of same-gender sexual orientation was suppressed within schools of social work, because social work reflects the dominant values in society, which stigmatize same-gender sexuality. A professor commented:

... my impression of social work is that it's very mainstream ...to a large extent, social work practice and thinking depends on where the state is at the time ...

This perception was supported by a recent MSW graduate, who stated:

... I think it is a real need of professional training to open up to alternatives because we're too focused on what we perceive as typical, which is really white, anglo-saxon, straight.

Some respondents argued that discourse about same-gender sexual orientation is suppressed within social work education, because it challenges traditional values

regarding sexuality and the family. Research participants commented that there was discomfort about discussing any form of sexuality within social work education. A man who graduated in 1991 perceived a fear of dealing with sexuality in his school:

... there is a sex phobia, and it's an enormous sex phobia in our faculties and amongst the students.

Informants surmised that if the participants in social work education were reluctant to explore issues of sexuality in general, they were even less open to discussion of same-gender sexual orientation.

A social worker with experience in services for both children and adults commented:

... it might be [that] one of the causes of homophobia within the social work profession is this underlying issue around values of the family, and seeing gays as a threat to that.

Respondents perceived that the emphasis in social work education was on traditional families. A student reported that the administrator of his school of social work stated this value explicitly:

... the dean ... was very adamant ... that family serves as the core, family courses serve at the core for social work...

An informant linked schools' conservative values regarding sexuality and the family to the personnel needs of social agencies:

... a lot of the social workers ... [find] jobs in very traditional agencies ... I think there's also this fear that if [schools of social work] publicize and

advertise for gays and lesbians, then [they are] saying to society that [they] condone what is perceived to be unacceptable ... and the mere fact that [schools of social work] push the clinical aspect of social work, the [graduates] will be counselling families and children ... I'm not sure that [schools of social work] would want to be seen as espousing these values, or encouraging teaching more homosexuals to go out to ... impart this kind of knowledge. So basically, I think that they would not want to be seen as perpetuating what is perceived by society to be unacceptable behaviour ...

These data suggested that dominant values regarding sexuality and the family were reflected in the policies and programs of social work education.

Policies of professional social work organizations. Respondents identified two bodies which shape social work education, the Canadian Association of Social Work (CASW) and the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW). A professor asserted that professional social work ethics required social workers "to understand sexuality in all its diversity." Another faculty member argued that the CASSW accreditation standards made no specific requirements regarding professional education regarding same-gender sexual orientation:

... it's a very vague statement that really says nothing

that schools of social work should address a number of social issues ...

He noted that the standards could be interpreted to mean that content regarding sexual orientation must be included, because gay people are part of the community.

However, a professor contended that the standards were not effectively implemented:

.. to relate to your community, basically that's the strongest statement that's made. So if you live in an urban community, you should be related to these variety of issues ... there are real questions we can raise about these general standards, but do we actually follow them?

These respondents noted that the regulatory bodies of social work and social work education addressed issues of sexuality in general, but did not include specific policies related to same-gender sexual orientation.

Policies of schools of social work. Respondents argued that the lack of policies to counter discrimination against gay men and lesbians on university campuses in general, and within schools of social work in particular, contributed to the suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation within social work education. Informants perceived that schools of social work are not committed to eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation. A faculty member contended:

... I don't think that we've taken a stand in terms of social work education that heterosexism is on the same level as racism and patriarchy and all these kinds of things that are much more clearly defined as being something social work has to confront.

Despite anti-discrimination programs in some universities, an MSW student expressed lack of confidence in their effectiveness:

... they're token statements ... when it comes right down to it, they're useless.

Thus, part of the reluctance to reveal same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work was due to the perception of vulnerability to discrimination.

There was disagreement among respondents as to whether schools of social work were welcoming to gay men and lesbians. Some respondents felt that schools gave preference to members of minority groups and that this policy was extended to gay men and lesbians. A professor argued that indication of same-gender sexual orientation strengthened an application for admission since there was a preference for minority students:

... I've always worked on the assumption ... that ... it is an advantage if you're upfront and ... claim minority status ... as a white, middle class man, I think you're often perceived to be less desirable than someone who came in ... with some experience themselves of some sort of disadvantage, and so I've never been particularly worried about how my being gay would be ... dealt with by other people ...

A student also believed that his school's policy of encouraging diversity of interests among students meant that his interest in gay issues was an asset when he applied. However, another respondent who carefully avoided revealing his sexual orientation when he applied for admission, noted that schools of social work have not made statements affirming acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation:

... they don't publish acceptance or encourage gays and lesbians to apply.

In the absence of statements to the contrary, many research participants assumed schools of social work were as prejudiced as other social institutions.

Decision-making processes. Respondents also related suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation to the manner in which power is exercised within schools of social work. A respondent perceived that gay faculty who are open about their sexual orientation were disempowered within schools. He contended such faculty members were excluded from decision-making in his school:

... we [gay faculty] often felt that when it came to sometimes making certain decisions, that we were excluded from the informal part [of the decision-making process], but very much involved in the formal, and that sometimes when we were in the [faculty] meetings, we would feel that the decisions had already been made, but knowing full well that [we] would not have agreed to it.

This situation left gay faculty members feeling powerless and marginalized.

Summary. Informants perceived that social work education has incorporated the dominant values regarding sexuality and family life which preclude acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation. They believed that these values have been propagated through the policies of the professional bodies which influence social work education and through the policies, programs, and decision making procedures of individual schools of social work.

Recommendations

University policies. Informants recommended the development of general university policies which would counter anti-gay discrimination on campus. A faculty member stated:

I think there needs to be institutional university policy that is supportive of gay and lesbian rights, so that ... policies ... are institutionalized that prevent discrimination ...

In addition to the prohibition of discrimination, a student advocated official recognition and acceptance of differences of sexual orientation:

... the president standing up there and saying ... we respect all groups and we know that diversity is a strength for us and if there are people of minority status, whether that be racial minorities or due to sexual orientation ... we want you to know ... that this will be a comfortable environment where you will be respected and you will be comfortable being yourself ...

Respondents felt that such a policy would make the university climate more comfortable for faculty and students in schools of social work.

Accreditation standards. Research participants also recommended changes in the policies of the body which accredits Canadian schools of social work. Respondents contended that when issues of sexual orientation are dealt with in schools due only to pressure from gay faculty and students, the changes are not universal and permanent, because the structures of social work education have not been altered. In

order to ensure the systematic inclusion of content regarding same-gender sexual orientation in social work education programs, informants recommended that the CASSW accreditation standards be amended to require training regarding same gender sexual orientation and heterosexism.

Policies of schools of social work. A social worker experienced in incorporating issues related to sexual orientation into educational systems recommended that schools of social work develop internal policies which support gay faculty and students:

... the social work department [should] make a statement saying that lesbians and gays as social workers are just as much valued as heterosexual social workers, lesbian and gay professors are just as valued ... and that nothing is going to be tolerated in that particular department which is going to be defined as prejudice against lesbian and gay teachers and social workers ...

A social worker whose practice involves advocacy for minorities suggested development of a systematic program to counter discrimination related to sexual orientation:

... something like an equity program where they focus on removing inequities or barriers facing gays and lesbians. I think it also helps if people know that there is an emphasis.

A professor felt that such measures would provide a means of holding schools accountable for creating a safe and comfortable climate for gay people.

Faculty recruitment and development. Respondents perceived that faculty have a leadership role in the creation of a safe climate in schools of social work. A social worker asserted:

... safety has to come from the faculty, has to come from their modelling behaviour, and their willingness to take issue with the unsafe practices of their professional peers and the students.

Therefore, this participant emphasized that it was important that professors be knowledgeable and accepting of same-gender sexual orientation. Informants believed that this could be achieved by having openly gay faculty on staff and by providing training to heterosexual faculty. Respondents recommended that schools support existing faculty in revealing their same-gender sexual orientation and appoint more openly gay professors. Research participants advocated provision of faculty training with respect to knowledge and attitudes concerning sexual orientation, and methods of teaching gay-related material.

The data showed that the nature of the faculty-student relationship influenced students' sense that it is safe to discuss same-gender sexual orientation. A professor observed that students were uncomfortable when he offered to share information about his life in a class on sexual orientation because of the element of authority in the teacher-student relationship:

... it was very difficult for students to ask the questions they might have asked because of uncertainty about how to handle this sort of a professor/student boundary. It had nothing, in some ways, to do with gay issues as much as

about 'do we ask a professor personal questions, do I ask a question that might offend him?' ...

He advocated faculty developing a teaching style that encourages students to be more relaxed in interacting with professors.

Student recruitment, admission, and support. The data indicated that the climate with respect to same-gender sexual orientation was also influenced by the visibility of gay students and the attitudes of heterosexual students. A respondent advocated a gay-positive student recruitment program:

... because people who know that they're welcome to apply ... make the environment such that people would feel comfortable talking about their sexuality and studying it ...

This informant recommended adopting an educational equity approach which includes diversity with respect to sexual orientation:

... ensuring that you advertise, letting the population know, all the communities know that, hey, you do have a program where you want to see more diversity, including gays and lesbians. To me that is a big plus, from my experience here, I mean it can work, and if people know that, they're comfortable to apply.

Based on the attitudes expressed by some students regarding same-gender relationships, a professor recommended reviewing the criteria for admission to schools of social work:

... we ... don't look at what their values are, what they stand for. It's too bad we don't have interviews any more. That allows us to look at who they are.

Respondents urged that applicants be interviewed to assess their attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

Core curriculum. Informants recommended that a goal of the core curriculum should be to prepare students to work effectively with clients who are different than they are. They argued that this could be achieved by the adoption of a curriculum framework which implements a policy of acceptance and support for all forms of diversity, including sexual orientation. Participants advocated that content on same-gender sexual orientation be systematically integrated throughout the core curriculum rather than isolated in specialized elective courses. A social worker asserted:

... I think they really ... need to include in the courses issues on gender and sexual orientation ... it should not be optional ... it has to be in the core, it has to be integrated throughout the program.

Respondents emphasized the need to sensitize social workers to the presence of gay clients on caseloads. A young client recommended:

... just generally educate social work students about ... the fact that there are gay kids out there ... and they're gonna be invisible for the most part and you have to assume that they're there and you have to welcome them and make your program or your service available to them ...

In order to reach this goal, the respondents identified a number of objectives for the core curriculum.

One objective was that the core curriculum address the commonalities in oppression based on race, gender, social class, as well as sexual orientation. They suggested that core courses include an examination of how homophobia develops in the individual. As well, research participants encouraged use of exercises to sensitize students to the impact of anti-gay discrimination. For instance, an experienced social worker noted that some gay people, who have internalized negative values regarding same-gender sexual orientation, experience:

... guilt and shame and low self-esteem and anxiety, and all the kinds of things that relate to the feelings that you grow up with and that are reinforced in the society about being lesbian and about being gay ...

A professor recommended a focus on how heterosexism influences individual development and relationships with individuals and the community. A student advocated examining how patriarchal values affect gender roles for both gay and straight men. Other informants suggested that the implications of heterosexism for family and other social policies be examined in social policy courses.

A second objective identified was that the core curriculum provide training regarding values and ethical issues related to same-gender sexual orientation which is based on the professional code of ethics. Respondents recommended that core courses have a goal of increasing students' awareness of their values regarding sexuality in general, and same-gender sexual orientation specifically. A social worker who works

with racial minority youth emphasized that it was important that students be helped to recognize differences rather than deny them:

... it's the same kind of thing as people who say they're colour blind, trying to sound very liberal and open ... that's like making everybody white. Everybody's not white, everybody's not straight.

A respondent urged that the goal of content regarding values be:

..real acceptance, not just sort of superficial acceptance, not just sort of superficial putting up with ... respect and acceptance ...

Respondents asserted that social work students should become aware of their own feelings regarding differences in sexuality. A recent BSW graduate suggested asking students:

...what is your own attitude, how did you learn that attitude and how does that show when you're with clients?

A professor held that in order for heterosexual social workers to be able to talk about sexuality with gay clients, they need to become aware of and accept their own sexual needs:

...it's a process and I think it has to begin with that nice white twenty-five year old female social worker addressing her own sexuality, her own fantasies, her own desires, and what is repressed within her before she can get into that specific of a discussion with the gay male ...

A social worker recommended that students be helped to recognize when their attitudes regarding same-gender orientation necessitate referral of a client to another

worker who is better able to work with gay issues:

... not everybody has to be comfortable with the issue, but at least know where your biases are and make your referral.

A third objective respondents identified was the integration of more content regarding sexuality in general, and same-gender sexual orientation in particular, into the core curriculum. A faculty member remarked:

... the schools have to start and identify this whole issue of sexuality as being a major priority for working with families, because whether you're a high school kid or ... you're twenty one or forty one ... [sexuality can be an issue].

A teenaged client asserted that one method of countering the stigmatization of gay people was to provide accurate information about same-gender sexual orientation. Respondents felt that same-gender sexual orientation should be discussed in the context of the development of sexuality in the individual rather than being marginalized. An MSW student advised:

... make it clear in that course that you would be dealing with issues of sexual orientation too and how that fits into the full spectrum, it's not something that's sort of off the wall ...

Informants advocated the discussion of theories and research regarding factors which influence sexual orientation. They advised an emphasis on the similarities in the sexual and emotional needs and behaviours of gay men, lesbians, and heterosexuals. A professor commented:

... I don't believe that there's much difference between straight and gay people, especially at the level of physicality and what drives us to need to express ourselves in a sexual way and what we look for, whether in relationships or fun ...

However, respondents also stipulated that students should be made aware that there are some differences in how gay men express their sexuality. A social worker noted that:

... [gay sexuality] was so repressed and so secretive ... that it kind of formed into its own little subculture with its own set of rules ...

An informant pointed out that gay men sometimes use sexuality to rebel and test limits, and for some, aspects of the oppression of gay male sexuality have been eroticized. He noted that some gay men need to be helped to feel good about sex because of their internalized homophobia.

Respondents also felt that information on gay identity development should be included in the curriculum. A young client suggested that information about the difficulties in coming out be included:

... [social work students] should at least have some material on the dilemmas and the things we go through as we're struggling to identify ourselves and to really come to terms with who we are ...

A faculty member cautioned that it is important to indicate that there is diversity in the degree to which men identify as gay and participate in same-gender sexual behaviour:

... I suggest that people need to understand there's such a thing as a gay identity and that there are gay men who identify in a cultural, in a psychic and

a social way with being gay, and then there's gay practice, where men have sex with men but they don't see themselves within that cultural way. And that involves straight men, it could involve bisexuals ...

A fourth curriculum objective respondents identified was to teach students how to apply knowledge related to same-gender sexual orientation in social work practice. They advised that the assessment models which are presented should be open to diversity with respect to sexual orientation. Informants recommended that attention be paid to families which include gay members. A professor advocated inclusion of content on:

... the nature of family relationships and the nature of families itself, and the nature of monogamy and couples ...

A client suggested that there is a need for content regarding how same-gender relationships differ from heterosexual relationships:

... I think there is probably a little bit of a difference .. between two gay men and say, a straight man and a woman. Certainly there's confusion about the roles. The two roles [in a gay relationship] could be more equitable, and at least in mainstream society there is a kind of code of conduct which may be changing, but at least there [are] centuries of socialization, where with us it's perhaps a little different.

For instance, another client noted that gay men may not expect sexual monogamy in their relationships. Another informant felt that there is a need for content about the gay courtship process. Respondents also recommended content regarding problems

which may arise in the lives of gay men and lesbians, including violence and stress due to discrimination, substance abuse, and the special needs of gay seniors. They contended that all social workers need to have knowledge of gay-positive resources and the skills to make effective referrals to these resources.

Elective courses. Respondents also identified several areas in which elective courses should be offered. A student felt that an elective regarding HIV infection should be offered since the majority of people with AIDS in Canada are gay men. Other respondents recommended the development of elective courses specifically for gay and lesbian students. A field instructor commented:

... there are more and more lesbian and gay social work students ... who are interested in specifically working with lesbians and gays and ... want to study a body of knowledge ... which is specifically designed to work with lesbians and gay clientele ...

Informants commented that the educational needs of gay students with respect to sexual orientation are different than those of heterosexual students.

Teaching methods. Respondents discussed methods of integrating content regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Most informants felt that direct contact was the most effective way of influencing students' attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation. They suggested that contact could be through inviting gay speakers into classes, presentations by gay faculty and students, as well as by field placements in

social agencies which focus on service to gay clients. Where direct contact is not possible, informants suggested the use of role-playing in order to give students a sense of the experiences of gay people. Research participants also encouraged the use of examples involving gay men in various courses.

Strategies for change. Respondents advised a multi-faceted approach to bringing about change in universities and schools of social work. With respect to change at the university level, an informant noted that his university had established an interdisciplinary committee to deal with structural and individual aspects of anti-gay discrimination on campus. In order to bring about change at the level of professional social work organizations, respondents supported the establishment of gay and lesbian caucuses within the CASW and the CASSW. They recommended that these groups work towards changes in the accreditation standards for schools of social work.

At the level of individual schools of social work, a participant, who had experience in curriculum development, advised development of comprehensive plans for gradual change in programs. He suggested that the first goal be the school's adoption of a policy of integrating gay-related material. This informant recommended beginning the change process by developing a proposal to look at social work education needs with respect to sexual orientation. He advised gaining support from local social agencies for the proposal. The respondent recommended that, subsequently, faculty be involved in redesigning the core curriculum, one course at a time. The respondent had confidence that an incremental approach was most effective

in overcoming resistance to change. Other respondents recommended using literature on sexual orientation in various courses and including such readings on course bibliographies.

Respondents encouraged gay people to take a leadership role in stimulating change within schools:

I don't know who's going to bring these things to the agenda of social work schools...if it's not gays and lesbians themselves.

Many research participants recommended the formation of gay and lesbian caucuses within schools of social work. They believed that such groups would attract gay students to the school and provide them with support. A recent graduate from a school which had such a gay caucus saw such groups as an effective method of stimulating change within schools:

... there was a gay and lesbian and bisexual caucus at the school that had a status within the ... school so that any issues that were academic or involved governance would have to be [reviewed] with the ... caucus if they related to any issues of sexuality, homophobia, heterosexism, discrimination, equity ...

This respondent held that it was important to have gay people on the committees which oversee the admission and curriculum development processes in schools. A faculty member advocated the use of pressure to achieve change:

...people are going to move because they have to, and even if it's just to shush you up, maybe they'll move a bit more than they would have otherwise.

He believed that students were most effective in pressing for change:

...what changes will happen will happen because of student demands ... whatever role we [faculty] play in helping students get together and formulate some critique of their own ... whether it's gay students or not ...

Another professor recommended that social agencies emerging within the gay community be encouraged to demand that schools prepare social workers who are competent to serve gay clients.

Summary. Research participants recommended that changes be instituted with respect to same-gender sexual orientation in the policies and programs of national professional social work organizations, universities, and individual schools of social work. Data supported initiatives to increase the number of openly gay faculty and students in schools of social work and the provision of training to both faculty members and students regarding issues related to same-gender sexual orientation. Informants advocated a systematic process of organizational change to achieve these objectives.

Supports to Change

Respondents identified a number of sources of support for change within schools of social work. An MSW student perceived that his lesbian peers were willing to join with gay men in the struggle against heterosexism, but that the support is limited:

... my lesbian friends, we talk about what are the similarities, but similarities basically are how the rest of the society perceives you and deals with you, and that's where the similarity basically ends.

Some respondents, who counted on lesbians as part of their support network within schools of social work, commented that differences sometimes arose due to the women's more radical views. Informants also commented that there were supportive heterosexual people in power positions who could facilitate changes. A social worker argued that support from non-gay participants in social work education could be sought on the basis that content on same-gender sexual orientation could help heterosexuals towards a better understanding of their sexuality. A respondent recounted how, in 1991, he received support from Black students in confronting heterosexism at his school:

... they were also quite politically active and they understood ... part of it was they were saying they were supportive of the process. They were saying 'don't not fight it, don't just let it alone because it won't do any good.'

Some participants proposed that gay and lesbian students form coalitions with other minority students in order to press for content on delivering services to members of oppressed groups.

Summary. Respondents suggested that gay men and lesbians form alliances with members of other oppressed groups, such as women and racial minorities, to

advocate for changes in social work education. They also advocated seeking support from heterosexual members of schools of social work.

Barriers to Change

Respondents identified a number of limitations in introducing change in schools of social work with respect to issues of sexual orientation. Some informants felt there was a need for more information about the attitudes of students and faculty regarding sexual orientation in order to design change strategies. A research participant feared that policies which prohibit discrimination may only suppress, rather than eliminate, prejudice.

A student argued that, although the need for training regarding cultural and racial differences has been recognized, faculty and students may resist changes learning about differences of sexual orientation. A respondent warned that inclusion of content on same-gender sexual orientation in the core curriculum could provoke resistance in the form of allegations of proselytization. Respondents noted that when content on same-gender sexual orientation was offered in elective courses, primarily those who were already interested and supportive took the courses. Informants attributed this lack of motivation for learning about same-gender sexual orientation to the fact that gay clients are largely invisible and are not exerting demands for service on agencies. A professor related some students' resistance to reluctance to deal with the complexity which diversity in sexual orientation introduces into the understanding of human relationships.

A faculty member commented that the predominantly passive nature of resistance to incorporation of sexual orientation issues into social work education makes it difficult to confront. For instance, professors reported that when gay faculty or students take the lead in introducing gay related content, heterosexual faculty feel they have no responsibility for dealing with these issues. Other respondents suggested that professors resist incorporating content regarding same-gender sexual orientation into their courses because of the already existing pressure to accommodate various minority differences within limited course time. A professor commented:

I think people resist because they realize that there has to be some space made and people are tired of making space.

A student noted that a difficulty in maintaining pressure for change was the lack of continuity in the student body due to admissions and graduations. Another barrier to implementing change identified by respondents was that schools lack connections to gay community organizations. A professor commented that since many strategies for bringing about change are based on the participation of openly gay faculty and students, a barrier was that some gay men do not wish to be open about their personal lives.

Summary. Barriers identified regarding change in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation were lack of interest by faculty and students, difficulty in incorporating additional content in the curriculum, and the transitory nature of the student population. The absence of links between schools of social work

and gay communities, and a lack of active support from some gay faculty members were also mentioned.

Findings from Documents

University policies. I reviewed the university calendars of schools of social work which respondents were associated with. The majority of these documents contained a statement proscribing discrimination as defined by their provincial human rights codes. Many also prohibited sexual harassment, although most did not identify abuse related to sexual orientation. Two of the universities referred specifically to sexual orientation in their anti-harassment statements.

I also examined a document which reflected the policies of a provincial government regarding harassment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The Framework Regarding Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination in Ontario Universities (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993) proposes guidelines for the development of anti-harassment and discrimination policies and procedures in provincial universities. Consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code (Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, 1990), the framework prohibits harassment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. It also suggests that universities adopt policies to protect faculty, staff, and students from harassment and discrimination, and to counter the existence of a negative campus environment and systemic discrimination in relation to sexual orientation. During the development of this document, the Ministry of Education and Training asked for feedback regarding

the proposals. However, the universities made no comments on the provisions related to sexual orientation (K. Wheeler, personal communication, February 9, 1994).

Social work code of ethics. I reviewed the Code of Ethics (CASW, 1983), which was in effect during the data gathering phase of this study, and the current Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994). Both documents prohibited social workers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. The Code of Ethics (CASW, 1983) identified a limited responsibility on the part of social workers to take "reasonable actions to prevent and eliminate discrimination against any person or group on the basis of ... sexual orientation ... " (p. 8). The wording of this clause suggests that the responsibility of social workers in relation to preventing and eliminating discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and other grounds is limited and open to individual interpretation. For instance, would it be reasonable to ignore anti-gay discrimination if taking action would threaten one's employment or relationship with colleagues? In addition, the placement of this responsibility at the end of the document suggests its low priority. The Social Work Code of Ethics (CASW, 1994) does not include even this weak reference to sexual orientation. It simply identifies a social worker's responsibility to "identify, document and advocate for the elimination of discrimination" (CASW, 1994, p. 24), making no reference to specific types of discrimination. This responsibility is described as a "... desirable goal[s] ..." (CASW, 1994, p. 8) rather than an ethical obligation, a breach of which

could be the basis of discipline. Neither document specified any other professional responsibilities in relation to issues of sexual orientation.

Accreditation standards. I examined the Manual of standards and procedures for accreditation of Canadian programs of social work education (CASSW, 1992). This document prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the hiring and promotion of faculty, the admission of students, and in field placements. The only other reference to sexual orientation is found in the accreditation standards for MSW programs which state:

The curriculum shall reflect social work values that promote a professional commitment to: optimize the dignity and potential of all people, regardless of race, colour, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnic or linguistic origin, physical status, political orientation, or socio-economic status ... (CASSW, 1992, Appendix E, 2.3)

This standard does not stipulate the inclusion of content regarding sexual orientation. In contrast, the manual requires specific policies and procedures regarding women, racial and cultural minorities, and aboriginal peoples with respect to all aspects of social work education.

Policies and programs of individual schools of social work. I reviewed the Description of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work and Directory of Programmes in CASSW Accredited Schools, Faculties and Departments of Social

Work in Canada (CASSW, 1993). The document identifies the existence of a Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Caucus of the CASSW. In contrast to the members of other CASSW committees and caucuses, 10 of the 14 members of the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Caucus withheld their names from publication. I also read the brief descriptions of the programs of each school of social work and their requirements for student admission. One school identified that its curriculum included an analysis of heterosexism along with other forms of oppression. Another school included gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in the groups it incorporated in its educational equity program for student admission.

I also examined the university calendar descriptions of the programs of schools which respondents were associated with. I found that most of the schools identified a commitment to providing training with respect to minorities, specifying women, racial and cultural minorities, and aboriginal peoples. None included gay men, lesbians or bisexuals in their statements. Although most schools offered a course on human sexuality, only one had a course entitled "Gender and sexuality, gay and lesbian identities." Two schools had courses which referred to oppressed sexual groups.

Summary. There is little reference to same-gender sexual orientation in documents related to social work education. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is prohibited. However, in contrast to other minority groups, there are no requirements that schools ensure equity in the treatment of gay and lesbian faculty and students, or include content on same-gender sexual orientation in the curriculum. This

silence with respect to sexual orientation is reflected in the programs of individual schools, which rarely make reference to gay-related issues.

Chapter Summary

Respondents reported limited overt discrimination related to sexual orientation within schools of social work. More commonly, they experienced subtle and indirect pressures to conceal their sexual orientation and avoid discussion of gay issues. Consequences of this climate were that there were few members of schools of social work who were open about their same-gender sexual orientation, and there was a lack of discussion regarding gay and lesbian issues among faculty and students and in course content. Gay faculty and students who were open about their sexual orientation influenced the climate and curriculum content in schools to include discussion of gay-related issues. Informants attributed the suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation to social work values regarding the family and sexuality, as well as to social work education policies and programs. Respondents recommended measures to make the climate in schools of social work more accepting of gay men and lesbians and systematic integration of content related to same-gender sexual orientation into curricula. Respondents' experiences were consistent with data from documents related to social work education. Canadian social work education policies proscribed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but did not require programs to address sexual orientation. These policies were reflected in the lack of attention to same-gender sexual orientation in individual schools of social work.

Chapter 6. DISCUSSION

In this chapter I review the major findings of the study, and compare them with the outcomes of other investigations. Next I relate the findings to the theoretical framework which guided the inquiry, showing the value of the data in understanding how issues related to same-gender sexual orientation are excluded and marginalized within schools of social work. I then discuss the implications of the findings for change in social work education and directions for future research. Subsequently, I evaluate the effectiveness of the research strategies I used in conducting this study and conclude with a reflection on my personal experiences throughout the research process. In essence, I show that the culture in schools of social work is shaped by an ideology of heterosexism, which is socially organized by social work education policies as well as the behaviour of faculty and students.

Review of Findings

Exclusion and marginalization of issues regarding same-gender sexual orientation. The informants identified the silencing of discourse about same-gender sexual orientation within social work education as their main concern. The data suggest that there are two aspects to this suppression, the social climate in schools of social work, which discourages faculty and students from revealing and discussing same-gender orientation, and the lack of curriculum content regarding sexual orientation. The respondents reported that there are few faculty members or students

who are open about their same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work. They also described a lack of curriculum content which would prepare students to effectively help clients deal with issues related to sexual orientation. Informants contended that the low priority accorded sexual orientation was indicated by the inclusion of content on this topic primarily in a few elective courses, which reinforces the marginalization of the topic.

Climate in schools of social work. Respondents perceived the climate in schools of social work to be discouraging and, in some ways, unsafe, for the acknowledgement and discussion of same-gender sexual orientation. The first factor identified by informants in the creation of a threatening atmosphere was passivity on the part of schools in countering the dominant heterosexism which pervades society in general, including universities and schools of social work. Participants described a lack of social work education policies and programs which recognize same-gender sexual orientation as a valid expression of human sexuality and effectively protect gay men and lesbians from discrimination within schools. Informants believed that social work education does not give the eradication of anti-gay discrimination the same priority it accords to fighting sexism and racism. They attributed this lack of concern to the belief of some participants in social work education that gay men and lesbians are not legitimate oppressed minorities because they have choice about whether they are visible. The result is that gay men feel marginalized, and vulnerable to

discrimination should they acknowledge their sexual orientation or discuss gay and lesbian issues.

The second factor informants identified as contributing to a sense of risk within schools of social work was their perception that career and academic success could be compromised by revealing same-gender sexual orientation or by focusing on gay related issues in teaching and research. Respondents perceived that some professors conceal their same-gender sexual orientation and do not advocate for program changes related to sexual orientation, because they fear a negative impact on their ability to obtain faculty appointments and career advancement. As well, some gay students avoid revealing their sexual orientation or exploring gay-related issues in their studies, because they are unsure of the attitudes of faculty who have the authority to admit applicants to schools and to evaluate their work. These fears are related to a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of university anti-discrimination programs in protecting gay men and lesbians.

The third factor described as producing an unsafe environment was the behaviour of faculty and students. Some professors and students make overtly prejudiced comments in class, resist consideration of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in course content, and disapprove of research in the area. The experiences described by informants suggest that most faculty and students tolerate gay men but do not actively support gay-related issues. Respondents contended that some faculty and students harbour negative attitudes regarding same-gender sexual orientation, which they do not openly express because of their professional

socialization, which discourages disapproval of value differences. Rather, it appears that faculty and students express their negative attitudes indirectly. For example, informants' experiences indicate that faculty and students are less concerned about oppression based on sexual orientation than that based on race or gender. In fact, respondents described students' fears of being identified with gay men and lesbians because of the stigma attached to same-gender sexual orientation. Informants reported that faculty and students lack knowledge about same-gender sexual orientation, are uncomfortable when it arises in classes, and do not acknowledge the need to become informed about it.

To recap, the climate in schools of social work is characterized by lack of commitment to reduce the disempowerment of gay men and the marginalization of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation, and to increase the acceptance and support for those who acknowledge their same-gender sexual orientation. This pattern of passive resistance regarding same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work has a number of consequences. Because of the lack of genuine acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation within schools, many men conceal their same-sex sexual orientation and are isolated from other gay men and lesbians in their schools. Another result of the silencing of gay men is that they do not share their knowledge regarding same-gender sexual orientation with other faculty and students. Thus, the climate in schools of social work contributes to the lack of discussion of same-gender sexual orientation.

Curriculum. The oppressive climate in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation is reflected in social work curricula. There is little evidence of curriculum content regarding same-gender sexual orientation. There are two criticisms of the material which is included: it does not adequately prepare students to work with gay and lesbian clients and it is not systematically integrated into the core curriculum. Rather, content about same-gender sexual orientation is presented in elective courses which the majority of students do not take or is incorporated on an ad hoc basis by gay and lesbian professors and students.

Respondents related these weaknesses to a lack of interest on the part of faculty and students, professors' fear of being stigmatized for including gay related content, and the use of "generic" curriculum frameworks which do not focus on differences. Informants contended that the suppression of content on same-gender sexual orientation is facilitated by the silencing of gay and lesbian professors and students. Gay and lesbian faculty and students who are "out" advocate for inclusion of content in the curriculum, contribute to the discourse in class and papers, and provide consultation and support to faculty and students in dealing with this material. Similar to the way in which the climate in schools of social work silences gay men, the curriculum generally omits content on same-gender sexual orientation. Furthermore, when gay related content is included, it is marginalized and presented in an unsystematic manner.

Determinants of the exclusion and marginalization of issues regarding same-gender sexual orientation. The data suggest that the silencing of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work is related to the social organization of social work education. These social relations reflect the values which guide social work, which are those of the dominant groups in society. These values include traditional mores regarding the family and sexuality which conflict with acceptance of same-gender sexual orientation. Respondents linked the silence regarding same-gender sexual orientation to the fact that the graduates of schools of social work are hired by social agencies, most of which provide services to families and children. Respondents believe that schools of social work do not want to be seen as supportive of same-gender sexual orientation, because to do so may be perceived as incompatible with the mission of social agencies.

Respondents identified the professional code of ethics (CASW, 1983 & 1994) and the accreditation standards for schools of social work (CASSW, 1992) as documents which set out the values of the profession and guide the provision of social work education in Canada. They noted that the accreditation standards do not require the inclusion of training regarding same-gender sexual orientation. A review of these documents, as well as others which describe and influence the programs of schools of social work, revealed a pattern of exclusion of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation which is consistent with the marginalization respondents experienced.

Summary. The findings of this study reveal that, from the standpoint of gay men, issues regarding same-gender sexual orientation are for the most part, excluded from the discourse within social work education. The properties of social work education which contribute to this silencing are a threatening climate in schools of social work for public discussion of same-gender sexual orientation and inadequate curriculum content on the topic. An examination of documents related to social work education reveal that the unsupportive climate and deficient curriculum are consistent with the values expressed in official texts which shape social work education.

Comparison of Findings with Other Literature

As described earlier, I was able to locate few investigations of social work training and same-gender sexual orientation (Cullen, 1994; Humphreys, 1983; Weiner, 1989). However, the findings of the current study are consistent with, and add to those of previous studies. It appears that there has been little change in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation over the last 10 years.

Humphreys (1983) found the majority of faculty members to be either accepting or neutral with respect to issues of same-gender sexual orientation, while a sizable minority were more negative. This result is consistent with my findings of tolerance and passive resistance on the part of most faculty members regarding gay issues, and open opposition by a few professors. With respect to curricula, my findings are similar to those of Humphreys' in that gay-related content was not systematically integrated into core curricula.

The current findings reveal that the limitations of social work education with regard to same-gender sexual orientation are the result of a more complex process than individual prejudice. Rather than focusing on the attitudes of faculty members, as did Humphreys (1983), my study also points out the roles of educational policy and of other participants and stakeholders in social work education, in limiting training about gay issues. The results also suggest that the lack of discussion of same-gender sexual orientation is related to discomfort with human sexuality, in general, within social work education. In addition to identifying the need for the integration of adequate content on same-gender sexual orientation throughout the curriculum, my findings establish the need for changes in social work educational policies and programs.

Another study relevant to social work education and same-gender sexual orientation is that of Weiner (1989), who measured the attitudes of BSW students towards gay men and lesbians. She also investigated the amount of training received regarding same-gender sexual orientation and its impact on attitudes and skills. Weiner's findings agree with those of my study. I found that, in the eyes of the respondents, students tolerate gay men, most being neither overtly hostile nor supportive. I also found a similar pattern as Weiner with respect to attitudes towards other minorities, in that both studies pointed to more positive attitudes towards women and racial minorities than towards gay men and lesbians. Similar to Weiner, I found evidence of pressure on gay students and professors to conceal their sexual orientation.

The lack of relationship Weiner (1989) found between the amount of curriculum content and more positive attitudes and social work skills supports the need

for intervention at several levels of social work education. Weiner argued that individuals who are not extremely prejudiced can be influenced by the environment to act in a non-discriminatory manner. This contention supports my finding that priority should be given to policy and program changes to make the climate in schools of social work more accepting of same-gender sexual orientation and to prohibit anti-gay discrimination. For instance, procedures should be adopted to avoid admission of highly prejudiced applicants to schools of social work.

Similar to Weiner, I found evidence that many students lacked understanding of same-gender sexual orientation and that social work training does not prepare students to work effectively with gay and lesbian clients. My research extends Weiner's findings by identifying useful curriculum content and strategies for its presentation.

It is interesting to consider Cullen's (1994) study together with mine in light of the literature regarding the university climate related to same-gender sexual orientation. Cullen found that the attitudes of current social work students in Ontario were overwhelmingly positive regarding gay men and lesbians. However, the respondents in my inquiry, who were mostly from the same schools as those in Cullen's (1994) study, described quite negative, though often indirectly expressed, student attitudes. Taken together, these two studies present a picture of positive attitudes and negative behaviours in relation to same-gender sexual orientation on the part of Ontario social work students.

This pattern is similar to that found by Norris (1991) in an American college. Norris (1991) explained the contradiction as a struggle between idealistic support for

human rights and adherence to orthodox values regarding sexuality. My findings suggest that a similar struggle exists within Canadian schools of social work. Given the profession's commitment to helping the oppressed, while at the same time supporting traditional social institutions, social work education proscribes discrimination against gay men and lesbians, but suppresses discourse about same-gender sexual orientation as a legitimate expression of sexuality. The respondents in my study were well aware of the covert negative values held by their peers regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Thus, consistent with D'Augelli's (1989b) findings that gay and lesbian students keep a low profile due to the hostile campus climate, few gay men reveal their sexual orientation within schools of social work.

It is also interesting to compare my findings with those of the Task Force on Multicultural and Multiracial Issues in Social Work Education (1991) of the CASSW. The exclusion and marginalization of issues regarding racial and ethnic minority issues in the discourse within schools of social work which that investigation documented is similar to that which this study reveals. The recommendations of the Task Force for comprehensive change in social work education with respect to ethnocultural minority issues are similar to those which respondents in my study put forth with respect to sexual orientation. Both studies advocate structural change, beginning with revision of the accreditation standards for Canadian schools of social work. The need for such a change is further supported by the fact that American social work education policies have recently been amended to require inclusion of curriculum content on same gender sexual orientation (CSWE, 1992).

Summary. The major themes in the literature and the present study are similar: issues of same-gender sexual orientation are silenced within social work education by the climate in schools of social work which discourages discussion of gay issues and by the curriculum which largely ignores the issue. The present findings add new insights into how discussion of same-gender sexual orientation is stifled in social work education.

Findings in Relation to Theoretical Framework

The perception of heterosexism in social work education from the standpoint of gay men. The finding that issues related to same-gender sexual orientation are excluded from, and marginalized in, social work education discourse and the discovery of how this occurs were made possible by conducting the study from the standpoint of gay men. In carrying out this investigation, I used Smith's (1987) ideas regarding the domination of social institutions by the ruling classes, in particular, white heterosexual men. Smith advocates conducting research from the standpoint of members of marginalized groups, to reveal the hidden subtexts, or ideologies, which are expressed in social relations which oppress those in the non-dominant classes. The findings of this study reveal that from the standpoint of gay men, there is an ideology of heterosexism operating within social work education.

As I indicated earlier, Neisen (1990) defines heterosexism as "the continued promotion by the major institutions of society of a heterosexual lifestyle while simultaneously subordinating any other lifestyles (i.e., gay/lesbian/bisexual)" (p. 25).

Neisen (1990) argues that heterosexism occurs when "... institutions knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate these prejudices and intentionally or unintentionally act on them ... " (p. 25). The data I gathered are consistent with this definition of heterosexism in that they point to the systematic suppression and marginalization of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation within schools of social work. Similar to the hidden "gender subtext" in social institutions by which women are oppressed (Smith, 1987), the existence in social work education of a hidden "sexual orientation subtext" which presents heterosexuality as the norm has previously been largely unrecognized.

Consistent with Smith's (1987) argument that research about the oppression of minorities should be based on their experiences within institutions, the data revealed two aspects of social work education which merited further investigation: the climate in schools of social in relation to same-gender sexual orientation and the curriculum. Based on the respondents experiences, I formulated two problematics regarding social work education:

1. How is the climate in schools of social work organized to discourage open discussion regarding same-gender sexual orientation?
2. How are curricula in schools of social work organized to allow the omission and marginalization of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation?

As described in Chapter 4, I focused on these questions in investigating the determinants of the suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work.

Determinants of heterosexism in social work education. The data exposed several factors which influence the climate in schools of social work. With respect to gay faculty and students, the perception of an unsafe climate is related to the stigmatization of same-gender sexual orientation which occurs throughout our society in general, and universities in particular, the direct expression of anti-gay prejudice by some students and faculty, limited tolerance and support from colleagues, non-disclosure of same-gender sexual orientation by faculty and students, and fear of discrimination with respect to career and academic progress. These factors are related to the lack of school policies affirming respect for gay men and lesbians, and of effective protection against discrimination. This deficiency in the policies of individual schools is linked to the absence of accreditation standards requiring inclusion of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in the policies and programs of schools of social work.

The data also revealed how content regarding same-gender sexual orientation is excluded and marginalized in curricula. This deficiency is related to the lack of knowledge regarding same-gender sexual orientation on the part of faculty members, disinterest and resistance on the part of both faculty and students, lack of concern about oppression based on sexual orientation, and the structure of curricula. Again, deficiencies in the curricula of individual schools can be traced to the policies of individual schools, which are regulated by the accreditation standards.

Influence of texts. Smith (1987) argues that oppression is organized at disparate local sites by texts. My analysis points to two texts as playing central roles in organizing the suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work across Canada. The accreditation standards (CASSW, 1992) require schools to "... infuse social work values and ethics into the curriculum ..." (p.1). These values are expressed in official statements of the CASW. My analysis of official statements regarding social work ethics (CASW, 1983 & 1994) reveals that these documents prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but do not oblige social workers to take any action to counter such discrimination.

The pattern of prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but omission of gay and lesbian issues otherwise, which is found in the ethical codes (CASW, 1983 & 1994), is reflected in the accreditation standards (CASSW, 1992). Although the latter document prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, it does not require systematic inclusion of sexual orientation issues throughout the policies and programs of schools of social work, although it does with respect to issues of gender, race, and culture. This finding is consistent with Smith's (1987) contention that the social organization of oppression is recursive, shaping all levels of the system. My data show that omission and marginalization of issues of same-gender sexual orientation occur in texts and social relations at all levels of social work education, from interactions between students and faculty, to the policies and programs of individual schools, to the national accreditation standards

This study supports Smith's (1987) understanding of oppression as a complex, textually mediated process. The prohibition of discrimination, but omission of any obligation to take action with reference to sexual orientation, helps to maintain the ideology of heterosexism in social work education. Schools of social work are not obliged to provide effective protection from anti-gay discrimination, nor are they required to actively expose and counter the complex, hidden web of social relations in the climate and curriculum which promote heterosexuality and suppress same-gender sexual orientation. There is no requirement for the development of policies or programs which would recognize same-gender sexual orientation as a valid expression of human sexuality. However, by prohibiting discrimination, the accreditation standards create the appearance of acceptance of gay men and lesbians in social work education and avert criticism for lack of policies and programs which address same-gender sexual orientation. Therefore, the ideology of heterosexism is not challenged. Consistent with Smith's (1987) views on the role of texts in implementing ideology, the accreditation standards participate in the social relations which result in the silencing of discussion regarding same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work across Canada.

These findings support Smith's assertions regarding the processes by which the dominant classes exert control over less powerful groups. Moreover, they confirm her theory that oppressive ideologies can be uncovered by conducting research from the standpoint of marginalized people. The study demonstrates that standpoint theory can be applied to groups other than women. This investigation also shows the value of

standpoint analysis in directing the focus of investigation beyond common-sense speculative explanations of oppression to its hidden, ideological determinants.

Systemic discrimination is ideologically organized, rather than being the result of conscious, determined attempts to oppress members of certain groups. Oppression results from the lack of awareness that those who are marginalized by virtue of their sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, or other differences, may have different views regarding social issues than members of dominant groups. But oppressive processes are complex. Although individuals may be aware of being disadvantaged, they may not be able to identify how their disadvantaged status occurs, because they have internalized the ideology of the dominant group, a process which renders oppressive practices invisible.

Weaknesses in standpoint theory and institutional ethnography revealed.

Standpoint theory might be overly simplistic in advocating research from the standpoint of a particular group, such as women (Harding, 1986). In fact, my findings suggest that an individual may have multiple standpoints outside the dominant perspective, related to age, race, socioeconomic status, as well as other factors besides sexual orientation. It is difficult to trace the exclusion of individual gay men in social work education to one factor and to sort out the impact of an individual's personal qualities on his treatment. For instance, an individual may be ostracized not because of his sexual orientation, but because of his aggressive personality or both.

A weakness of institutional ethnography is its attribution of oppression to a particular social institution, such as social work education. It appears that some of the experiences of respondents were related to the general social stigmatization of same-gender sexual orientation, rather than being unique to social work education. It is also difficult to follow the path of social relations back to one specific text or factor.

Interestingly, some gay men did not perceive themselves to be oppressed within social work education, and many heterosexual faculty and students were said to be accepting of same-gender sexual orientation. The influence of the ideology of heterosexism on these persons is not apparent. However, this lack of clarity may be attributed to the fact that the goal of institutional ethnography is to examine individuals' experiences in relation to an institution in order to explicate how oppression occurs rather than to understand individuals.

A further limitation of institutional ethnography is that the identification of the social relations within a particular social institution which result in oppression may not lead to its eradication. For instance, it is possible that changes in social work education policies may not be effectively implemented and may be unable to counter the influence of societal heterosexism within schools of social work.

Summary. To some degree, the findings support Smith's formulation of standpoint theory and demonstrate that institutional ethnography is an effective approach to developing an understanding of social institutions. An ideology of heterosexism influences social work education, silencing discourse regarding same-

gender sexual orientation, oppressing gay members of schools of social work, and impeding professional training. The findings confirm Smith's argument that oppressive social relations are organized by texts and are reproduced on all levels of institutions.

Value of Findings

The results of this study provide valuable new knowledge, challenge accepted myths, and suggest goals and strategies for changing social work education. I believe that the most significant findings are those which identify the existence of a hidden ideology of heterosexism in social work education and show how it works. These findings are valuable, because they expose the contradiction between espoused social work values and the processes of professional education. The findings demonstrate that the suppression of same-gender sexual orientation is a complex, multi faceted process in social work education. Because the study explicates concretely how heterosexism is implemented in social work education, it provides an empirical basis for practical change-strategies.

A unique feature of my study is that it was conducted from the standpoint of gay participants in social work education. The recommendations for change are based on data about how oppression actually occurs, rather than on ideological or speculative explanations. This approach resulted in the identification of the need for comprehensive change in the policies and programs of social work education, rather than simply providing additional training to faculty and increasing content on same-

gender sexual orientation as has previously been advocated (e.g., Humphreys, 1983).

The findings also provide new knowledge about the processes of oppression of minorities in general, adding to the literature on systemic oppression of other groups such as women and racial minorities. The data demonstrate that oppression is more complex than overt discrimination. They show that overt discrimination may be eliminated, but that minorities may continue to be disadvantaged by complex and hidden social relations. Thus, the findings support the need for policies which do more than simply counter obvious discriminatory practices.

Finally, this study contributes to knowledge regarding power relationships within schools of social work. It demonstrates that the hierarchical relationships within schools of social work inhibit openness on the part of faculty and students. For instance, fear of negative career impacts deters some faculty from disclosing their same-gender sexual orientation. The data highlight the need for clear guidelines for accountability in decisions made with respect to both students and faculty. The findings suggest that these are particularly salient issues for minority students and professors.

This study is unique in that it presents the voices of gay men on a topic which had not previously been investigated, oppression in social work education on the basis of sexual orientation. It is also original in that it is an investigation of a social institution through the eyes of gay men, rather than a study of gay men themselves. The research design, which included the participation of gay men throughout the investigation was also original. This aspect of the design facilitated a rapport with

respondents and understanding of the data which would have been more difficult to achieve had the study been carried out by heterosexual investigators in a non-participatory manner.

Effectiveness of Combining Research Strategies

In this study I attempted to integrate Smith's (1987) approach to institutional ethnography with the principles of emancipatory social psychology (Minton, 1986). In seeking to achieve the emancipatory goals of the inquiry, I used action research strategies (Halpern, 1988; Whitmore, 1990) and the guidelines for ethical research involving gay men and lesbians identified by Walsh-Bowers and Parlour (1992). By blending these approaches, I was able to collaborate with gay men in identifying problematic aspects of social work education and in generating potential solutions. Below, I evaluate how effective the research design was in reaching the goals of institutional ethnography, emancipatory research, and action research.

Maintaining the standpoint of the oppressed. Institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987), emancipatory social psychology (Minton, 1986), and action research (Halpern, 1988) share the principle of conducting research from the standpoint of members of minority groups in order to counter their oppression. This principle was implemented in this study in that I carried out all phases of the study in collaboration with gay men. Consistent with each of these models, the problematic aspects of social work education in relation to same-gender sexual orientation (negative social climate

and inadequate curriculum content) were identified by exploring the experiences of gay men within schools of social work. Subsequent data gathering and analysis were related to these issues.

Institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987) and emancipatory social psychology (Minton, 1986) are both responses to the concern that traditional research approaches may result in the oppression of minority groups. In fact, some respondents expressed concern that more attention to issues of same-gender sexual orientation in social work education could result in more effective oppression of gay men and lesbians within social services. However, the participation of gay men throughout the design and implementation of the study helped ensure that the data gathered were relevant to the needs of gay men and that the findings were presented in a manner that could contribute to their emancipation rather than oppression.

As Hick (1991) points out, institutional ethnography allows a deeper understanding of the sources of oppression than is possible using other participatory forms of research. He bases this argument on the fact that institutional ethnography directs attention to social and organizational factors which are outside the experience of respondents. In this study, the techniques of institutional ethnography extended the effectiveness of emancipatory and action research strategies by allowing the oppressive experiences of research participants to be traced back to their determinants in the structures of social work education. Likewise, the action research approach enhanced the impact of institutional ethnography by identifying ways in which this new knowledge could be applied in social work.

Stimulating change. Emancipatory social psychology (Minton, 1986) and action research (Halpern, 1988) share the principle that in addition to contributing to knowledge, research should bring about change. This study produced a comprehensive set of recommendations regarding social work education which reflect the complexity of the process by which discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation is suppressed. The recommendations point towards intervention at several levels, including educational policy, curriculum structure and content, faculty training, student support, and social work research.

Although the focus of the study was on changing social work education, involvement in the inquiry enhanced research participants' ability to influence schools of social work by increasing their awareness of their own oppression. Thus, the research process created a pool of persons concerned about social work education regarding same-gender sexual orientation and began to build supportive networks among these men. In addition, because all respondents were provided with a summary of the findings at the conclusion of the study, they have data which they can use to advocate for changes in social work education through the organizations with which they are involved. The research process itself demonstrates the method by which change can be brought about in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation: the creation of conditions which provide gay men and lesbians with the opportunity and support to speak about their experiences and needs with respect to social work education.

The study was limited in achieving one of the goals of action research, testing the implementation of findings during the research process (Halpern, 1988). This limitation occurred because potential interventions were not identified until the analysis of the data had been completed.

Summary. The study demonstrates that a new approach to developing knowledge, institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987), can usefully be combined with the change oriented investigative strategies of emancipatory social psychology (Minton, 1986) and action research (Halpern, 1988; Whitmore, 1990), while protecting and enhancing the well-being of research participants (Walsh-Bowers & Parlour, 1992).

Evaluation of Methods of Involving Research Participants

Ethical relationships. A strength of this study was that it implemented the principles for ethical inquiry involving gay men and lesbians recommended by Walsh-Bowers and Parlour. The purpose and potential risks and benefits of participation were discussed with informants in negotiating their involvement. The approach to data-gathering allowed respondents to contribute data which they felt were important and relevant. The report reflects the contributions of informants to the investigation and documents their concerns.

One ethical issue surfaced during the investigation. Because the respondents were members of a relatively small group of people, gay men in social work education, there was the possibility that the sources of data could be accurately

identified, particularly by other members of this group. Thus, there was a particular need for attention to safeguarding confidentiality. I took care during discussions of the study to avoid disclosing any information which could possibly be used to identify participants.

Research advisory committee. In order to implement the collaborative principles of action research, I carried out the study together with a committee of gay men who participated actively in all phases of the investigation. Similar to the involvement of community members in previous studies concerning hard to reach groups (Joseph et al, 1984; Whitmore, 1990), I found the participation of members of the gay community through the RAC helpful in clarifying the research focus, developing the interview guide, and analyzing the data. The assistance of RAC members was crucial in accessing respondents, since soliciting participants through formal appeals to health and social agencies and schools of social work was largely ineffective. This experience echoes that of Bennett and Thompson (1980) who reported that personal contacts were the most effective means of recruiting gay research participants. As Whitmore (1990) indicated, the participation of community members in interviewing respondents with whom they already had a relationship facilitated openness on the part of participants. The members of the RAC were a source of support to me throughout the study, providing criticism and advice. Because the RAC members are associated with gay community service groups, mainstream

social agencies and schools of social work, they can facilitate the dissemination of the findings to organizations which have a stake in social work education.

A significant limitation in carrying out research collaboratively with community members is the amount of time they have available for participation. Because all members of the RAC were employed full-time, it was difficult to arrange regular meetings of the committee. This limitation hindered the development of an ongoing group process in the committee. Also because of their time-constraints, members of the RAC were not able to participate extensively in conducting interviews. These factors limited the depth of their involvement in analyzing the data.

In-depth semi-structured interviewing. Similar to the experience of Joseph et al. (1984) in interviewing gay men, I found that in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Gochros, 1988; Mishler, 1986a; Patton, 1990) gave respondents the opportunity to discuss experiences which they perceived to be most relevant to the focus of the study. The participatory style, in which interviewers actively shared their responses to respondents' experiences, stimulated discussion, resulting in rich data. Self-revelation by the interviewers contributed to the development of trust between interviewers and respondents, because it demonstrated an understanding of their experiences based on membership in the same group. I believe that without this shared perspective, some participants would have been reluctant to share information and the data could have been misunderstood.

Many research participants indicated that they had not previously reflected on their experiences in schools of social work. They commented that during the interviews, they had become more aware of their own experiences of oppression and the processes by which discussion of same-gender sexual orientation is silenced within social work education. Thus, the data-gathering process provided an opportunity for respondents to clarify their feelings and values regarding the way in which social work education treats issues of same-gender sexual orientation. The interviews contributed to change in that respondents felt supported in discussing their experiences and learning that other gay men had similar concerns.

Reflexivity. The reflexivity of the research design (Smith, 1987; Smith, 1990) and the involvement of gay men in studying social work education with respect to gay issues contributed most significantly to the credibility of the findings. The lack of distance between researcher and respondents facilitated the presentation and analysis of the experiences of gay men in social work education.

Because the data were gathered exclusively by and from gay men, the research findings reflect their unique perspectives on social work education. By focusing on the concerns of gay men in relation to social work education, the study reveals issues not discussed previously in social work education research. Harding (1991) argues that reflexivity contributes to the "strong objectivity" (p. 161) of studies, because the values of both the researcher and respondents are available for scrutiny, rather than being obscured. As Smith (1987) points out, in the traditional scientific approach, the

investigator claims a neutral stance, not revealing his or her personal values, but in practice, usually ascribes to the assumptions of the dominant classes.

In fact, most studies related to gay and lesbian issues are conducted within this paradigm (Walsh-Bowers & Parlour, 1992), with the result that the researcher's attitudes regarding sexual orientation are hidden and their influence on the study glossed over. Because the sexual orientation of all participants in this study is specified, the relationship of their values to the findings can be assessed. In addition, because I and the members of the RAC are all gay, we were able to use our own experiences to understand the data gathered from the respondents.

Summary. This study demonstrates that investigations regarding the concerns of marginalized populations can be effectively carried out by carefully involving them in many aspects of the research process.

Implications of Findings for Social Work Education Policy

There is a need for development of social work education policies which address those aspects of social work education which result in the exclusion and marginalization of same-gender sexual orientation issues in schools of social work. The sparse literature on sexual orientation issues in social work education (Dulaney & Kelly, 1982; Humphreys, 1983; Newman, 1989; Weiner, 1989) focuses on increasing curriculum content and improving faculty attitudes. However, such changes will not

be effective in countering heterosexism in schools of social work unless there is systemic change in social work education.

The findings suggest that the CASSW should officially acknowledge the legitimacy of same-gender sexual orientation and affirm that oppression based on sexual orientation in schools of social work is a concern of equal importance to that of oppression based on gender, race, ethnicity, and other differences. The absence of social work education policies requiring schools of social work to address issues of same-gender sexual orientation in their policies and programs should be addressed by amendments to the accreditation standards (CASSW, 1992). Schools should be required to transcend the current prohibitions against discrimination based on sexual orientation to actively counter heterosexism. Considerations related to sexual orientation should be integrated throughout the policies and standards which refer to all aspects of the functioning of schools of social work.

Curriculum development. The accreditation standards of the CASSW should require that content on same-gender sexual orientation be presented in the core curriculum. Courses should include information about the nature of same-gender sexual orientation, the social service needs of clients who are sexually oriented to their own sex, methods of intervention at different levels related to same-gender sexual orientation, and development of students' awareness of their own values regarding sexual orientation. In addition, elective courses on specialized topics related to same-gender sexual orientation should be introduced. Guidelines for the integration of

content should be prepared, and materials and teaching methods developed. Curriculum frameworks which train students to work with clients who are of a different gender, class, race, ability, and class should be used.

Implications of Findings for Individual Schools of Social Work

Schools should take steps to make their environment safer and more comfortable for open discussion regarding same-gender sexual orientation. They should advocate within their universities for the adoption of policies and programs which counter heterosexism on campus, including complaint procedures in which gay men and lesbians would have confidence. Faculty selection and student admission procedures should include measures to screen out individuals who are extremely prejudiced regarding same-gender sexual orientation. Schools should also develop programs which educate faculty, staff, field instructors, and students regarding diversity in sexual orientation, sensitizing them to heterosexism on campus and in field placements, and preparing them to counter this form of oppression in their everyday experiences.

The existence of faculty and students who are open about their same-gender sexual orientation provides a basis for the creation of a safer climate within schools of social work. My findings suggest that the existence of "out" faculty and students makes the climate in schools less threatening. Therefore, schools should take steps to increase the number of out faculty members and students. To achieve this goal, schools should actively recruit gay and lesbian faculty and students. In addition,

current members of schools of social work should be encouraged to be more open about their same-gender sexual orientation through the establishment of support groups. Since overcoming the isolation of gay students and faculty is probably the most significant way of making schools safer, the "out" members of schools may be able to take an effective leadership role in building links among gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of the school. For instance, a group could be formed which would initially provide support to its members. Later, it could identify goals and methods for changing the climate within the school. In addition to policy statements affirming respect for diversity in sexual orientation, schools should provide support in the form of meeting space and help in publicizing the existence of the group. Gay and lesbian students and faculty should also be invited to present research and discuss practice issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in regular colloquia sponsored by the school.

Change Strategies Suggested by Findings

The findings show that the silencing of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation is organized by a complex pattern of social relations which extends from the policies of national professional bodies to the behaviour of individuals within individual schools. An implication is that pressure for change should be exerted at all levels of social work education.

I plan on joining the CASSW Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Caucus to advocate for change in the accreditation standards. The findings of this study may be useful in

establishing the need for a CASSW task force on gay and lesbian issues in social work education. At the local level, caucuses of gay men and lesbians should push for changes in the policies individual schools. These groups should seek support from other minority groups, supportive heterosexual people, and gay community groups. It is particularly important that gay men build links with women, both lesbian and heterosexual, given that women and gay men share common issues in the struggle against patriarchy. The process of change should be based on a systematic assessment of the needs of individual schools, involving local agencies which serve gay men and lesbians. An implication of the finding that heterosexism is implemented by the activities of individuals in schools is that individuals should become aware of their own heterosexism and identify heterosexist behaviour of faculty and students.

Future Research Needs

There is a need for further research with respect to the social relations which organize heterosexism within social work education. In carrying out this study, I did not explore all the possible determinants of heterosexism in social work education. A more comprehensive understanding may be gained by interviewing heterosexual students, field instructors, faculty and school administrators, as well as university administrators, and officials in the provincial ministries responsible for social work education. It would also be useful to interview CASSW personnel involved in developing accreditation standards. Another potentially fruitful line of inquiry would be the investigation of those determinants of heterosexism which emanate from social

agencies. This could involve gathering data from heterosexual social workers and administrators in mainstream social agencies and decision-makers in funding sources.

Other areas of investigation are suggested by the findings of this study. The effectiveness of the implementation of the current standards of accreditation which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation should be evaluated. There is also a need for analysis of course content and teaching materials used with respect to sexuality, focusing on their treatment of same-gender sexual orientation. The difficulty in incorporating content on various minorities into courses should be addressed by research on development of curriculum frameworks which would facilitate learning about various types of differences.

It would also be useful to carry out institutional ethnographies of social work education from the standpoints of persons situated differently with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, class, and ability. There is a need for further investigation of the relationships among members of various minority groups within social work education, because some data gathered in this inquiry suggest that there may be competition among oppressed groups, rather than mutual support. For the purposes of comparison, it would also be useful to conduct institutional ethnographies of the training programs of other helping professions, such as psychiatry and clinical psychology.

Research from the standpoint of lesbian women. As discussed in the introductory chapter, in order to be consistent with standpoint theory (Smith, 1987), I did not gather data from lesbian women regarding social work education in this study.

Some respondents advocated for inclusion of lesbian issues in this study, arguing that issues of same-gender sexual orientation, whether gay or lesbian, are treated similarly in schools of social work. However, I believe that it is important that a separate ethnography of social work education from the standpoint of lesbian women be conducted. As I discussed earlier, while gay men and lesbian women share some common experiences of oppression, the social location of women, which is distinct from that of men in our society, might lead lesbians to have different views of social work education than those of gay men. Perhaps by comparing the ethnographies of social work education from the standpoints of lesbians and gay men, an action strategy which would address the common concerns of both groups could be devised.

Professional educational from the standpoint of other oppressed groups. This study demonstrates the value of basing emancipatory strategies on an understanding of how oppression actually occurs rather than on theories about its causes. For instance, research regarding racial and ethnic issues in social work education has resulted in recommendations similar to those of this study regarding prohibition of discrimination, recruitment of minority faculty and students, and inclusion of minority content in curricula (e.g., Committee for Intercultural/Interracial Education in Professional Schools, 1991; Task Force on Multicultural and Multiracial Issues in Social Work Education, 1991). However, my findings suggest that such changes alone are not sufficient if the social relations which maintain oppression are not altered. There is a need to expose the oppressive aspects of the ideology which shapes the profession and

to incorporate the values of various minorities. Therefore, it would be useful to conduct institutional ethnographies regarding professional education in other disciplines and from the perspective of various minorities.

Personal Reflections

Other factors which influence confidence in qualitative research findings are the skills, values, and experience of the investigator. Patton (1990) suggests the researcher report "... personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation ..." (pp. 472). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend maintenance of a "reflexive journal" (p. 319) for this purpose. Consistent with these recommendations, I recorded my expectations, emotional reactions, and speculations on the meaning of data throughout the research process. In reviewing my journal notes, I found that this research project was part of the ongoing process of integrating my sexual orientation into my life and contributed to my understanding of how that part of my identity influences me as a social worker and researcher.

Initial expectations. At the beginning of the project I recorded the expectations I had about doing a study of issues related to same-gender sexual orientation in social work education. My belief was that revealing one's sexual orientation or dealing with gay issues could present a risk to success in a school of social work, either as a student or a professor. While I had experienced tolerance as an openly gay man in the school, I had concerns that raising questions about how issues related to same gender

sexual orientation are handled in schools of social work could arouse negative reactions in heterosexual faculty and students. I anticipated finding that gay issues rarely came up in social work curricula and that their absence was related to the emphasis on the traditional family model in social work. I believed that there was a need for policies which would make schools safer for the revelation of same-gender sexual orientation and which would require systematic inclusion of content regarding sexual orientation in curricula. I assumed that such changes would free up gay participants in social work education to be more open about their sexual orientation. I hoped that by doing this study I would be better able to contribute to social work education from my perspective as a gay man.

Emotional reactions. Because of my anxiety about the possible negative effects on my career of conducting a study on a gay related topic, I hesitated before embarking on this project. My interest in the research question and support from a number of faculty and students eventually overcame my ambivalence. I found that implementing this study required coping with anxiety on an ongoing basis. For instance, at times it was disturbing to talk to respondents who were extremely angry and frightened as result of oppression. I feared that informants' criticisms of social work education might offend heterosexual social work educators and students who generally do not think of themselves as participating in the oppression of minorities. I was also worried that doing a study from the standpoint of gay men would not be seen as a legitimate academic pursuit. However, I was able to cope with these anxieties

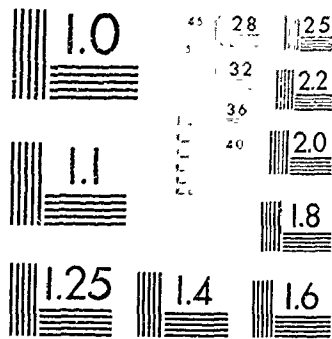
with the support of my research advisors and the RAC. Eventually I became more comfortable with the strong emotions the research evoked and more confident in the value of the findings.

I experienced personal growth in carrying out this study. In interviewing respondents of different ages and types of professional experience, I encountered various reactions to the stigmatization of same-gender sexual orientation, some of which I had experienced myself. For instance, in observing the impact of heterosexism on some respondents in terms of damaged self-esteem, fear, and anger, I realized that my previous career in child welfare had supported my own internalized heterosexism, diminishing my self-esteem, and contributing to my sense of marginalization in the agency. I realized that in carrying out this investigation, I have become more comfortable with being openly gay in the professional context. I was encouraged by realizing that a significant number of gay men are struggling successfully to improve the climate in schools of social work for discussion of sexual orientation.

Insights. During the research process I also gained insights into the nature of oppression. I recognized that control of the discourse in society is an effective method of oppressing minority groups. For instance, because of the suppression of discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation in schools of social work, heterosexism is not recognized as a serious concern in social work education. Therefore, I realized that discrimination against gay men and lesbians is largely related to the structure of

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social institutions, such as social work education, rather than being a result of individual prejudice. An implication is that for emancipatory changes to be effective and permanent, organizational change is required.

In carrying out this study, I formed the impression that in general, gay men prefer reform and compromise strategies to reach their goals. This inclination seems a significant difference from other oppressed groups, which prefer to use more radical conflict strategies. I suspect that gay men's choice of change strategies may be due to two factors. Gay men benefit from male privilege, particularly as long as they downplay their sexual orientation. Therefore, we may have more confidence that we can negotiate acceptance without endangering our privileges. Another possible explanation is that gay men feel too isolated to risk confrontation. Lesbians possibly have support in their struggles from feminist women. Racial minorities can look to each other for support. However, gay men do not look to heterosexual men for support, many feel they have little in common with women of any sexual orientation, and cannot necessarily count on the support of their gay brothers, who may be unwilling to come out.

Valid contributions can be made to the emancipation of gay and lesbian people through various approaches. As a result of this study, I became more aware that I am most inclined to use reformist strategies which depend on working from within the system. I have the most confidence and comfort with an incremental approach to bringing about change in social work education with respect to same-gender sexual orientation. I support the development of gay and lesbian caucuses within schools of

social work and the forging of links with supportive women and men, and members of other oppressed groups.

Summary. The process of carrying out this inquiry contributed to my feeling more comfortable as a gay man in social work education and added to my understanding of the dynamics of institutional oppression based on same-gender sexual orientation.

Chapter Summary

This study reveals the impact of an oppressive ideology, heterosexism, in the functioning at a major social institution, social work education. The findings show how discourse regarding same-gender sexual orientation is suppressed within schools of social work by a social climate which marginalizes gay men and lesbians and by curricula which omit useful content on same-gender sexual orientation. The research demonstrates that emancipatory, action-oriented research approaches can be combined with standpoint analysis to develop new knowledge regarding social work education. The findings point to the need for interventions at all levels of social work education with respect to issues of same-gender sexual orientation. It was the consensus of the members of the research advisory committee that the first priority should be revision of the accreditation standards of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work.

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Appendix A. Letter of Consent

484 Church Street, # 706,
Toronto, ON,
M4Y 2C7
Date:

Dear

I would like to request your participation in a research study leading to a social work doctoral dissertation. My advisor in conducting this inquiry is Dr. Richard Walsh-Bowers of Wilfrid Laurier University. The goal of this study is to determine the need for changes in social work education with respect to gay male sexual orientation. The information you provide could be helpful in developing social work training regarding this issue. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to be involved in an interview. In some instances, it may be necessary to conduct a second interview to clarify issues which arose during the first discussion. Each interview will be audio-taped and should last about one hour to one and a half hours. I will provide you with a summary of the research report subsequent to its completion.

I do not believe that there are any risks related to your participation in this study. I will maintain your anonymity and the confidentiality of information which you give me. When the tapes are transcribed, no names or other identifying information will be used. Only one other person, Dr. R. Walsh-Bowers besides myself and the interviewer will have access to the data. Dr. Walsh-Bowers will not have access to your name. I will be solely responsible for coding of the transcribed tapes, and the key to the code will be maintained separately, so as not to provide a means of identifying specific participants. During the research study the tapes will be securely filed, and subsequent to the study, all tapes will be erased.

The research report will contain general impressions and selected anonymous quotations which will help to add depth and richness to the report. You will only be quoted if you consent to this use of information from your interview. Should it appear that others might identify any participant from such content, then the material will not be used. Any journal articles or other publications which evolve from the research will follow the same guidelines.

If you should decide to participate, you are completely free to withdraw at any time and any information obtained from you will be destroyed upon notification of your withdrawal.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at anytime at 416-921-0166. Alternatively, you may also contact Dr. R. Walsh-Bowers at Wilfrid Laurier University, (519-884-1970).

Sincerely,

Please retain the letter, and return the signed consent form to me.

.....

I have decided to participate in the study, The Need for Change in Social Work Education Regarding Gay Male Sexual Orientation. My signature indicates that I have read and understood the information above, and am willing to participate. Furthermore, I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time should I decide to do so.

Signature

Date

I agree that anonymous quotations from the transcript of my interview may be used in the dissertation report.

Signature

Date

Appendix B. Research Advisory Committee Agreement Regarding Confidentiality

As a member of the research advisory committee of the study The Need for Change in Social Work Education Regarding Gay Male Sexual Orientation I agree to:

1. Protect the confidentiality of all information provided by respondents;
2. Use code names to identify sources of interview data recorded on audio tapes and notes;
3. Deliver all interview audio tapes and notes to Brian O'Neill as soon as possible after interviews;
4. Maintain confidentiality indefinitely after participation in the study.

Signature

Date

Appendix C. Recruitment Flyers for Respondents

THE EXPERIENCES OF GAY MEN IN SOCIAL SERVICES

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes needed in social work education from the perspective of gay men. To do this we would like to hear about the experiences of gay men as clients of social workers. The intent of the study is to help schools of social work better prepare social workers to work with men who are attracted to other men.

Why is this study important?

We know very little about what it is like for gay men who go to social workers for help. Therefore, our understanding of their needs is limited. This study presents a unique opportunity to learn about the experiences and needs of gay men. The results of this study may assist in planning and developing social work education.

How will this study be conducted?

In order to understand changes needed in social work education, we would like to speak with men who are sexually attracted to other men and who are or have been clients of professional social workers, that is social workers who have a BSW, MSW, DSW, or PhD. The interviews will last about one hour and consist of questions that will allow participants to answer in-depth and in their own terms. All information will be kept confidential.

From this study, a document will be produced which will be sent to all participants.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you are a gay man who has received service from a social worker, you can tell us what it was like for you.

Tell gay men who are or have been clients about the study.

Put us in touch with gay men you know who would be interested in participating in the study.

Put up this flyer in your office so that gay men who are not "out" can know about the study.

This study is part of a social work doctoral dissertation at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

CALL
BRIAN O'NEILL
AT
921-0166
FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE EXPERIENCES OF GAY MEN IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes needed in social work education from the perspective of gay men. To do this we would like to hear about the experiences of gay men as clients, students, workers and teachers. The intent of the study is to help schools of social work better prepare social workers to work with men who are attracted to other men.

Why is this study important?

Gay men constitute a significant, but unrecognized minority within the populations served by social workers. However, our understanding of their needs is limited. This study presents a unique opportunity to learn about the changes needed in social work education from the perspective of gay men. The results of this study may assist in planning and developing social work education.

How will this study be conducted?

In order to understand changes needed in social work education, we are talking with gay male clients and social workers. We would also like to speak with gay men who are students or teachers in BSW, MSW, DSW, or PhD programs. The interviews will last about one hour and consist of questions that will allow participants to answer in-depth and in their own terms. All information will be kept confidential.

From this study, a document will be produced which will be sent to all participants.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you are a gay social work student or teacher, you can tell us about your experiences.

This study is part of a social work doctoral dissertation at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

CALL
BRIAN O'NEILL
AT
Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University
75 University Avenue West,
Waterloo, ON
N2L 3C5
519-884-1970 Extension 2033
OR
416-921-0166 in Toronto

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Appendix D. Interview Guides

Guide for Interviews of Gay Clients

23/10/92

*In arranging interviews, clarify with the participant that his predominant sexual/emotional attraction is towards men.

*Clarify that the worker who provided service was a BSW/MSW/DSW/PhD

*Subsequent to the interview note significant observations such as the participant's age, minority status in terms of race, ethnicity, disability, as well as anything else with respect to the context that seems important.

1. Purpose of the study - why we're interested in talking to you
 - studying social work education, not gay men
 - feel free to raise other issues, ie racism, if they are important

2. Consent provisions - give the respondent the letter and consent form. They keep the letter.

3. What the interview will be like - a conversation between us, not a lot of questions - I would like you to tell me what is important to you about your experiences.

4. Tell me about your experience(s) as a client? What was it like to be a gay man in this situation? (Tell me the story, paint the picture)
 - a) What happened?
 - When did this happen?
 - What type of agency eg: youth agency, counselling agency, health care, minority focused, other?
 - Was the agency rural or urban?
 - Why did you go for help and why this particular agency or social worker?
 - What type of service did you receive? (individual counselling, advocacy, case management, group, etc)
 - How "out" were you to the worker, other clients?
 - What were your experiences with the social worker?
 - What were your experiences with other clients, if a group situation?
 - What kind of talk have you heard about gay men or gay male sexual orientation from your worker, other staff or clients?
 - Was the experience helpful or not? How?

 - b) What is your analysis/explanation of what happened?
 - How did this come to occur?
 - How did it work?

5. Tell me about agency policies, procedures or anything else that made it difficult or positive for gay clients.

6. If you could, how would you change the service to make it better for gay men?
7. Based on your experience, how do you think social work education should be changed with respect to gay male sexual orientation?
 - What sort of things would have been helpful if your social worker had been educated differently?
 - knowledge/values/attitudes/skills
 - involvement with gay community, ideology re minority groups, gay input into decisions
 - gay profs, field placements, field supervisors
8. Is there anything else that we haven't covered? What is the important question I haven't asked?
9. How was the interview for you?
 - feelings about the process and content of the interview
 - any questions about the interview?
10. How could the interview be improved?
11. Feedback from interviewer to respondent about main points in the interview
 - do they reflect what the respondent said?
 - interviewer's feelings about content and process of interview
 - interviewer's impressions of how the data will contribute to the study

*During or after the interview, journal about your own thoughts, feelings, reactions, & speculations about the interview

Guide for Interviews of Gay Workers/Students/Faculty

November 3, 1992

*In arranging interviews, I will clarify with the participant that his predominant sexual/emotional attraction is towards men.

*I will also clarify whether the participant has or is pursuing, a BSW, MSW or DSW/PhD.

*If during the interview it emerges that the participant has received service from a social worker, also cover the topics covered in the client interview schedule.

*Subsequent to the interview, note significant observations such as the participant's age, minority status in terms of race, ethnicity, disability, as well as anything else that strikes you as important.

INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the study - why we're interested in talking to you
 - studying social work education, not gay men
 - feel free to raise other issues, ie racism, if they are important
2. Consent provisions
3. What the interview will be like - a conversation between us, not a lot of questions - I would like you to tell me what is important to you about your experiences.

RE BEING A STUDENT

1. What school of social work did you attend/are you attending? What program are/were you in (clinical, community development, policy etc)?
2. When did you graduate or expect to graduate?
3. Tell me about your experience(s) as a social work student. What is/was it like to be a gay man in the school of social work?
 - Did you identify yourself as gay on your admission application? What effect do you think that had?
 - How "out" are/were you at school?
 - What have been your positive or negative experiences with faculty, staff and other students related to gay issues? What effect did this have on you?
 - Were there any faculty, staff or students who were gay? Were they out? What effect did this have on you?
 - What kind of talk would you hear about gay men or gay male sexual orientation from faculty, staff, or students?
4. What content (knowledge, values, skills) was taught regarding gay male sexual orientation, and in what courses (core or elective)?
 - How was it taught?

- What resources were used?
- Content on AIDS?

5. Tell me about policies, procedures or anything else that made it easier or difficult for gay students.

- gay consciousness (connection to gay community, ideology re minorities, input into decision making)
- matching - gay placements, faculty, field supervisors

RE BEING A WORKER

1 Tell me about your experience(s) as a worker/field placement student in agencies. What is/was it like to be a gay man working in a social agency?

- What is/was the type of agency eg: youth agency, counselling agency, health care, other? urban, rural?
- Are/were you "out" at the agency with supervisors, colleagues, clients?
- What are/were your experiences with supervisors, colleagues, clients related to gay issues?
- Were there any staff, students or clients who were gay? Were they out? What effect did this have on you?
- What kind of talk would you hear about gay men or gay male sexual orientation from staff, students or clients?

2. What content (knowledge, values, skills) was taught regarding gay male sexual orientation in staff training, and in what courses (core or elective)?

- How was it taught?
- What resources were used?
- Content on AIDS?

3. Tell me about agency policies, procedures or anything else that made it difficult or easier for gay workers, students and/or clients

- gay consciousness (connection to gay community, ideology re minorities, input into decision making)
- matching - gay workers and clients

RE BEING A TEACHER

1 Tell me about your experience(s) as a faculty/field placement instructor. What is/was it like to be a gay man working in a school of social work?

- What is the program of the school: BSW, MSW, DSW/PhD; the school's orientation (structural, clinical), programs (casework, community development, policy, special populations, etc), location (urban, rural)?
- Are/were you "out" at the schools with colleagues, students?
- What are/were your experiences with colleagues and students related to gay issues?
- What kind of talk would you hear about gay men or gay male sexual

orientation from staff or students?

-Were there any staff or students who were gay? Were they out? What effect did this have on you?

2. What content (knowledge, values, skills) is taught regarding gay male sexual orientation, and in what courses (core or elective)?

-How is it taught?

-What resources are used?

-Content on AIDS?

-any faculty development?

3. Tell me about policies, procedures or anything else that make it difficult for faculty members/field instructors/students

-gay consciousness (connection to gay community, ideology re minorities, input into decision making)

- matching - gay placement, faculty, field supervisors

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

1. If you could, how would you change social work education to make it better for gay men, whether students or faculty and to better prepare social workers to respond to the needs of gay male clients?

-How could these changes be implemented?

-What barriers do you see?

2. Is there anything else that we haven't covered? What is the important question I haven't asked?

3. How was the interview for you?

-feelings about the process and content of the interview

-any questions about the interview?

4. How could the interview be improved?

5. Feedback from interviewer to respondent about main points in the interview

-do they reflect what the respondent said?

-interviewer's feelings about content and process of interview

-interviewer's impressions of how the data will contribute to the study

*During or after the interview, journal about your own thoughts, feelings, reactions, & speculations about the interview

Appendix E. Data Categories

April 27, 1993

1. Client Problems

Problems related to oppression of gay men and same gender sexuality, problems directly related to same-gender sexual orientation, or problems where sexual orientation is part of the context. Problems which could be responded to by a social worker

2. Client Service Needs

Service needs related to same-gender sexual orientation which could be met by a social worker.

3. Service Issues

Strengths and weaknesses in social services in relation to gay clients' needs.

3a. Professionals' attitudes (beliefs/knowledge, values, skills) regarding sexual orientation & sexuality.

Attitudes, knowledge, values, skills of social workers in relation to sexual orientation issues.

3b. Intake/assessment

Anything workers do/don't do related to sexual orientation during the intake stage.

4. Matching

Benefits and drawbacks of having a gay or straight worker.

4a. Gay positive/negative services

Types of agencies which are gay positive or homophobic/heterosexist.

5. Agency Climate

Data which reveal agency climate regarding same-gender sexuality, and explanations of how the climate is created.

5a. Staff being out/closeted in Agency

Data regarding agency staff who are closeted or out, and the effects on other staff.

5b. Impact of Being in closet/coming out on gay social worker

Impact of being in closet/coming out on personal and professional lives of gay social workers

5c. Effect on service of suppression/support of same-gender sexual orientation and openness of gay workers

Data about any effect of suppression of discourse regarding sexual orientation on service to clients.

6. Climate in Schools of Social Work

The nature of school climate regarding same-gender sexual orientation, and explanations of how climate created.

6a. Faculty attitudes

Data regarding faculty knowledge, values, feelings, and behaviour related to same-gender sexual orientation issues.

6b. Impact of climate on faculty

Data about faculty willingness to teach gay content. Gay faculty's feelings as a result of climate.

6c. Impact of faculty attitudes regarding sexual orientation on students

Data regarding impact of faculty attitudes on student discussion of sexual orientation, intimidation, support.

6d. Faculty: coming out/being out/closet

Data regarding faculty being out, and its effect on other faculty and students.

6e. Out/closeted gay faculty - career impact

Data regarding promotions, academic recognition.

6f. Student Attitudes

Students' beliefs, feelings, behaviour regarding same-gender sexual orientation.

6g. Impact of student attitudes on students and faculty

6h. Reactions to negative attitudes

Data re possible and actual reactions to attitudes.

6i. Out/closeted Students

Data regarding the presence of gay students, and how they reveal their sexual orientation in school.

6j. Gay student supports

7. Admission

Whether students were out when they applied, impact on admission, admission screening procedures.-being out/closeted at point of application/admission.

8. Supportive Straight People

Levels of knowledge regarding same-gender sexual orientation, amount of discussion, values.

9a. Programs of Schools of Social Work - problems/strengths

Data re any strengths/weaknesses of schools of social work re same-gender sexual orientation.

9b. Recommendations re changes needed in programs

Data re changes in educational goals, policies, models, content, teaching methods, and how to integrate gay related content into curriculum

9c. Change process

Data re strategies, supports/barriers to change.

9d. Field Placements

Experiences in placements, and recommendations for development of gay positive field placements.

10. Politics of academia

Data regarding politically correct images around same-gender sexual orientation within institutions.

10a. Decision making - schools of sw

Data re the processes of decision making within universities and schools of social work and their impact on gay men.

10b. Control of faculty

How gay faculty are managed.

11. Ruling Bodies and related texts

Data regarding institutions which influence social work education, and related policies, procedures, documents.

11a. Role of social work

Data regarding the mandate of the profession.

11b. Ideology of Social work

Data regarding the influence of dominant ideologies underlying social work

11c. Professional practices - Oppressive/supportive

Professional practices which oppress or support the gay client.

12. Minority issues

Data on issues related to race, age, ability, class, and regarding ideology regarding these issues.

13. Gender issues

Data regarding women, lesbians, feminism in social work.

14. AIDS

15. Narratives

Any significant stories which emerge.

16. Respondents

Demographic data -age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, marital status, number of children. Whether respondent is a client, student, worker, professor, or field instructor. Degree, when graduated, and from which school of social work. Regarding clients, type of agency, location.

17. Improving the interview

Feelings about the interview, and how it could be improved

Appendix F. Categories Related to Social Work Education

Programs - strengths and weaknesses

- Field placements

Climate in schools

- politics

Silencing gay faculty

- control of faculty
- career impact
- decision making processes
- faculty attitudes
- students' attitudes
- faculty being out

Silencing gay students

- admission
- faculty attitudes
- student attitudes
- out gay students

Ideology of social work

- role of social work
- ruling texts

Recommendations

- curriculum
- change process
- supports for change
- supportive straight people

Minority issues

Gender issues