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Women Empowering Women

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Abstract

As women in this female-centered profession of social work, we have not effectively advocated for ourselves in terms of leadership within our educational systems. We reexamine the 2008 *JSWE* special issue on women in the academy and build upon information that suggests social work has lost its momentum to advocate for a more unified feminist voice and "standpoint epistemology" in our scholarly literature, teaching materials, and leadership models. We reflect on pioneers who helped pave the way and question our own involvement, as women, in surrendering to the "dominant voice." We conclude with suggestions for eliminating status-based disparities, unifying our stance as women, and strengthening the feminist voice in leadership, mentorship, and education through the lens of Relational-Cultural Theory.

Keywords: female faculty, feminist leadership, relational-cultural theory, social work education, social work pioneers

Women Empowering Women

Women have been at the forefront of social work since its inception and they have consistently raised voices in defense of justice, in spite of the historically identified disparities women themselves face. Today, women in social work education account for 69% of full time and 72% of part-time faculty (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2014a). While these numbers appear to be cause for celebration, they raise significant questions about the role and status of women in social work education, the first relating to the need for this article. With such staggering numbers, why do women continue to lag behind men in *leadership positions* in the social work academy? While there are currently more women in the positions of deans and associate deans, there remains a nagging sense that women in entry level and tenure track positions are not being given the tools needed to succeed in the academy. Might this relate to the general societal views of gender roles, women's place within the workplace, and the challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities? Do leaders, women included, inadvertently surrender to the dominant voice by slipping into traditional leadership styles, such as trait theory suggests where women are stereotyped as lacking leadership characteristics (Brown, 1979)? What leadership theories drive social work leaders in the academy today? Interestingly, Alkadry and Tower (2014) in their book on *Women and public service*, state that leadership in mainstream management is shifting away from the traditional assertive and transactional leadership style that focuses on individual traits to a more participative and transformational style that focuses on collaboration. Such a shift is good news for women as the latter is found to be a part of the natural ways in which women relate (Miller, 1986). Is this shift visible in the social work academy as well? Participation and collaboration are reflective of forming connections, which is a major tenet of Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) procured by Jean Baker Miller and her colleagues at the Jean Baker Miller Training Institute (2014). While women in

social work have historically advocated for oppressed and marginalized persons, this effort must be carried out within our own social work educational systems where there is a lack of parity between men and women in leading the academy.

The purpose of this article is to be a catalyst of change – a call for a more consistent and unified approach to elevating women's status in the academy. The central themes of this article highlight the need for structural change, including the unification of women to work together and adopt a female-centric model of leadership that integrates the principles of RCT. To place this call for action in context, we felt it significant to begin with a brief history of feminist social work leaders who helped pave the way. The discussion shifts to the current issues of concern that stemmed from our review of the 2008 *Journal of Social Work Education* special section on women in the academy. This is followed by a discussion on a feminist theoretical model with a focus on relational cultural theory, and concludes with recommendations for moving forward.

Historical Leadership of Women in Social Work

If we are to stay true to the concerns and vision of the female pioneers who paved the way for social work, we must study their contributions. There is no explicit requirement in social work curriculums to teach about social work history, leadership, or feminism. How can we create future leaders or change the status quo if we do not acknowledge our past? We must teach social work students who these women were, including their role in social welfare and reform. Perhaps most important, we must model our leadership styles and values with their legacies in mind. Numerous women have made significant contributions to the field of social work. We all know the pioneering roles of Mary Richmond, Jane Addams, and Julia Lathrop. Much has been written about them compared to their female predecessors and peers, who made major contributions to social welfare reform as well, but are less well-known. Here we highlight

a small group of diverse women, who served as educators and/or made other scholarly

contributions. The type of work these women did and the way they worked is worthy of

consideration and analysis as we attempt to rethink the role of social workers in the academy,

with a specific focus on female faculty, mentoring, and leadership.

Before there was formal social work, there were many women who paved the way, as

social welfare reformers and feminist scholars. In preparation for this article, we attempted to

research women pioneers and more recent examples of female leaders in the academy, but most

of what we found were biographies on less than scholarly websites. We know that many women

were involved at the forefront of social change as innovators and collaborators. Many of these

women boldly made their way into the academy, but there is limited information in the literature

about women's contributions to the history of social welfare and the academy.

Social and political reformer, Florence Kelley (1859 – 1932), was an advocate for

worker's rights (Library of Congress, 2007; National Women's History Museum, 2007). She

was instrumental in the formation of two major organizations: the National Consumers League

and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Goldmark,

1953; National Women's History Museum, 2007; Sklar, 1986). Through the NAACP she was a

friend and supporter of W. E. B. Du Bois and was instrumental in filing briefs for landmark cases

involving labor laws, which ultimately provided leverage for the Brown vs. Board of Education

case to end school segregation (Goldmark, 1953; Sklar, 1986). Kelley published widely,

primarily on issues of women's labor, women in industry, the minimum wage, and the modern

industry and its' impact on family, health, education, and morality (Goldmark, 1953; Library of

Congress, 2007; National Women's History Museum, 2007; Sklar, 1986).

As a woman during the Progressive Era, Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge (1866 – 1948) overcame many barriers and worked toward reform in political and educational settings. Her interest in women's labor rights led to her involvement in the Hull House Settlement. She was influential in setting the standards for social work education, affording her international recognition. Breckinridge advocated for state involvement in social welfare programs and disseminated her doctrine in *Social Service Review*, which she cofounded and edited. Breckinridge was an organizer of the Women's Peace Party and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; she was also active in a number of other progressive movements (Brown, 2014).

As an advocate for the rights of women and children, Lucile Eaves (1869 – 1953) worked in San Francisco at the South Park Social Settlement where she was responsible for educational and recreational activities for the neighborhood. As an education innovator, she created illustrated stories to teach children ethical lessons (Deegan 1991; Woodhouse, 1926). Her own financial challenges throughout her adult life, lead her to focus on research that assessed the financial stability of women in later life as a result of low salaries and their role as caregivers, factors that made it difficult to save for retirement (Eaves, 1921). Throughout her career, Eaves was involved in many organizations, including the Committee to Standardize Research (Deegan 1991; Woodhouse, 1926).

Ophelia Settle Egypt (1903 - 1984), another underappreciated social work pioneer, was one of the first to conduct interviews with former slaves. While at the School of Social Work at Howard University, Egypt made significant contributions by way of historical social research (National Association of Social Workers [NASW] Foundation, 2004b; Stevenson, 2011). At a

time when many look forward to retirement, Egypt implemented innovative family planning programs for African Americans in Washington, D.C.; highlighting reproductive control as crucial to economic advancement. In 1981, the Planned Parenthood clinic Egypt directed for 11 years was renamed in her honor (Stevenson, 2011; Wells-Wilbon, 2007). Egypt is distinguished as the only African-American identified as a chartered member of the NASW (Wells-Wilbon, 2007).

Inabel Lindsay (1916 – 1983), best known for her pioneering role as a social work educator and administrator, was the first dean of the School of Social Work at Howard University (NASW Foundation, 2004a). Even in this role, though, she never lost her commitment to traditional social welfare values. She fought for social justice and facilitated the growth of the School of Social Work which became the second accredited school in the country serving Black students, with Clark Atlanta holding the distinction of being the first. Lindsay published on community leadership, the elderly, race, gender, and the socio-cultural constructs, and Black participation in social welfare (Brown, Gourdine & Crewe, 2011; Crewe, 2006; Gourdine, Crewe, & Brown, 2008).

Myrtle Reul (1918 - 2003) focused on advocacy for women and their representation in the academy. In particular she advocated for CSWE to appoint more women to serve on task forces. Reul was ahead of her time in believing that in order to examine complex issues such as diversity, it was necessary to include intersections across race and, more importantly as a feminist issue, gender. Not to be discouraged by the passage of time nor resistance, Reul persisted until CSWE established a Task Force on Women in Social Work Education. The authorization came without funding or staff, but eventually, due in major part to Reul's leadership, the task force took flight (Alvarez, Graber, Collins, & Lazzari, 2008).

Forty years after the development of the Task Force, later renamed the Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education and commonly referred to as the Women's Council, similar issues still affected female social work faculty. Over the years, members' areas of expertise and interest have driven the Women's Council initiatives, but focus has always been maintained to elevate the "participation, visibility, and positions of women within CSWE, in schools/departments of social work, and at [the Annual Program Meeting]; equity for women faculty and students; and attention to and standards for women in social work curricula" (Alvarez et al., 2008, p. 69).

An early leader of the Women's Council, Ruth Brandwein used a feminist framework to investigate the prevalence of family violence and its effects on women and their families. The adversity she faced as a female leader in the academy influenced her scholarly work on women's roles in administration. Along with co-author Susan Kemp, Brandwein defined feminism as informed women's attempts and efforts to advocate for equity and inclusion (Kemp & Brandwein, 2010).

Perhaps one of the most published scholars on social welfare pioneers, Iris Carlton-LaNey emphasized the web of affiliations by many of these social work pioneers (Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Gilkes, 1988). The affiliations not only included the organizations and community service activities these pioneers were involved in, but also the relationships between many pioneers (Carlton-LaNey, 1999). With the women whose contributions are acknowledged here, and many more not mentioned, we see this web of affiliation. Almost all the women were involved in multiple organizations, and many were among the founders of some of the most prestigious welfare reform organizations of their time. For example, Kelley was among the founders of the NAACP and a friend and supporter of W. E. B Dubois, while Breckinridge was

also a member of the NAACP and one of the founders of the Women's Peace Party with other noted pioneers such as Jane Addams. Breckenridge, Egypt, and Lindsay were all recognized as social work pioneers by the NASW Foundation. Reul worked tirelessly for the establishment of the Women's Council on which Brandwein and Carlton LaNey later served. Many of these women had additional formal training, in other fields including, sociology, political science, economics, and education. These women were strong social justice advocates and worked successfully at blurring the lines between sociology, psychology, social work, social reform, political activism, race work, scholarship, community outreach, and service. The areas where their careers and contributions intersected, is indeed, a web of affiliation.

All of the pioneers are known for some unique contribution to the profession. Breckinridge was involved in the development of one of the first social work training institutes, which became the Graduate School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. Eaves brought attention to the role of women as caregivers and the challenges that such a role can create for women (Wells-Wilbon & Simpson, 2009). Reul advocated for CSWE to recognize the necessity of more women in leadership positions and to address the position of women in all areas of social work education (Alvarez, et al., 2008). These women modeled commitments to the social and political causes of their times and served on the front lines of change.

The work of these historical women embodied the commitment to social justice across systems levels. Almost all of them worked on a macro level, but also made commitments to mezzo and micro issues as well. There was no distinction about which approach was more important, but a review of their body of work revealed that they believed macro approaches were critical for social welfare reform. In order to address the challenges women faculty continue to

face, we must commit to continuing the legacy of women pioneers to make changes at the macro level within the academy.

Current Issues of Concern

The leadership of these women and the changes they brought to the academy and CSWE begs the question of why more has not been accomplished especially in the last decade? Why do we not see more women in leadership positions in the academy? Why is it still so difficult to add a feminist voice to social work education and its standards? How can we increase the momentum based on the accomplishments of these pioneers from decades past?

In the Winter 2008 edition of the *JSWE*, guest editors, Tricia Bent-Goodley and Susan Kiss Sarnoff, identified five areas of concern regarding women social work faculty. The issues included "limited data collection, pay and rank inequity, limited mentoring opportunities, the challenges presented of balancing home life and work life in the professoriate, and the unique challenges of diverse groups of women in the academy" (p. 2). The special section of the issue also included four articles focused on the status of women in social work education (Alvarez et al., 2008; Johnson, 2008; Sakamoto, McPhail, Anastas, & Colarossi, 2008; Simon, Roff, & Perry, 2008). The literature confirms that the issues raised in the special section of the *JSWE* are a persistent thorn in the side of women in the academy as they are still relevant today.

Sakamoto, McPhail, Anastas, and Colarossi (2008) brought to our attention the irony that inequity exists between female and male faculty members in a profession focused on promoting social and economic justice. Using secondary data collected by CSWE in 2003, the authors found gender to be a factor in faculty work-load, advancement, and compensation. Females were more likely to be on faculty at smaller, religiously-affiliated institutions with undergraduate-only social work programs. Women were also less likely to be in tenure track

positions. For those on a tenure-line, women were less likely to have been granted tenure at the time of the survey. Women were also found to hold more supportive functions in field and liaison roles than men, who were more likely to function as administrators and researchers. Lastly, Sakamoto and associates found on average, female faculty earned $9,000 less than males, with faculty at undergraduate-only programs in religiously-affiliated institutions earning the least. Data to assess whether women continue to lag behind men in these areas is limited as CSWE currently collects data in the aggregate. Lane and Flowers' (2015) systematic literature review confirms Alvarez and associates' (2008) manuscript is the most recent study on pay inequity to be found in the literature; highlighting the need for more research in this area.

Women's lives differ from that of men. As such, it is important that women continue to address the differences that relegate them to subordinate roles in society and in the academy (Sidanus & Pratto, 1999). Women in the academy still struggle with work-life balance needs that require their attention. Too often, women are forced to compete within the academy while balancing various other roles, such as partner, mother, caregiver, and community supporter. The reality of time restraints can be a big factor in women progressing in the academy and into leadership positions. Women already spend more time on household activities than men, with average daily time spent on household activities at 2.2 hours for women compared to 1.3 hours for men, which becomes as much as 15.4 hours per week for women compared to 9.1 hours per week for men (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). This may not appear to be a huge issue if it were not for the standard expectations of academia: *the privilege of working all the time*.

Another issue of balance unique to women is the notion of taking time off for children before, during, or after taking an academic position. Re-entry into the academy is very difficult

if one takes time off to rear children, but the reality is there is no good time to have children. The longer one stays out of the academy, the less likely one is to get tenure (Wolfinger, Mason, & Goulden, 2009). Women who adjunct are more likely to stay in academics, but such a position also makes it difficult to move up later into leadership positions. Likewise, Noble and Pease (2011) note a "glass ceiling and maternal wall" that women face in social work education. While fatherhood is seen as a career asset, motherhood is a wage penalty. Social work still needs to consider what areas of male privilege continue to exist in the academy, particularly, in how male standards are normalized within our own profession. As Noble and Pease (2011) pointed out "women's lack of success in leadership positions was seen as their problem. This position does not begin to address and question the masculinization of workplace norms…" (p. 31). Sandberg's (2013) popular book, *Lean in,* notes that women just need to be confident and try leadership opportunities, but it ignores the structural bias and leadership expectations that are not congruent with many women's lives.

When considering race, there are even less women of color in leadership positions within the social work academy. Simon, Roff, and Perry (2008) found a lack of mentoring in life-work balance for Black female academic administrators as well as doctoral students and non-administrative faculty members. The authors found a tendency for administrators to provide more psychosocial mentoring for male protégées and less psychosocial mentoring for female protégées. The authors had expected female administrators to provide more support to the next generation of women in the academy; therefore, they were especially concerned given that nearly half of the Black female protégées were paired with Black female administrators. Simon and associates agree with Tillman's (2001) identified lack of opportunity for same-race mentoring especially for women of color in the academy.

Granted, the issues for women in the professoriate are not unique to the field of social work, but given that the field is predominantly female, even in the academy (CSWE, 2014a), women must be empowered to "speak truth to power." Not much has changed since Bent-Goodley and Sarnoff (2008) highlighted the areas of concern as female social work faculty continue to "surrender" to what has been.

Feminist Theoretical Model

It is clear from the history of strong female leaders in the field and the academy that women not only make the personal political, but understand the issues and needs of women in the context of relationships and institutions. The feminist relational theoretical approach, as applied to shared leadership, most closely aligns with this understanding as it posits that social interactions include skills, processes, outcomes, and characteristics along with interplay of norms and power. Thus, this theory of leadership "incorporates the need to transform institutions in such a manner as to promulgate cultural diversity and commitment to greater sharing of power and responsibility" (Lazzari, Colarossi, & Collins, 2009, p. 351). Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) extends this feminist relational theory further by incorporating the roles of *connection* and *culture* in the lives of women (Miller, 1986).

Emanating from the work of feminist scholar Jean Baker Miller and the Jean Baker Miller Training Institute (JBMTI, 2014) at Wellesley College, RCT forces us to take a closer look at the role of differences in the way women and men are socialized, recognizing differences not only in gender roles but differences in women's experiences as defined by societal culture. Miller (1986) outlines the importance of concepts such as domination and subordination, traditional meaning of power, and the cultural context in which these structures impact women's lives.

All women are not equal. Our trajectories are different and should be embraced. To strengthen our position as women, we must embrace our differences, acknowledging that while gender binds us, there is diversity that privileges some over others. Kemp and Brandwein (2010) remind us that while gender is a unifying force among women, "gender equity is inseparable from racial and economic justice" (p. 344).

There is a problem with the traditional notion of leadership and its meaning of power as "power for oneself and power over others" (Miller, 1986, p. 117). RCT promotes women's relational capacity, pivoting the ability to connect with others as indeed a strength and not a weakness, as psychological theories would have one believe. Through the lens of a relational alongside cultural structure, RCT allows for a deeper understanding of the subordinate role assigned to women and the privileges based on stratification of some women over others that forces a disconnection among women (JBMTI, 2014). In this vein it is important to recognize the impact of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ableism among other dimensions that intersect with gender to inform women's experiences, not only as individual dimensions but in ways that these dimensions intersect to inform women's lives; recognizing these as forces of strength in their ability to connect, thus shattering the norms created by the dominant group.

In *Women of Color on the Rise*, Vakalahi and Peebles-Wilkins (2010) discuss Zichy's Six Building Blocks of Leadership. In their articulation of these building blocks, they highlight the importance of self-development as a key tool to undergird the self-esteem of women leaders with an emphasis on introspection, self-control, understanding, risk-taking, achievement, and women having a solid foundation and sense of self. Covington (2007) states that these are possible only through women connecting with each other, the foundation of RCT.

RCT posits women must be the ones to redefine leadership as this new approach does not serve the dominant group. This theoretical approach provides for relational leadership that includes mentoring and the empowerment in mutual and collaborative endeavors (Martin, 2011). In the academy, mentoring is a one way for women in leadership positions to seek ways in which they can create connections for women entering the academy, faculty of color, and others at the margins, by helping to move them forward.

RCT shifts the focus from individuation to connections that includes core principles of *mutual empathy* among those in relationships, such as the mentor and mentee where the empathic interaction allows for another principle, *growth-fostering relationships* where those involved experience "zest or a sense of excitement and vitality; sense of worth or value in the relationship; clarity of purpose; productivity or energy; and, in turn, a desire for more connection" (Hammer, Trepal, & Speedlin, 2014, p. 6). Attention is also given to issues of *power and marginalization* that tend to disconnect and isolate individuals. Applying these core principles to mentoring women in the academy is a good beginning to developing women leaders.

Call for Moving Forward

The impetus of this article was to provide suggestions for eliminating status-based disparities, unifying our stance as women, and strengthening the feminist voice in leadership, research, and education. Women social work educators should be leaders in this change in the academy for all of the reasons already stated: women have been at the forefront of social work since the beginning, women have been historical leaders in the field and the academy, and women know what the issues have been that keep us from achieving leadership roles and a stronger voice. Taking a three-prong approach of eliminating disparities, unifying our stance,

and strengthening the feminist voice in leadership may help in building the momentum that has been stalled in trying to address issues singularly.

Eliminating Status-Based Disparities

In an attempt to address challenges with balancing an academic career with family responsibilities, Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2009) suggest that "sequencing of transitions is a better conceptual tool for understanding women's careers than pipelines" (p.1613). Pipelines suggest that women can follow a typical trajectory toward eventual leadership in careers. However, for many women, particularly in the academy, getting on the pipeline (e.g., tenure track, tenure, and promotion) is itself difficult. Sequencing and allowing faculty multiple trajectories can assist more women and women of color to move up in the academy. Sequencing is more than just stopping the tenure clock. Men and women in the academy should be able to leave and return to their positions without penalty. At this time, many universities put a limit on "years toward tenure" when academics change institutions or leave work for a period of time. Women are more likely to be in this position and are thus, penalized for not having a consistent work history. Women cannot reach levels of leadership if they have to keep starting over in the pipeline. Likewise, advocating for part-time and adjunct faculty to have opportunities to be included in departmental research and committee work would give more women a chance to remain active in academia and count part-time work toward tenure.

Understanding time constraints from the relational cultural perspective suggests that relationships are an important part of well-being, such that family and personal needs should be considered in work assignments. Leaders in the academy can model and respect this need as a support to both male and female academics. Committee assignments, meetings, and teaching

schedules should take into consideration caregiving responsibilities, research interests, and the personal needs of each faculty member. This can be as simple as having meetings at times suitable for both men and women colleagues with children or having meetings by phone or videoconferencing. While the division of labor at home may not change as a result of leaders adopting an RCT frame, such consideration for faculty may result in more productivity leading to more advancement opportunities for women in the academy.

Real structural and normative changes need to occur within the academy and the social work profession for women to reach their potential. We call on the need for more research and transparent data collection to understand disparities. Research is necessary to assess differences between women and men in terms of rank, pay, and other important factors. Without support for this type of research, how can we assess the current status of women and what interventions work and do not?

Similarly, we can do more to assist women in moving toward leadership positions in the academy. Women's leadership development for social work education leaders were initiated in 2008-2009 through CSWE (2014c). The Leadership Institute had three initiatives with an overall goal to promote leaders in social work education, higher education, and the social work profession: The CSWE Leadership Institute in Social Work Education (LISWE); CSWE Leadership Scholars in social work education programs; and the CSWE Leadership networking reception. The LISWE offers pre-conference workshops, the scholars program offers training for leadership, and the reception provides an opportunity for networking. We are encouraged by the list of the 2014 scholarship recipients who attended summer leadership institutes (CSWE, 2014b). This is a start to addressing the issue; however, the kind of leadership training matters. If leadership training simply reflects the same patriarchal, business-based values, philosophy,

and techniques, it does not address normative and structural barriers faced by women in the academy. It is unclear as to the theoretical frame of these trainings and whether traditional models or feminist models of leadership are promoted. CSWE's Leadership Institute initiative makes use of the Harvard Institute of Higher Education, providing 50% of the funding for three of the five yearly awards. However, applicants need to be in higher education administrative positions, such as dean or director, for at least six years and the cost of the program is over $7000. While this program is well-received for enhancing leadership, it does not develop leadership until a woman reaches tenure and an administrative rank. Likewise, the Higher Education Resource Services Bryn Mawr Summer Institute has provided only two awards per year since 2012. While this is again, a good start, the cost of almost $8000, with no accommodations for children or spouses, and requiring a two-week stay seems prohibitive for younger faculty with less means looking to move into administrative or leadership positions or those with young children. If training is truly to promote advancement, then leadership training should be made available to all faculty, not just those who have advanced to leadership positions, thus leveling the field, and empowering all women to utilize leadership skills in their quest for promotions in the academy.

Thus, change must also come from the leadership. While there are no current statistics on the characteristics of social work education administrators, it is known that two-thirds of social work faculty are women (CSWE, 2014a). This becomes a pipeline issue if we are looking at women moving into leadership rather than those already in leadership positions. We must address how we are promoting women in leadership positions given that the number of female academics narrows as we move up the ladder. Providing other sequencing avenues, as noted above, to promote female leadership in the academy, not just waiting for women to make full

promotion, is one way to address this issue. Another solution is to give more consideration for administrative and committee work and less penalization for fewer research or teaching requirements in promotion to equalize opportunity for some faculty. Additional demands are often placed on women and faculty of color to represent the "minority voice" on various department and university committees (Jacobson, 2012; Simon et al., 2008). Faculty with multi-lingual skills are also frequently asked to use their special skills for the benefit of the department. Such faculty should be compensated and given additional weight in the tenure and promotion processes for these additional service expectations and contributions.

Unifying our Stance as Women

One's identity is critical to the lens through which he or she views the world. Women must begin to present as a unifying force particularly if the next generation of women is expected to move us forward. One way to accomplish this is that we must do a better job in preparing students, who are tomorrow's leaders, to advance women's positions through a broadening of understanding of women's trajectory and an understanding of their role in furthering the path for those behind as it has been forged for them. As such, the term *feminism* should be better understood in that it broadens social work's mission to bring about social justice. Specifically, female students should be encouraged to submit applications for scholarships, fellowships, presentations, and manuscripts and encouraged to seek out leadership positions within agencies and the academy. As mentors for rising women, we should provide mentorships and initiate discussion and role play for negotiation skills, an area in which women often lack (Babcock & Laschever, 2007).

As reviewed in the brief history of women's leadership, mentoring can be an important part of a woman's trajectory in the academy. For example, we know that Lindsay was a mentor of Egypt. Both had opportunities to work with pioneering sociologist E. Franklin Frasier, but they first met at the St. Louis Provident Association where Lindsay was Egypt's supervisor and mentor. In 1939, Egypt became an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Howard University, where she worked for ten years as the assistant to Dean Lindsay and was responsible for the medical social work curriculum (Stroman & Waters, 1985). We cannot be sure of the other mentoring roles that took place in the lives of the pioneering women celebrated, but we know that many of them worked together in various organizations or to advance a particular cause. Through their affiliations in what we would now call professional organizations, it is likely that many of these women served as role models for each other. In fact, professional organizations in social work still serve as a point of contact where women can build alliances and scholarly collaborations.

Yet, the need for mentoring of women academics continues to ignore the lack of women available to provide mentorship. Male mentors may or may not be available and they may lack the understanding and support for gender equity. Wolfinger and associates (2009) note that mentoring is particularly an issue for women when time is already at a premium given the many roles women already hold.

There is the need for mentoring but, as Alkadry and Tower (2013) note, mentoring may simply perpetuate the status quo. The question then becomes does "reaching back" result in not moving forward because of time demands and/or status quo expectations? As noted earlier, additional duties are particularly problematic for female academics at the start of their career, if they have small children, or are working in small, less diverse academic units. Too often women

have to juggle their own work expectations and family needs with mentoring colleagues. Thus, mentoring needs to reflect the central tenets of RCT in how it is done and what exactly is expected from the mentoring relationship. Mentoring cannot just be more work, but needs to provide women with opportunities to share the experience, the work, and the product.

Strengthening the Feminist Voice

Women in the academy, particularly those in current leadership positions, must do as First Lady Michelle Obama stated in her speech at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, "You reach back, and you give other folks the same chances that helped you succeed" (National Public Radio, 2012). It may be that because there are more women leaders today than in earlier days that there is some degree of complacency among leaders. Relational cultural theory speaks to connection, as such, feminist leaders must look beyond the differences among us, strengthening our stance as women through mentoring, training, leading, and other initiatives if we are to build on what earlier feminists have done before us. We must strengthen the feminist voice in our curricula, educating both men and women on the meaning of feminism and the parallel discourse with social work (Kemp & Brandwein, 2010; McPhail, 2008). We must find ways to address the level of competition in academia for publications and grant monies. Through more collaborative efforts with untenured, adjunct, or part-time faculty who are more likely to be women, we can use our diverse trajectories as a source of strength.

We have to first be true to ourselves in terms of our own inherent biases toward difference. One author shares an experience in her early years of teaching that led her to question her understanding of feminism and of social work education. While collaborating on building a new course, she made some suggestions that led one female colleague, whom she considered a

mentor, to state, "you are merely an assistant professor; your power is only in the classroom. I am a tenured full professor and I can do what I want." True to the principle of RCT, this power imbalance served to disconnect and impede the mentoring relationship that the author had envisioned. Women in the academy must seek to dismiss such power structure in effort to collaboratively strengthen our collective voices.

One way to start is to teach social work students about privilege and reaching back, women's leadership, and feminism. Students need to have an understanding of how women leaders have provided innovation and justice-oriented leadership throughout the profession's history. Students should understand how women have moved through fear and against social norms, created new opportunities, challenged the status quo, while valuing diversity. Recognizing and promoting these women and female-centric models of leadership, such as RCT, within our own curriculum can encourage future social work and academic leaders among our students. Social work curricula must provide all students with adequate knowledge of female leadership history, feminist theory, and diverse leadership models.

Similarly, in cases of female leaders who follow the status quo or are not aware of female-centric leadership models, increased sensitivity training and awareness of the different needs of women in the academy and support for them is necessary. Not doing so perpetuates the cycle: Female leaders who learn male models of leadership or are afraid of following models such as RCT leadership will not make institutional change by simply being there. Institutional change comes from real diversity of not just people, but actions. It is recognized that feminist leaders must deal with overcoming perceptions of those who may view their position as "too political" but feminist leaders must communicate this need for change in a delicate balance between advocating for more mentorship and institutional change, while fitting in with their

institution's ideas of leadership. Providing training and support in our professional organizations

for these women to make change at their institutions would be a first step. WE-CRONES

(Women's Ex-Commission, Rotated Off, Now Elders in Solidarity) is one example of how

former leaders of the Women's Council continue to mentor rising women leaders in the academy

(Bent-Goodley & Sarnoff, 2008).

We offer one tangible example of challenging the status quo and unifying as women in

the writing of this article. We are diverse women working together, talking about different

experiences, and using our shared strengths. We are of diverse academic rankings, from

institutions of differing size and geographic locale, and vary in terms of age, race, and ethnicity.

We dismissed hierarchy and listed authors by alphabetical order. We supported each other in

reframing and concerns about reprisals.

We acknowledge there are many feminist theories that could have been used to guide our

suggestions, but chose RCT as our guiding theoretical frame. For those interested in other

feminist theories, Saulnier (1996) highlights the contributions and limitations of well-known

feminist theories and provides examples for application at the micro, mezzo, and macro level.

The book emphasizes the multiple voices of feminism, and in turn empowers individual feminist

scholars.

Conclusion

The legacy of Flexner's (1915) influence on the profession is still seen today even in the

academy. Social work as a collective must debunk the power of other disciplines over the

determination of social work as an institution. Just as Flexner's prestige gave him an unjustified

power over the social work profession, many of the issues in social work academics are the

legacy of other disciplines. Yet, social work has not progressed in terms of respect as other female-dominated professions, such as nursing and teaching. Social work academics need to honor who we are as social workers who advocate for social justice in order to move forward from the status quo in the academy. We have given up too much to fit in with the academy and must maintain our social work values and professional ethics. As a "women's profession," we have given no legitimacy for being "other."

The issues faced by women in the academy mirror women's image within the greater society. While there has been progress, women are still not equal to men. Sakamoto and associates (2008) called on social work educators to realign the status of women in the academy with the mission of the profession. We agree, social workers in the academy must challenge our leaders, as well as the university system as a whole, in addition to advocating for societal changes that will affect the social work academic to the front line social worker.

Social work leadership especially needs to reclaim the profession and who we are in the academy. We must offer required classes on social work history, female leadership, and feminism. Challenging our own organizations such as CSWE, NASW, and the academy in general to make real structural change will not be easy; however, the very charge of the Women's Council is to ignore status-based hierarchy and strengthen our voice. The Council has worked to provide more incentives and support for research on and for women. Politically, we could explore how collaboration with other professional organizations that consider the needs of women, such as the Association of American University Women, can strengthen the collective voice of women. Female social work academics cannot go it alone as we are not the only ones facing these issues.

We conclude this article by challenging all readers to reconsider the status and role of women in the academy. Women are relational beings and should recognize and embrace, not defend, such a characteristic. We stand on the shoulders of giants and advocate for more relational-cultural approaches to leadership. We honor the sacrifices women make to pursue an academic career. We call on senior faculty to foster productive mentoring relationships with junior faculty by partnering in projects and offering advice in terms of work-life balance. To the alumni of CSWE leadership initiatives, use the knowledge gained to "reach back" and assist emerging female leaders, thus incorporating feminist values in your leadership. As women in the academy our gender binds us and our diversity strengthens us. Let us make use of the strength in the dimensions of our diversity. Social work as an institution needs innovators to work against the grain, just as the leaders of the past have done. We challenge our students everyday to be the next generation of leaders, we must lead by example.

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