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A Comparison of the Original Objectives
of Foreign Students Enrolled in American
Schools of Social Work with Their Per-
ception of the Education Actually Received

By

Hielkje Brugman Sheneman

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A PROJECT REPORT

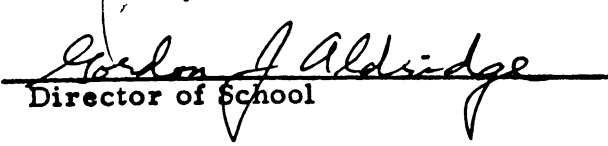
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research report is to survey the American social work education received by some foreign students as they perceived it, compared with their original objectives for studying social work in the United States.

Many persons come to the United States each year to be trained in the general methods and philosophy of American social work. Many of these students, prior to coming to the United States, have been social workers in their home countries and have practiced for varying lengths of time. Some have been supervisors in agencies and as such have been concerned with the immediate details of relating welfare programs to client needs. Others have been government officials working to raise the standards of social welfare in their home countries. All of them come to learn from the philosophy and practice of social welfare in the United States.

The great majority of these students are coming to the American schools of social work for a specific purpose, mainly to learn about the methods and skills of social casework as they are uniquely used in the United States. These students desire to compare these with the existing methods and philosophy in their homelands and to apply them where found useful to social welfare practice of their own countries. There is an appropriate concern among social work educators regarding

the value and applicability of American social work in terms of philosophy and program in foreign countries.¹

The uniqueness of American social work education for the European student is related by several writers. Among these writers, Dr. Jan F. de Jongh, Director of the School of Social Work in Amsterdam, emphasizes the importance of casework. He writes in Social Casework, "That American social work is a far more mature profession than social work anywhere else is largely due to casework."²

What Dr. de Jongh sees is the contrast between the European social worker's interest in broad social security measures and the American social worker's concern for individualized services contributing to greater personal adjustment. There is a difference between the European and American social worker in the extent to which they seek to understand the emotional component in every need. Dr. de Jongh feels that "European social work as a whole has overlooked the needs of personal adjustment, even in a system of complete social security."³

The European student who comes to this country to study social work fields, philosophy and methods, arrives with a certain set of expectations which have been acquired by one means or another through experiences in his home country. Some students expected to learn more about human behavior and how to deal with the emotional

¹Hilda Arndt et al., A Study of Field Instruction for International Students (New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1957), pp. 6-7.

²Jan F. de Jongh, "A European View of American Social Work," Social Casework, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, (1950), p. 151.

³Ibid., p. 152.

problems of clients in a social work setting. Many of them expected a university set up as the European with much freedom of choice in the study program and a less rigid time schedule.

This study was interested in whether or not the expectations established by the students prior to enrollment in the American school of social work were met by the social work education received in this country.

Since there does exist a contrast in social work practice and even social welfare goals between some European countries and the United States, as Dr. de Jongh has pointed out in his article "A European View of American Social Work," this writer was concerned with how these foreign social work students would evaluate their satisfactions with the training they received. In handling the measurement of how satisfied these foreign social work students were with their American training, the questionnaire used in this study sought only a dichotomous answer, yes or no, on the question: "Does the American Social Work School where you are presently studying meet with the expectations you had before coming to the United States?"⁴ Further in the questionnaire the opportunity is provided to qualify these answers by additional comment.

It was realized that a more accurate and searching assessment of what satisfactions were felt might have been obtained by using a direct interview method rather than the questionnaire, but there were not enough foreign students in social work available to make an interviewing approach feasible.

The questionnaire used for this study had fifteen questions dealing with factual data about the sample group. Further seven

⁴See page 38, question 25.

questions were designed to understand what expectations they had prior to enrollment and by what means they derived these expectations, seven other questions were asked to obtain the reactions to their training experience. A copy of the questionnaire may be seen on page 35.⁵

In developing the questionnaire a trial use of it was performed by having two foreign students in social work complete the questionnaire. Although the results did not alter the general outline of the questionnaire, some rewording of the questions was suggested by this experience. In designing the questionnaire the writer followed suggestions laid down by McMillen in his Statistical Methods.

Although the literature of social work education and of foreign student education is extensive, little specific information regarding the education of foreign students in American schools of social work is available. The Bibliography lists publications which have direct significance to this study.⁶

In summary, foreign students come to their American training in social work with a set of expectations against which to test their new experience. To what extent these expectations are realistic and are met by the American schools of social work is a question raised by this research project. We recognize it is possible that even with the student whose expectations are not met and frustrations develop, he may, by his capacity for making adjustments, develop new expectations and new satisfactions therefrom.

⁵See Appendix.

⁶See page 32.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

To obtain needed information a letter with a questionnaire¹ was sent to foreign students of several schools of social work in the United States. These schools were:

Michigan State University
Wayne State University
University of Michigan
New York School of Social Work
University of Chicago
Western Reserve University

A follow-up letter was sent to those students who failed to respond to the original request.²

In order to make the sample as homogeneous as possible the students were chosen from European countries. At this time there is little or no exchange of students from the Central and Eastern European countries, including Russia. Greece was excluded for the reason that its culture is less homogeneous with the rest of the European cultures as represented in the sample.

Questionnaires were sent to 31 students of whom 21 replied. Two of these questionnaires were not filled out since these students felt the questionnaire did not apply to them. One of them had become

¹Pages 34-38.

²Page 39.

an American citizen, while the other student, an American citizen, mistakenly had been on the list of foreign students. Thus a total of 19 questionnaires were used in this study. Wayne State University did not have a foreign student enrolled from the European area at the time of the study. Michigan State University had one student as did the University of Michigan.

Age

The age of the students in the sample ranged from twenty-six to forty-five.

Table I--Age of Students at Date of Survey, February 1958

Age in years	Number of students
Total	19
26 - 30	3
31 - 35	9
36 - 40	3
41 - 45	4

Of the nineteen students five were married. One spouse of these married students lived in the home country. None of the students reported having any children. One student reported a relative dependent upon him.

Home Countries

The students in this sample represented nine European countries. Seventeen of these students planned to return to their home country.

One student planned to stay in the United States for reason of having married an American citizen. One student was unable to make a statement regarding his future plans due to upset in the political situation of his home country. Of these students seventeen came to study social work in the United States. One student had come to the United States originally on a trip for reasons other than study and a second student entered the country as a political refugee. The great majority of students in the sample planned to use their acquired social work training in their home countries.

Table II--Countries Represented

Home Country of Students	Number of Students
Total	19
Denmark	1
England	3
France	4
Hungary	1
Italy	2
Netherlands	4
Scotland	1
Sweden	2
Switzerland	1

Because there are too few students belonging to separate countries of origin, it is not statistically useful to break down their responses according to the countries from which they come. In analyzing the foreign students' responses to the questionnaire it has been necessary to treat them as a single group without regard to national sub-groups.

Positions Held Prior to American Education

All but two of the students in the sample held positions in social work in their home countries. The seventeen with prior social work experience had positions in such fields as child welfare, medical social work, social work education, family casework and group work. See Table III.

Table III--Positions Held by Students in Home Countries

Field of Social Work	Positions Held	Number of Students
	Total . . .	19
Social Work Education	Dean of School of Social Work 2 Directors of Fieldwork	3
Child Welfare	Director Children's Home Juvenile Court worker Area Office director Child placement agency Psychiatric social worker	5
Medical Social Work	Director of Social Service Dept. of a hospital 3 Medical Social workers 2 Workers with physical and mentally handicapped	6
Family Case Work	Family case worker	1
Group Work	Director Settlement House Group worker	2
Other	Attorney Teacher	2

Seven students, a minority, considered that they had a specific position waiting for them on return to the home country. Of these seven,

two had previous experience in social work education, one was administrator of a children's institution, and the remaining four were practitioners with responsibilities in supervising other workers. In spite of the fact that this sample was probably considering its American training in the light of its applicability to specific job requirements in the positions waiting for them, the majority felt their expectations were satisfied. This is discussed more fully on page 23.

Previous Social Work Experience

The students studying American social work have held different responsibilities within the social work profession in their home countries. Many of them were holding administrative, supervisory or teaching jobs, while others worked on a practice level.

In the sample group these various responsibilities overlap with one respondent, for example, doing supervision, teaching and practice. More than half of the students were involved in supervision or in practice. Table IV shows the nature of these responsibilities as they are distributed among the students in the sample.

Table IV--Responsibilities of Students in Previous Positions

Responsibilities	Number of Students
Administration	8
Practitioners	13
Supervision	10
Teaching	4

Knowledge of English

When the Arndt study¹ was made the schools of social work were asked to rank in order of importance those qualifications which they believed would prepare the student most adequately for their study in American schools. Proficiency in English was rated first by thirteen schools out of the thirty in the study. The necessity of spending time and energy for developing a proficiency in a new language is a serious handicap to a student already facing problems of adjusting to a new culture and of studying in schools having unfamiliar methods and philosophy of education.

The information in Table V below, reported in response to question thirteen of the questionnaire, indicates that more than half of the students in the sample felt they had an excellent or good knowledge of writing, speaking, and reading English. The remainder, therefore, must have had an important language handicap in studying in the American schools.

Table V--Knowledge of English Upon Entry to the United States

Fields	Total	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Writing	19	6	6	4	3
Speaking	19	7	4	7	1
Reading	19	7	7	3	2

A good working knowledge of English, however, will not guarantee that the foreign student will understand the exact meanings of words

¹Hilda Arndt et al., A Study of Field Instruction for International Students (New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1957), pp. 6-7.

and terms. For example, a student in social work who had little knowledge of American government and history thought that federal and state governments were the same bodies, the terms used interchangeably, because of her literal translation of the word "state" in her native language. This caused some considerable confusion to this student and one of her teachers until the basis for the problem was discovered.

Previous Education

Fifteen of the students had previous education in social work in their home countries. Among these students one had received a doctorate in economics as well as a social work diploma. Three students reported previous education in social studies. Others had received their education in sociology and psychology, political science, education, and one had received a degree of doctor of law. In the Arndt study it was shown that the schools of social work placed importance on previous social work education and experience in ranking significant factors for adequate preparation for foreign social work students. A large percentage of the students in the sample--fifteen of the nineteen students--had received previous social work education in the home country. Seventeen of the nineteen students (see Table III), also a considerable number, had previous social work experience in their home countries. Fifteen of the nineteen students reported that they had no previous education in America. Four students had received American education prior to their enrollments in the schools of social work. The lengths of their prior American education varied from six months to two years.

CHAPTER III

FOREIGN STUDENTS' ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE ARE MET BY AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

Factors Influencing and Deciding Study Abroad

Influences upon a person's behavior may come from many sources. What decision a person makes, however, is dependent upon the influences which he selects to react to; in other words, what influence or reason seems most important in explaining his decision.

Question 16 of the questionnaire presents some of the common sources from which an influence upon the student might emerge. Insofar as they may shape expectancy, these sources of influence differ in their completeness. For example, meeting and working with an American social worker or a friend who has been trained in American schools should provide an experience developing a more complex expectation of American social work education than merely the availability of a scholarship or the urgings of a government official.

In replying to question 16 the students were asked to check those factors which they thought influenced their study abroad. They were asked to add other factors if they felt there were any others which had special meaning for them. The number of factors listed by the students ranged from two to five, with an average of 3.1. A breakdown of replies to question 16 is presented in Table VI .

Table VI--Factors Selected by Students as Influencing Their Decision to Study in America

Influencing Factors	Number of Students
Total	19
Reading about American social work	14
Meeting American social workers in home country	7
Previous training in America	3
Scholarships available	7
Government and other officials	1
Own choice	16
Wish to learn American casework	4
Social work further developed than in home country	3
Other*	3

* This item includes: own efforts supported by employer; field connected with law; and meeting Dutch social workers trained in the United States.

The answers to question 16 indicated that the majority, fourteen students in all, had learned about American social work from reading. Several indicated, however, that additional factors also contributed to their decision. It is expected that reading presents some problems in shaping expectations which are entirely realistic. One writer cites the narrow scope of professional social work literature that is available abroad. "It is largely professional teaching material which the European reads; there are no good general books on the actual practice of social work in the United States and Canada."¹ It happens that only six of the

¹Marjorie J. Smith, and Eileen L. Younghusband, "Exporting Casework to Europe," Proceedings of the Council on Social Work Education (1953), p. 87.

foreign students who derived their concept of social work in this manner, reading among other sources, felt that their expectations had been met.

While these students indicated they had received information through reading they also had obtained information from other sources along with it. An example of this would be meeting of American social workers. It was the theoretical view of the writer that the more personal experience of meeting American social workers in the home country would provide a more realistic background for shaping the foreign student's expectations. However, this was not proven to be particularly the case in the sample studied. On question 16 of the questionnaire seven students indicated "meeting" an American social worker as an influence, but subsequently in their answers to question 25 which asks if expectations regarding American training have been met, only two in this group felt that their expectations had been met.

In various other fields there is the general idea that the government is an active promoter of the study abroad by their nationals. The responses on this questionnaire did not indicate much government influence upon students coming to the United States for social work training. The one respondent who did check "government or other officials" as an influence also felt it important to check "own choice." The discussion below, however, does note a high incidence of national interest relating to the interest in professional advancement by this group of students.

Question 17 of the questionnaire approaches the subject of what directs the foreign social work student to American social work training in another way. While there are certain factors influencing the decision of the student in America, there are other factors that help the student make the actual decision. The students were asked to check from among four possible factors those which they felt were of a

determining nature to their decision. They were asked to add others which they felt had special meaning to them. For example, the one student who felt he needed American training to hold his position also checked "Better equipped to serve the country."

The number of factors listed by the respondents to this question ranged from one to four, with an average of 2.1. A summary of the replies to question 17 is presented in Table VII.

Table VII--Factors Selected by Students as Determining the Choice of Study of American Social Work

Determining Factors	Number of Students
Total. . . .	19
To hold present job	1
Better position in social work	5
Status in home country	2
Better equipped to serve the country	14
To do a better job	3
Interest in experience of living abroad	3
Other*	6

* Under this item the following remarks were: "To develop case work training," "To improve practice as caseworker," "High standards of American social work," "To find out how much can be applied of American social work," "To broaden outlook," "Cheaper financially" (student had previously studied in U. S. A.).

It is interesting to note that national interest is so highly reflected in this set of replies to question 17 of the questionnaire. We may suppose, considering that this group was enrolled in casework and generic social work, that at this time a greater European interest was developing in the casework approach as a method of giving help to people

over and above the impersonal systems of social security as seen in the home country. We find two currents of parallel interest in the group studied; one of these is the feeling that American training will enable the social work practitioner to better serve his country, and the other is the expectation that American social work training emphasizes individualized services seeking to understand the emotional component of every need.

Having raised again the distinctiveness of American social work philosophy, we will briefly note the appeal which this holds for the European student. Eleven students in the sample replied affirmatively to the question if American social work practice appealed to them. Three students reported having ambivalence as there were certain aspects which did appeal to them and other aspects with which they did not agree. One student answered negatively thus, "Disproportion of interest given to clients presenting personality problems, and reluctance [of American social worker] to deal with realistic problems."

The aspects of American social work which appealed to some students included:

- "the more scientific approach"
- "emphasis on human growth and behavior"
- "the person considered as a whole"
- "more highly skilled social work techniques"

There was, as has already been noted, a minimum of negative feeling about American social work practice. Some of the undesirable aspects found by some of the students were that the American social worker is often only a technician, that while excellent work is done with individuals, welfare programs as such, are underdeveloped; that professional social work is only an actuality in urban areas, and finally, that the approach is "too Freudian."

Interest in Special Fields of Social Work

Questions 18 and 22 of the questionnaire explored the interest which the students in this sample expressed in various fields and methods of practice. To learn if American social work education actually met the original objectives of the students in this sample, they are grouped according to their special fields of interest in the discussion. Questions 18 and 22 were found to cover much the same material. The responses to these questions were so similar in every case that it seemed the best for the purpose of this study to use the terms "special interests" and "original objectives," as used in these questions of the questionnaire interchangeably.

Question 22 provided five categories of special interests. The special interests were listed as casework, group work, community organization, generic social work, development of social policy, and "other." Since supervision and teaching appeared several times under "other," a category of this answer was created when the replies were tabulated. A breakdown of the studied group among these fields of interest is presented in Table VIII on page 18. It is possible for the students to check more than one field of interest, but it was believed that any further tabulation would not add clarity to the discussion which follows.

Casework Training as Original Objective

In the sample of this study it becomes clear that many of the students came to the United States to study casework. Nine students mentioned this as their only objective, while others had some interest in casework as well. The total number expressing some or all of their interest in this area number fifteen of the nineteen students. Their

Table VIII--Special Interests of Students at Time of Enrollment in American Schools of Social Work

Special Interests at Time Of Enrollment	Number of Students
Total. . . .	19
Case work	15
Group work	3
Community Organization	3
Generic social work	8
Social policy	4
Supervision and Teaching*	5
Research	1
Other**	4
Total. [†] . . .	43

* This category did not appear on the questionnaire but was entered by five students.

** This item includes: psycho-dynamic approach; legal aspects of social work; medical social work; and child guidance clinic work.

[†] The total is greater than the number of students in the sample since students were permitted to check more than one field of interest.

opinions indicated that casework is not offered in any of the European schools.

While it may be difficult to apply social casework as a method in other countries, studies are in process to evaluate the extent and nature of possible application. The International Training Program of the Social Security Administration has gathered from trainees some of what these trainees considered to be of value in their social work training. One of the trainees from the Netherlands wrote:

The greatest impression was the fact that casework and casework attitudes were accepted nearly everywhere. Casework attitude and method is being more accepted in the Netherlands and this is certainly due to the fact that so many of us had an opportunity to see casework in practice in the United States. Besides . . . students can observe the democratic way in which conferences are managed and the acceptance of the other person with a different point of view.²

The students reporting in this study anticipated that they would need to interpret some of the casework principles in their home countries and that full acceptance would come slowly. Considerable adaptations or readjustments to the home environment might well have to be made, according to several students. Three students felt almost all of their training would be applicable in their home countries. These students were not from the same country. It was interesting that fellow students who came from their respective countries indicated a more cautious feeling about the acceptability of social work in their home country.

Group Work Training as Original Objective

Three students indicated that group work was their original objective. One student felt that the school had met with his expectations, while the other two students found much of their training valuable but felt the approach was too Freudian. Both students were from the same country. They had been reading about American group work in their home country previously and felt this influenced their decision to study in America.

²U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Social Security Administration, Social Workers Abroad Assess Their Training in the United States, International Service, Washington, D.C., April, 1955.

Community Organization as Original Objective

None of the students replied that their original objective was to study community organization in this country, but three students mentioned this as a special interest. This would seem to indicate again that the European students are primarily interested in learning about methods and skills of individualized services contributing to greater personal adjustment. It is necessary for a social worker to understand casework first before he can become professionally interested in a field as community organization and apply himself in that field effectively.

Three students, however, mentioned community organization as a special interest. Of these, three students, one came for a one year program but remained a second year, during which he acquired an interest in community organization. The second student's original objective was to receive training in group work and supervision. This student also checked "community organization." The same student felt that the philosophy in the school of social work was too Freudian and "not enough philosophically thought through."

The third of these students mentioning community organization as a special interest came originally to study social work research. This person was disappointed upon finding that this research interest could not be met in the school of social work where he was enrolled. He therefore became interested in community organization and subsequently felt very satisfied with it.

This student was the only one of the sample group who indicated that his original objective had changed since his decision to study in an American school of social work.

Prior to the American training this respondent had received a doctors degree in economics and a social work degree. His position

previous to enrollment was director of field work in a school of social work, to which he intended to return after his American training. It follows that this person with his experience in teaching social work and his prior studies would be inclined to be interested in American social work research methods.

Generic Social Work as Original Objective

Two students wrote that their original objective was to gain understanding in general social work as practiced in the United States without concern for special fields of practice. These students came from different countries and intended to take a one year program but remained for two years. Both had earned degrees in social work in their home countries, one having attended a one year training institute and the other having attended a two year course at the University of Sorbonne. These two students checked one of the reasons for their study in the United States as "status in their home country" (see Table VII). Both students held positions in child welfare. A total of eight students checked generic social work as a special interest. Five of these individuals were satisfied with the training at their particular American schools while two expressed both positive and negative points of view and one did not offer his opinion.

Supervision and Teaching as Original Objective

As one of their original objectives supervision and/or teaching was mentioned by seven students. Of these, four felt their objectives prior to enrollment had been met by the school, while three others made some negative remarks along with mentioning positive impressions of

the American training received thus far. For these students supervision and teaching as such were not subjects offered in the curriculum at their level in the graduate school; consequently, what criticism did appear was focused on the special fields in which they were studying, of which the teaching and supervision aspects were only incidental.

The Development of Social Policy as Original Objective

No student listed an interest in American social policy as an original objective for study in the United States. Again this may relate to the fact that the reputation of American social work focuses on its methods for providing individualized services rather than on unique welfare programs. There was, however, an acquired interest in American social policy reported by four students responding to question 22 of the questionnaire. This interest was indicated without additional comment and was not related by the respondents to the question of fulfilling their expectations.

Other Interests Not Specified in the Questionnaire

Of the respondents to this question there were five who listed other special interests in studying social work in the United States. These included an interest in the psycho-dynamic approach, interest in the legal aspects of social work, interest in medical social work, interest in child guidance and interest in research. One student felt the training he received met with his expectations. This student was the one expressing his interest in the "psycho-dynamic" approach. The others did not feel they received the training they expected. The student who was looking for a study of the legal aspects of social work had previously

received a doctorate in law. He left his social work studies and shifted to the field of political science where he is now more satisfied.

One student came with the original objective of studying research in social work. This person was not able to receive training in research at his particular school, however, switching to community organization satisfied him. He felt this specialization was well worth-while and was not available in his home country.

Summary

The stated original objectives of the students in the sample concentrated on casework and generic social work with particular interest in improvement of their casework skills and enlargement upon their psychodynamic knowledge.

The question was asked: "Were the expectations of these students met in their educational experience in the American social work schools?" As seen by the students, the answer of the majority is "yes." Only one student in the sample reported that he could not find any satisfactory field of interest in social work and shifted entirely to another field of study. It should be noted that this student had attained a professional status in law before coming to the United States, he entered the country as a political refugee and entered social work study because he could not, at the time, practice his profession in the United States.

In spite of the fact that the students generally evaluated their American educational experience as conforming to expectations, their replies indicate that adjustments by them were needed. Such adjustments were not unlike American students themselves undergo in social work education which places some emphasis on recognition of clients' emotional needs plus self-awareness on the part of the social worker to

his own reactions to his clients' emotional needs. This self-awareness with its applications of Freudian psychology upon self and client is arrived at with some emotional difficulty. This problem may be compounded in the case of the foreign student who is accustomed to think of social work in relation to mechanisms of social security rather than to the emotional component of human behavior.

It happens that while the students in the sample report that their expectations have been met in their American social work education, they also, in many instances, add comments of a qualifying nature. For instance, one student wrote, "too much of a Freudian approach." Another wrote, "Too exclusively Freudian, not philosophically thought through." Still another wrote, "Casework loses sight of the whole community." A different sort of qualifying comment read, "Not enough opportunity for free exchange and personal reading." Remarks such as these suggest that while expectations in the main have been met in the view of the students, the philosophy of American social work and the methods of teaching and practice have required modifications in the attitudes of the foreign student.

CHAPTER IV

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF AMERICAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

The selected suggestions offered in this chapter are those which have been made by students in the sample who answered questions 24, 26 and 29 of the questionnaire.

Immediately one recognizes that there are difficulties for the foreign student who is learning in a language other than his native tongue and in a culture which differs from that of his homeland. Most of these difficulties would apply to the foreign student regardless of what studies he intended to follow, but social work education presents some difficulties for the foreign student which are unique.

One of these difficulties as experienced by the foreign student is expressed as "too many class hours . . . not enough opportunity to browse." There tends to be in schools of social work a rigid pattern of required courses, against which some of the students react as did the following student, "I feel very strongly that it is a waste of time and money to take the basic courses." Some of the students implied that there was not a careful examination of what their previous training has been, so that they would not have to repeat basic courses but have their former study recognized.

Another problem confronting the social work trainee in the United States is his own consideration and evaluation of how receptive the society in his home country will be to the application of casework

methods. Six of the nineteen students in the sample felt that casework would be met with question or reservation in their home countries. Such a realization undoubtedly affects the learning process. This being the case, some of the students felt that American teachers of social work should be better informed as to the welfare practices and philosophy in foreign countries. As one student put it, "Social work and its training in home country should be higher estimated." The statement of this student has a defensive tone. When such defensiveness arises it is detrimental to the learning process and has been stated that, "In general the learning process across cultures increases in difficulty when there exist defensive stereotypes between the nations."¹

The problem of applicability of American social work abroad is a concern to educators and the foreign student. A prominent social work educator, Cora Kasius, expressed this concern after her experience as a Fulbright lecturer at the School of Social Work in Amsterdam.²

Several of the respondents in this study suggested the use of seminars to discuss the particular social service needs in their home countries and to explore the applicability of American social work methods to these problems. One student suggested the participation of American students in such seminars "to make them interested in what is done successfully in other ways in other countries." Another wrote, "There seems to be some trend toward government responsibility in social welfare in America, so maybe America could learn something of value from experiences in other types of social work."

¹Jeanne Watson, and Ronald Lippitt, Learning Across Cultures, A Study of Germans Visiting America, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1955), pp. 48-49.

²Cora Kasius, "Casework Developments in Europe," Social Casework, Vol. XXXII, No. 7 (1951), pp. 281-288.

A seminar of this type was successfully conducted at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, with students participating from India, Israel and Egypt.³ Inter-university seminars of this type might be another way of organizing useful exchange of ideas.

According to Gordon Hamilton, social work cannot be isolated from the democratic frame of reference and culture in which it developed.⁴ The truth of this was apparently evident to foreign observers of American social work. Several students in this sample indicated a great need for understanding at least the basic American cultural patterns and philosophies, which they held as important to the satisfactory study of social work in the United States. Along these lines they made such suggestions as, "better orientation in American culture," "a chance to discuss American culture with others," and "traveling about America." While understanding the American cultural scene may enable the foreign student to understand more deeply his American social work education, it will still be necessary for the foreign student to face the work of relating his knowledge, skills and techniques to the necessities and level of acceptance in his home country. Cora Kasius has commented on this as follows: "Casework, if it is to develop soundly in European cultures, must be related to the needs, attitudes, feelings and cultural patterns of each country; it must be developed in its native soil."⁵

³Theses have been written by three students regarding the communication process during the seminar and also on the applicability of the seminar topics to specific problems in certain cultures.

⁴Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Work (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

⁵Kasius, op. cit., p. 287.

Psychological involvement of oneself and the elaborations upon relationship therapy seems to be difficult for foreign students even more so than for American students. Since dealing with emotional problems of individuals is less likely to be associated with social work in European countries these students are less likely to expect any psychological involvement. Several students suggested that the prospective foreign student be given adequate advance knowledge of this aspect of American social work education. One suggested that an orientation program include what is necessary for "realistic anticipation and orientation to psychological difficulties for social work students."

In summarizing, the foreign students in the sample of this study felt their broad and generalized expectations for their American social work training were met, yet at the same time they were hopeful for a means of acquiring fuller and more useful knowledge of the schools' expectations. It seems that several foreign students did not feel they had benefitted from existing orientation programs, either due to lack of their attendance or to ineffectiveness of the program itself.

The questionnaire used in this study was not designed to make any study regarding the relative effectiveness of orientation programs existing at this time. In the Arndt study of field instruction for foreign social work students a proposed orientation program of the Institute of International Education is discussed.⁶ The students reached in this study do cite the need for a broadened and more carefully planned orientation.

⁶Arndt, op. cit., pp. 9-14.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

To obtain information in regard to this study questionnaires were mailed to foreign students enrolled in schools of social work at the time of this study. The sample was too small, nineteen students, to be subjected to statistical analysis of the data. Tabulation, content analysis, and interpretation became the working operations.

It was attempted in the questionnaire to obtain information in some rather fine differentiations, such as with shades of meaning between the influencing and deciding factors (questions 16 and 17) leading to American social work study; also differentiation was attempted between the original objectives on enrollment and the special social work interests of the students (questions 18 and 22). Through the experience of using the questionnaire the writer is doubtful that this is a very good tool for reaching such "shaded" information; rather in such instances the direct interview might have been more productive.

On the crucial question, number 24 in the questionnaire, dealing with whether or not the student's expectations have been met in his American training, it seems it would have been better to provide a rating scale of possible answers rather than the dichotomous "yes-no" reply.

By far the large majority of those responding to the questionnaire planned to return to their home countries. They might have come for American social work training for multiple personal reasons but most felt that one of the deciding factors for their study was to become better

equipped to serve their country. Nearly half of the respondents had held administrative responsibilities, while slightly over half of them were involved in supervision and a few had held teaching positions. More than two-thirds held positions involving practice. Over three quarters of all the students had earned social work degrees or certificates in their home countries. From this group of students in the sample the following was concluded:

1. From the sample it appears that casework holds the greatest interest for the foreign social work student. This was the interest of the majority of students in the sample and a similar majority felt that good casework training was not available in their home countries.
2. The large majority of the sample felt that their expectations were met by American social work education.
3. Whatever personal reasons foreign social work students may be serving through study in the United States, the majority in the sample also rank very high the expectation that their American training will better equip them to serve their home countries. Foreign students see their social work studies in explicit terms of "serving the country" as well as in terms of "serving the client."
4. While foreign students appear highly motivated to study casework with its orientation on problems of individual adjustment, several feel this view is overdone in American training to the neglect of problems in the total community.
5. Within the scope of this sample there seemed to be no effect on whether or not expectations were met that could be related to the foreign student's source of information about American

social work. The students in this sample felt they had a realistic idea of American social work whether they obtained this information by reading, meeting American social workers, or other sources.

6. Nearly all the students felt there ought to be a more adequate and more carefully planned orientation to their study. Fulfillment of recommendations made by the students regarding specific orientation for expected psychological problems encountered during social work training is considered to be of great importance for helping them achieve their purposes. Other areas for improvement in orientation programs are increased information about American culture, political institutions, philosophy, communications, teaching methods and student-professor relationships, according to the students questioned by this study.

There is a special need to give attention to the learning experience of foreign students in American schools of social work. These graduates will have less opportunity than their American counterparts to use a professional association of practitioners as a means of correcting learning errors.

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APPENDIX

Michigan State University
School of Social Work
East Lansing, Michigan

February 22, 1958

Dear fellow student,

As a second year foreign student in the School of Social Work of Michigan State University, I would appreciate your assistance in regard to my research project.

To help determine whether foreign students in social work feel the American social work education actually meets the original purpose of their professional training I have prepared the enclosed questionnaire. Although I realize that you probably have many questionnaires and papers to fill out, I hope you will be kind enough to answer these questions as I believe it might, in some small way, be of help to other foreign students who will follow us.

Please read through the questions before answering and return the completed form in the stamped, self-addressed envelope, if possible, before March 21, 1958.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Hielkje Sheneman

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Social Work
East Lansing, Michigan

QUESTIONNAIRE

Your responses will be kept confidentially and will not in any manner be revealed to your school, your country, or any other resources.

If additional space is needed, please write on the back or attach an extra page.

1. What is your age? _____
2. Are you single or married? Single _____ Married _____
 - a. If married, is your spouse in this country? _____ In home country? _____
is your family in this country? _____ In home country? _____
3. If you have children, how many? _____
 - a. If you have other family or relatives to take care of, how many? _____
4. What is your home country? _____
5. In what country (countries) were you brought up? _____

6. Do you plan to go back to your own country? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, what type of job do you expect to have? _____
7. Is there a position waiting for you in your home country? _____
If so, do you want to have this position? Yes _____ No _____ If you answered No, tell in limited words why not _____

8. Do you plan to stay in the United States? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, why? _____

9. What training and/or degrees, beyond high school, did you obtain before coming to the United States?

<u>Years of training and degree</u>	<u>Field</u>
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____

10. Before coming to the U. S. A. for training, what position did you hold, if any?
 Short description of job _____
 Field of work _____
 State if it was on a practice, supervisory, or administrative level _____
11. Were you engaged in any voluntary work related to social work?
 In United States? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, describe _____
 In home country? Yes ____ No ____ If yes, describe _____
12. If any, what American schooling did you have before you were enrolled in the social work school? _____
13. When you came to the U. S. A. how was your knowledge of English?
 a. In writing? Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor ____
 b. In speaking? Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor ____
 c. In reading? Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor ____
14. Did you come to the U. S. A. to study social work? Yes ____ No ____
 If No, for what reason did you originally come to the U. S. A. ? _____
15. When did you decide to study social work? _____
16. What influenced you the most to study social work in the U. S. A. ? (you may check more than one)
 a. your reading about American social work _____
 b. meeting American social worker(s) in your country _____
 c. previous training in America _____
 d. scholarships available _____
 e. your government or other officials _____
 f. your own choice _____
 g. other _____

17. What factor(s) decided your studying social work in the U.S.A. ?
- a. to hold your present job _____
 - b. better position in social work _____
 - c. status in home country _____
 - d. to be better equipped to serve your country _____
 - e. other _____
18. Please list the original objectives on enrolling in the school of social work in the U.S.A. If it has changed, list the main changes also _____
19. Did social work, as practiced in the U.S.A., appeal to you? Yes _____
No _____
If yes, why? _____
If not, why not? _____
20. Did studying social work in the U.S.A. appeal to you? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, why? _____
If no, why not? _____
21. Could you have the same training in your home country? Yes _____ No _____
22. When you entered the school of social work, did you have any special interest, such as to learn specifically about:
- a. case work _____
 - b. group work _____
 - c. community organisation _____
 - d. generic social work _____
 - e. the development of social policy _____
 - f. other _____
23. In your opinion what is the main philosophy of social work in the U.S.A. ?

24. To what extent do you find your American training valuable? Or not valuable?

- a. curriculum and professional content _____

- b. type of teaching and student guidance _____

- c. extent of application in your home country? _____

25. Does the American social work school where you are presently studying meet with the expectations you had before coming to the U.S.A. ?
 Yes _____ No _____
 If yes, in what aspects? _____
 If no, why not? _____
26. Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the social work program for foreign students in the following areas?
 a. choice of school _____
 b. type of curriculum _____
 c. length of training _____
 d. screening and orientation of students before coming to the U.S.A. ?

 e. other _____
27. Did you feel socially accepted by fellow students, professors, supervisors and staff of agency in fieldwork, if you had any?
 a. I felt accepted by _____
 b. I felt tolerated by _____
 c. I felt out of place by _____
28. Did you feel that any of the persons mentioned in question 27 understood your problems, if any, as a foreign student? If so, who? _____

29. Are there any other comments or suggestions you, as a foreign student, would care to make on any aspect of the studying social work in the U.S.A. ? Write below.

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Michigan State University
School of Social Work
East Lansing, Michigan

April 22, 1958

Dear fellow student,

In February 1958 I sent you a questionnaire in regard to my research report. Since through circumstances this questionnaire might have been misplaced or you have not been able to complete the questions I am forwarding you another.

Please be so kind to fill out these questions and return the completed form in the stamped, self-addressed envelope at your earliest convenience. If you have already done so please disregard this letter and the enclosed questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Hielkje Sheneman

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