THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL WORK LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Social Work – Doctor of Philosophy

2014

ABSTRACT

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL WORK LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:
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The purpose of this study was to examine how social work leaders define the construct of

leadership within the profession. Specifically, this qualitative study utilized a purposive sampling

technique to identify 18 master's-level social work leaders who were employed in the non-profit,

governmental agency, and educational settings. An interview protocol was developed and

utilized to conduct semi-structured interviews with the 18 participants. The interviews were

conducted in person at work sites and by telephone. Axial and open coding techniques were used

as the primary method of data analysis. An independent second coder was employed in order to

increase the validity and trustworthiness of the study. Analysis of the data revealed that social

work leadership is a widely defined, gendered, and culturally dependent construct. Social

workers tend to identify leaders in the historical sense, while remaining ambivalent in some

cases about self-identifying as a leader. Social workers perceived their unique contribution to

leadership strengths to include systems thinking and integrity. Seeing oneself as a leader was a

function of gender, class, race, life experience, and professional socialization. Leadership

identity is formed in a context of barriers, supports, education, employment, and life experiences.

Leaders reflected on experiences or setbacks, challenges, discrimination, and personal failures.

In the process of resolving these conflicts and overcoming personal difficulties, participants

affirmed their identity as leaders. Such information would be helpful to develop leaders in

overcoming similar struggles. There is a gap between calls for leadership within the profession

and the notable absence of "leadership" in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

competencies and practice behaviors. Progress has been made in the recent development of social work leadership programs that are specific to particular fields of practice such as child welfare, higher education, and gerontology. Implications for practice include a stronger emphasis on leadership as a core component of social work education, infusion of leadership content into undergraduate and graduate curricula, and the continued need for the development of the next generation of social work leaders.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Importance of Studying Leadership Development

In the 21st century, new understandings of the interconnectedness and shared responsibilities of public and non-profit organizations in the global, political economy have suggested new lines of inquiry for organizational ethics (Addams & Balfour, 2010) and by extension, social work leadership development. Social work constructions of leadership include an emphasis on social justice. Social workers must lead both within and against social systems. Leaders must reconcile competing values, with particular attention to what is morally and ethically responsible in a broader global community (McBarnet, 2004). However, the reality is that insufficient resources, problematic institutional policies, inadequate staffing, cost containments, scarce organizational supports, and the intense work pace contribute to discrepancy in what leaders would prefer to do ethically and what they are actually able to do in practice (Weinberg, 2010). In addition, this perspective encourages leaders to adopt a triple bottom line, including social and environmental assets along with financial ones.

Market-oriented human services are marked by a lack of transparency, a short-term orientation, harsher norms of competition, increased individualism, and money as a measure of well-being (Addams & Balfour, 2010). Trends toward privatization have led to more decentralization and less accountability. Cutbacks in governmental budgets and personnel have made it difficult to monitor and regulate the ethical practices of contracting organizations (Fredrickson & Fredrickson, 2006).

Who can and will advocate for the development of effective, ethical leaders, capable of navigating this increasingly complex and paradoxical context? Social work educators interested

in leadership will need to understand the current context and transformational processes of leadership development. The development of leadership and management theory and practice has been dominated by the fields of business and public administration (Quinn, 1988). Competency-based approaches like the Competing Values Framework may be applicable to social work education (Cameron, Quinn, DeGraff, & Thankor, 2006; Hess & Cameron, 2006; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007). Empirical research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is congruent with social work practice and values (Aches, 1997; Gellis, 2001; Mary, 2005; Packard, 2004; 2005). Social work leadership skills for the 21st century include: proaction, vision, communication, and empowerment (Rank & Hutchison, 2001). Qualitative studies that explore the lived experiences, ethical dilemmas, and hidden conflicts of contemporary social work leaders are scant (Greenhouse, Gardella, & Haynes, 2004). Leadership has become a point of concern, with increased competition from business and public administration degree and certificate programs.

Problem Statement

Calls for leadership, combined with an increasingly competitive and privatized human services workforce and a decline in organizational ethics, have given leadership more importance within the social work profession. Leadership has become a major focus for non-profits, accrediting organizations, governmental entities, university graduate and undergraduate programs, social work practitioners, and scholars (Ginsberg, 2008; Hoefer, 2003; Northouse, 2007; Quinn, 2007).

At the same time, leadership development is a concept that has not been fully integrated into social work curricula, field practica, and by extension, professional identity development. The gap between the espoused professional goals of leadership development and implementation

of concrete curricular outcomes calls for further examination. By analyzing elements beyond the narrow scope of defining leadership and the related technical, supervisory, and administrative competencies, this study seeks to broaden knowledge of leadership development as conflict-ridden, individual, and social processes, that when uncovered may transform our understandings and practice of leadership development. In institutional settings, such conflicts may manifest internally within an individual or externally between people when faced with competing values and policies (Mabokela, 2008). Social constructions of gender, which have limited the contributions of women (Sontag, 2001), continue to have some bearing on leadership development in social work.

Significance of the Study

Leaders of non-profit human service organizations (NHSOs), social welfare agencies, and university-based social work education programs have been associated historically with the social work profession. Furthermore, these leaders currently operate in a complex environment, under increasing pressures to do more with few resources. This study seeks to draw from and contribute to the growing body of social work leadership literature by taking a critical, multi-faceted view of the development of leaders. The review of literature includes a brief history of the leadership and management theory and social work-specific research on leadership development. The study draws from other bodies of literature, including non-profit management, public administration, and organizational psychology. This approach has a dual purpose. First, the study enlarges our understanding of professional leadership development to encompass the necessary relationships, language and linguistic conventions, cultures, and experiences (including conflicts) in which leaders can be developed. Secondly, it contributes to the emerging literature on the experiences of social work leadership development.

In this context, the development of leadership as part of an emerging professional identity begins as one begins to see oneself as a leader. Leadership development is also interpersonal, as others participate in the process of shaping and contesting meaning. Of particular interest are hidden conflicts at the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels. Exploring these conflicts, along with transformational experiences and related ethical dilemmas, may reveal structural factors that may play critical roles in leadership development.

Changes in the Social Work Leadership Development Context

Over the past four decades, the non-profit sector grew faster than the for-profit, corporate sector, an eighty-fold increase, compared with a seven-fold increase (Herman, 2005). Privatization of governmental services and the growth of private foundations contributed significantly to this trend (Pynes, 2007). Thompson, Menefee, and Marley (1999) lamented that during the latter part of the 20th century, the macro practice skills of community organizing, social planning, and political advocacy became less desirable within the profession, with increasing numbers of students choosing a clinical focus. Amidst calls for unity and leadership, some have expressed concerns that the social work profession has become polarized over philosophical questions (Gambrill, 1997; Gomery, 1997; Haynes & White, 1999; Leiby, 1997). Arguably, internal tensions have not been fully resolved.

In the new millennium, the external context of the social work profession is highly complex. Rank and Hutchison (2003) observed that, "Globalization, managed care, computerization, the Internet, welfare reform, privatization, diversity, and an increasing gap between the rich and the poor are just some of the macro forces that are affecting social work practice" (p. 488). Shifts in the political landscape in recent years may prove to be helpful to the social work profession. Arguably, a resurgence of progressive values seems to have emerged,

with a democratic president whose leadership approach was largely based upon grassroots community organizing (Obama, 2006).

Decline of administration programs. In 1982, "there were almost 1,400 students specializing in administration, 6.5% of all social work students" (Wuenschel, 2006, p. 58). Patti (2000) noted that within the last decade, the numbers have been declining, with only about 3% of social workers in graduate programs specializing in the macro-practice domain of administration. It is unclear whether the drop is being driven by changes in student interests, external regulatory processes, curricula revisions, an increased emphasis on micro-practice, or other factors. More research is needed. Policy-making organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) could have some influence on the direction of research on social work leadership, as well as provide resources for future studies.

Leadership and social work education. Leadership development within the social work professional literature has been rather limited in terms of the practical implications for social work education and course development (CSWE, 2006; Wuenschel, 2006). There is a gap evidenced by the dearth of publications on the importance of leadership and management in social work education and the small number of courses and textbooks focused on leadership in schools of social work (Austin and Ezell, 2004; Ginsberg, 2008). Packard (2004) asserted that:

> Schools of social work need to pay particular attention to the "competition" that their MSW graduates are facing from managers who have learned on-the-job and through continuing education and from graduates of MBA and MPA programs or non-profit degree programs. Agency executives and boards who hire human service administrators will need to see clear evidence of how an MSW with an administration specialization

adds value to the organization beyond what may be offered by someone with other credentials or experiences (p. 19).

John F. Kennedy said, in a speech delivered in Dallas on the day in his assassination, "Leadership and learning are indispensible to one another" (Kennedy, 2008, p. 31). Leadership education emerging in the fields of business and public administration has been defined as developing mastery of a base of knowledge, leadership competencies, and skill at managing competing values (Block, 1993; Cameron, Quinn & Thankor, 2006; Covey, 1991; Greenleaf, 1996; Hess & Cameron, 2006; Kouzes, 1995; Northouse, 1997; Quinn, 1996; Quinn, 2004; Quinn & Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007).

Within the social work profession, the National Network of Social Work Managers has defined ten management competencies and established the Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM) credential (Neosoff, 2007; Wimpheimer, 2004). These competencies include: contemporary and public policy issues, advocacy, public/community relations and marketing, governance, planning, program development, financial development, evaluations, human resources management, and staff development (Wimpheimer, 2004). *Leadership* as a clearly articulated, concrete term is notably absent. Similarities and conceptual overlap exist between notions of leadership in the fields of social work, business, and public administration. At the same time, there are differences in the value base of social work leadership. This does not mean that leadership knowledge developed in other fields should be rejected without examination for potential application. There is a need for social workers to develop leadership competencies as well as an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of leadership and management theory.

Problematic constructions of leadership in social work. The notion of leadership in social work is somewhat problematic. The construct of leadership is thoroughly embedded into

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the history, development, and professionalization of social work. Ironically, leadership is so well rooted into the foundation of social work, that the practice of leadership is difficult to identify. At the same time, contemporary social workers seem to lack the discursive strategies to define and legitimize it as an approach of our own. Patti (2003) concurs that the "call of high level managers for more business talent" results in one getting the impression that "many executives are saying that social workers don't bring to the table what they are looking for in upper level management" (p. 7).

Social workers may, for example, begin to develop a type of bi-lingual aptitude in the language of leadership, substituting terms like "talent" for "strengths" to gain credibility with senior-level managers schooled in business or public administration. Likewise, social workers may serve as administrators, advocates, supervisors, community organizers, and managers, but social work *leadership* seems to be, to some degree, a noble designation that is relegated to the profession's past. The practice of leadership and the social work profession's relationship to notions of leadership are at the same time embedded, ambiguous, and ambivalent.

The social work profession's ambivalence toward traditional constructions of leadership may be related to leadership's earliest origins in war tactics (Drucker, 1954), which conflict with the radical peace orientation of Jane Addams and other prominent leaders (Addams, 1907). Discomfort of the language of leadership may be associated with incidences of corruption and the abuse of power on the part of leaders (Addams & Balfour, 2004; Farmer, 2003; Palepu & Healy, 2003). Likewise, educating leaders from a motivation of profit may be viewed as entirely distinct from educating leaders from a motivation of human development and freedom (Nussbaum, 2009). These tensions may cause internal conflicts for social workers. Social work

leaders of the 21st century must be equipped to meet the conflict-ridden global challenges of AIDS, climate change, famine, and war.

The practice of leadership and management. Constructions of leadership have been influenced not only by the fields of business and public administration (Adams & Balfour, 2004; Covey, 1991; Denhart, 2000; Quinn, 1996; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007; Weber, 1946/1958), but also, the social work profession (Ginsberg, 2008; Neosoff, 2007; Packard, 2004; Wimpheimer, 2004; Wuenschel, 2006). There are, however, some notable differences in business and social work definitions. Conservative business guru and proponent of privatization Peter Drucker wrote, "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers" (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard, 1996, p. 52). Maxwell (2007) defined leadership as "influence, nothing more, nothing less" (p. 3). Indirectly, Maxwell has noted, the notion of character is built in; leaders who lack integrity and trustworthiness will eventually lose followers.

Social work leadership, values, and ethics. By contrast, social work leadership is framed within the values and ethical foundations of the social work profession (Ginsberg, 2008; Mary, 2005; Rank & Hutchison, 2003). While social work values such concern for social justice and vulnerable populations, the dignity and worth of the individual may conceivably be at odds with the pursuit of profit above other motivations. Organizational ethics and social responsibility "go against the grain of individualism (the classical liberal values inherent to American culture) and against the grain of technical rationality (professionalism, scientific-analytic mindset, and the belief in technique)" (Addams & Balfour, 2010, p. 632). Social workers must have moral courage to advocate for causes that may be viewed as counter-cultural.

Historically, social workers championed causes that have been, at least at some point, unpopular and not particularly profitable. Social workers must lead effectively by building alliances both within and outside the profession. Social workers must also confront ethical failures, both within and outside of the profession. Organizational ethical failures are often hidden and must be "unmasked" in order to be corrected (Addams & Balfour, 2010). Masked failures can occur in more than one way: an organization can be compliant with all laws and regulations but be harming a stakeholder group; an organization may be legally compliant while operating in a nation that violates human rights or allows environmental harm in order to achieve its financial objectives. Or, an organization may follow the rules but facilitate immoral and irresponsible behavior through other organizations and individuals through contracting and outsourcing practices. Organizations and professions (and their standards of conduct) may be blind to the limitations and destructive consequences of their own actions, even as they pursue ambitious goals in the name of the common good (Addams & Balfour, 2009). Hurricane Katrina and Blackwater USA demonstrated that, even with good intentions, most organizations are not able to self-police and self-correct.

Failure to address leadership development needs. It has been approximately 45 years since formal calls for *leadership* to be addressed in social work education became apparent in the literature (Fauri, 1976). Patti and Maynard (1978) lamented that "social work education is not widely perceived as a unique qualification for supervision or administrative responsibility in public welfare agencies" (p. 283). Brilliant (1986) observed that leadership training was a "missing ingredient" in the social work curriculum and "is essentially a non-theme in social work training" (p. 325). Karger (1986) noted that:

The importation of non-social work managers (MPAs and MBAs) results in the colonization of social work by other professions. These managers who try to produce the most cost efficient, productive and rational service have little understanding of the terrain of social work practice (p. 123).

There is some evidence of business management experts co-opting social work knowledge. Rath (2007) wrote a New York Times bestseller entitled *Strengths Finder*, outlining over 30 empirically validated individual strengths, without acknowledging the origin of the *Strengths Perspective* in the social work profession (see Saleeby, 2002).

Reamer (1993) asserted that there are a number of inspirational, talented, and bright leaders in social work education, and part of the challenge is that leadership is an ill-defined quality that can be difficult to teach. Arches (1997) found that effective social service supervisors were using principles of transformational leadership, even if they were not identifying it as such. Innovations in leadership theory and practices have, for the most part, originated in the business management literature (Quinn, 1988). Adaptations for non-profit and public human service organizations also have their source in business and management professionals (Drucker, 1990; Herman, 1994; Herman, 2005). However, non-profit and public human service organizations are unique in several ways, and thus leadership in this context has some unique factors. Such characteristics include: advocating for stigmatized populations, collaborating with other agencies, addressing difficult moral choices, and reliance on front-line professional staff (Patti, 2000).

Nieves (1999) contends that finding social workers who are willing to lead is increasingly problematic. She advocates for leadership, urging NASW to be "less tradition bound" and more responsive to membership and the changing environment. Newsome (1995) warned that,

"Without some serious attention to leadership preparation, those we educate for service delivery are likely to be managed by other professionals" (p. 1–2). It became increasingly apparent that administrators with degrees in business, public administration, and fields other than social work were competing for social and human service agency leadership positions (Gummer, 1987; Faherty, 1987; Patti, 1984; Patti, 2003). Perlmutter and Addams (1994) found that agency executives in Family Service Agencies were leading in an environment that was hostile [to social work values] and "more market driven than mission driven" (p. 445). That "social service agencies are businesses" appears to be conventional wisdom (Brown, 2008, p. 41).

Knowledge controversies. A major dispute developed over which profession was the most suitable to lead human service organizations (Faerty, 1987; Gummer, 1987; Hoefer, 2003). In their study of administration degree programs, Mirabela and Wish (2000) analyzed the content according to three organizational functional levels: "outside function," "inside function," and "boundary spanning" (p. 219). They found that MSW programs had more content focused on the outside functioning of agencies, such as advocacy, community organizing, and public policy. MPA programs had more content focused on boundary spanning between the internal and external organizational environments, such as strategic planning and legal issues. MBA programs had more courses that emphasized internal organization skills such as financial and human resources management. Clearly, all three functional areas need to be addressed. Packard (2004) suggests that an administration concentration in social work be structured in the manner described in table 1 below.

Table 1. Structure of Administration Concentration in Social Work

Administration	
Leadership	Management
1. Visioning	1. Program design
2. Change management	2. Financial management
3. Strategy development	3. Information systems
4. Organization design	4. Human resource management
5. Culture management	5. Program evaluation
6. Community collaboration	6. Project management
7. Ethics and values	7. Diversity
8. Political advocacy	
Theoretical Foundations	
Organization systems theory – Political economy	
Contingency theory – Learning organization	

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were grounded in the values of the social work profession and based upon findings from previous research. The questions were initially structured around participants' self-knowledge of their own leadership strengths. Leadership was also defined as an identity development process that has social and cultural underpinnings. In this context, meaning is negotiated through relationships, experiences, and conflict. Of particular interest was how participants navigated conflict to in order claim their own identity as leaders across the life span. The research sought to reveal a deeper understanding how leaders utilized supports and addressed barriers in the face of such conflicts. The role of critical incidents or transformational experiences was a central question. Such information would be very beneficial to social work educators. These lessons could then be passed on to future social work leaders.

1. How do participants perceive their leadership strengths?

2. What factors influence the leadership development process?

3. How do transformational experiences or critical incidents play a role in leadership development?

4. What are the common misconceptions about leadership?

5. What are the hidden conflicts or "undiscussables" related to social work leadership development?

6. How might leadership in social work be taught?

Definition of Terms

The following defined terms are essential to this study. These terms include: leadership, management, leadership development, leadership theory, positive organizational scholarship, transformational leadership, and transformational experiences.

Leadership vs. management. Leadership and management theories and practices have, for the most part, originated in the for-profit sector and have been authored by men (Burns, 1987; Ginsberg, 2008; Rhode, 2003; Wilson, 2007). Business interests have historically favored conservative, rather than liberal values and laissez-faire governmental approaches (Lakoff, 2002). Leaders of public and non-profit human service organizations have been ambivalent toward leadership theories and practices that have their origins in the corporate sector (Ginsberg, 2008).

Leadership and management are terms used together or interchangeably. In actual practice, leadership and management are inextricably connected. However, leadership is said to be conceptually distinct from management in that leadership is focused on ascertaining the right direction, and management deals with the speed, coordination, and logistics of going in that direction (Covey, 1989; 1991). Likewise, Kotter (1996) asserts that management is focused in the present and maintaining stability, while leadership is focused on the future and adaptive change.

University of Richmond Associate Professor Crystal Hoyt starts her leadership studies classes with a lesson in the deconstruction of leadership myths. "The students have these images

of leadership: it's masculine, it's white, it's top-down. If we ask students to draw their conception of leadership, we see a lot of pictures of pyramids" (Leadership and Liberal Education, 2009, para. 1).

Management theory is the study of how managers carry out basic activities such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (Quinn, 1988; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007; Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 1995). There is some overlap between management and leadership functions. An administration concentration should incorporate both leadership and management content (Packard, 2004). The National Network of Social Work Managers has defined ten management competencies and established the Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM) credential (Neosoff, 2007; Wimpheimer, 2004). These competencies include: contemporary and public policy issues, advocacy, public/community relations and marketing, governance, planning, program development, financial development, evaluation, human resources management, and staff development (Wimpheimer, 2004). Social work leadership is "the communication of vision, guided by the NASW Code of Ethics, to create proactive processes that empower individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities" (Rank and Hutchison, 2003, p. 499).

Leadership development definition. For the purpose of the study, leadership development is defined as the process of acquiring the needed knowledge, skills and values that enable an individual to influence the direction and behavior of a group, organization or community so that the goals of the entity are achieved.

Leadership theory. Leadership theory is the study of leader behavior and its influence or effects on the organization (Lunenbrug & Ornstein, 2008; Northouse, 2007). Leadership theory may be trait-based, residing in individual qualities of the leader such as extroversion,

intelligence, and height or process-based, residing in the environment, and interactions with others (Northouse, 2007).

Lewin, Llippit, and White (1939) identified three styles of leadership:

1. Authoritarian or autocratic – control oriented;

2. Participative or democratic – interactive and process oriented; and

3. Delegative or free reign – empowerment oriented.

Good leaders are said to utilize all three styles of leadership as time constraints, circumstance, and context warrant, while poor leaders tend to rely almost exclusively on one style. Leadership in organizations is embedded within and constrained by the culture of organizations.

There are at least three additional classifications of leader: laissez faire, transactional, and transformational (Bass & Avolio, 2000; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978; Gillis, 2001; Gronn, 1996; Mary, 2005). According to Burns (1978) poor leaders exhibit a hands-off, *laissez-faire* approach, ordinary or *transactional* leaders are those who exchange concrete rewards for the work and loyalty of followers, and extraordinary or *transformational* leaders are those who engage with followers by focusing on higher level intrinsic needs. Transformational leaders raise their followers' consciousness about the importance of specific outcomes and innovative ways in which those outcomes might be achieved.

The four I's of transformational leadership include:

1. Idealized influence. Leaders are strong ethical role models. Leaders have a vision and behavior that inspires others to follow.

2. Inspirational motivation. Leaders have the capacity to motivate others to have high expectations and commit to the vision.

3. Intellectual stimulation. Leaders encourage followers to be innovative, creative, and to challenge the norm.

4. Individualized consideration. Leaders provide a supportive environment to assist followers to be fully actualized; leaders mentor to the specific needs of followers. (Adapted from Mary, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2006)

Transformational leaders start by asking questions to promote motivation rather than always providing answers (Packard, 2003). More recent research suggests that transactional and transformational qualities are not opposites on a continuum and that good leaders display characteristics of both (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Piccolo 2004).

Positive organizational scholarship. Similarly, the field of positive organizational scholarship focuses on "virtuous" leadership, which results in extraordinary transformations (Hess & Camerson, 2006; Quinn, 1996; 2004). In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (2001) describes the ideal leader: a humble, servant leader, who confronts brutal facts without losing hope, embraces technology as an accelerator for growth, and who adheres to the *Hedgehog Concept*. The *Hedgehog Concept* is the intersection between three areas (p. 96):

1. What are you deeply passionate about?

2. What can you be the best in the world at?

3. What drives your economic engine?

Likewise, Quinn describes the transformational leader in *Deep Change* (1996) and *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It* (2004) as one who must master personal leadership before leading others. This necessarily involves overcoming fears and facing challenges as the leader confronts the hypocrisy gap between her/his stated values and her/his actual behavior. Leaders must also confront those things in the organization that are considered undiscussable. When

doing so, the leader enters the *Fundamental State of Leadership*, becoming increasingly "purpose-centered, internally-directed, other-focused, and externally open" (Quinn, 2004, p. 221).

Transformational experiences. Transformational experiences are defined as those experiences that fundamentally change the way a person views herself and/or the world (Quinn, 2004). These experiences may occur in one's personal or professional life. Examples include a defining moment or critical incident during a time of profound growth or change such as: studying abroad, ending a relationship, divorce, death of a loved one, a promotion, an internship, or completing a graduate program. For the purpose of this study, participants were asked to engage in the process of reflection with particular attention to transformational experiences. Such reflection allows for the personal meaning of the event could be drawn out, as well as providing critical perceptual information to the researcher.

Assumptions of the Study

The study is based on the assumption that any findings about the dynamics of leadership development will be useful to social work as well as related disciplines. The stakeholder approach assumes that knowledge, resources, and interests are shared and that the less-evident aspects of leadership development are multi-faceted. Moreover, within a critical theoretical framework, it assumes that meanings are constructed in dynamic social processes of conflict. Myths and misunderstanding are present and must be clarified in the research process.

The utilization of ethnographic semi-structured interviews is built upon several assumptions that relate to the research process. It is assumed that respondents will provide honest accounts of their personal experiences as leaders, their insights and impressions about their transformational experiences (experiences which fundamentally changed the way they view

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themselves and the world) in leadership development, and the ways in which they resolve ethical dilemmas. It is assumed that the process of change is laden with conflict and that studying these conflicts will lead to a clearer understanding of social workers' experiences of leadership development.

Finally, this study will be dependent upon volunteers. It is assumed that those who volunteer to participate in this study will be representative of human services leaders in social work, in general. Theoretically, this assumption cannot be verified, since by definition, comparable information is not available from non-volunteers. However, sample bias in a qualitative study is not the same type of issue as it is in a quantitative study. Qualitative inquiry utilizes knowledge gained from purposive approaches and data found in information-rich, in-depth cases.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to broaden our understanding of professional leadership development to encompass the necessary relationships, knowledge, language and linguistic conventions, and behaviors that together contribute to the social construction of leaders, and to make a significant contribution to emerging literature on the lived experiences of present-day social work leadership development.

In the new global context, the complexity of social problems such as war, famine, HIV/AIDS, and climate change calls for new lines of inquiry in the topic of social work leadership development. Social work ethics and values are well aligned with this new paradigm. Moreover, multi-system level, culturally competent approaches to addressing social problems are particularly relevant at this time in history. However, social work education appears to be lagging in the domain of leadership development, with many schools emphasizing clinical and

micro practice over more structurally based macro practice approaches. Social work curricula emphasize administration, community organizing, and policy but fail to fully embrace the practice of "leadership" development.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A Brief History of Leadership and Management Models

Before the industrial revolution, leaders were said to be born not made. This privileged definition of leadership precluded the notion of developing leaders. Ruling elites could justify the inequitable status quo and their place as leaders in much the same way that rulers where equated with deities. By definition, their place of privilege could not be questioned, nor could others aspire to hold such a place of power and influence. This construction of leadership gave way to new meanings, particularly when capitalism demanded a supply of technically trained leaders and managers. Since the beginning of the 20$^{\text{th}}$ century, there were four major periods of theoretical development of leadership and management: (1) rational goals and internal processes, (2) human relations, (3) open systems, and (4) integrative approaches (Hess and Cameron, 2006; Quinn, 1988; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & Sinclair, 2007). Each period was influenced by the dominant discourses and scientific knowledge of its era.

Rational Goal and Internal Process Models (1900–1925). The first period from 1900 to 1925 has been termed "The Emergence of the Rational Goal Model and the Internal Process Model*"* (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & Sinclair, 2007, p. 3). This period was characterized by social transformation, laissez-faire policies, and massive immigration that led to cheap labor. At the same time Mary Richmond was advocating for scientific case management based on rational inquiry (Richmond, 1917), Fredrick Taylor was touting the value of Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911). Taylor developed four principles of management:

1. Develop a science for every job, which replaces the old rule of thumb method.

2. Systematically select workers so that they fit the job and train them effectively.

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3. Offer incentives so workers behave in accordance with the principles of the science that has been developed.

4. Support workers by carefully planning their work and smoothing the way they do their jobs (p. 44).

Industrial leaders like Henry Ford applied Taylor's principles to the automobile production process. Rational goals of production and focus on action often translated to harsh treatment of workers by supervisors (Karger & Stoesz, 2006). At the same time, a "professional bureaucracy" was needed to support the hierarchical climate and mechanistic processes (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & Sinclair, 2007, p. 4).

The basic notions of this internal processes approach would not be fully codified until the writings of Max Weber and Henry Fayol about 20 years later (Fayol, 1949; Weber, 1946/1958). Fayol focused on the division of work, authority and responsibility, discipline and sanctions for workers, unity of command (each worker should have one supervisor only), centralization, order and stability (1949, p. 20–41). Weber observed the basic elements of a bureaucracy: division of labor with clearly defined responsibilities, hierarchical organization of responsibilities, objective selection of employees, promotion based on technical abilities, documentation of decision-making in written records, and standard rules and procedures that are uniformly applied to all workers (Henderson, Parson, & Weber, 1947, p. 328–337).

The Human Relations Model (1926–1950). The Human Relations Model developed during the second quarter of the century, marked by the 1929 stock market crash and World War II (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & Sinclair, 2007, p. 4). The 1933 New Deal was instrumental in the economic recovery from the Great Depression and the beginning of the development of the welfare state (Karger & Stoesz, 2006). The Social Security Act of 1935 was

a primarily self-financing social insurance program that rewarded workers. Unions held significantly more power than in previous years. By the end of this period, there was a growing sense of prosperity and an emphasis on recreation (McGerr, 2003; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007). Rational goal and internal process approaches were not as effective.

The Hawthorne Studies, conducted by Mayo (1933) at Western Electric, were interpreted as evidence that relationships and informal group processes were powerful motivators. During this period, new emphasis emerged: social and psychological variables such as morale, participation, conflict resolution, and consensus building. Braverman (1974) has been critical of this interpretation of the Hawthorne Studies, however, citing inequitable power relations characteristic of the study's setting and Big Brother-like surveillance techniques as probable motivators of the workers.

In 1950, before this model had been grown to a level of clear consensus, the idea that leaders should be empathic mentors and facilitators ran counter to rational goal and internal process models. The result was a type of authoritarian benevolence (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007). McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y of worker motivations presented a new set of assumptions for managers; workers may not dislike and avoid work, but rather, workers may have intrinsic motivations to work as a natural human function (Ginsberg, 2008). It is no surprise that during this period, corporate entrepreneur Dale Carnegie wrote the still popular book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. While not empirically grounded, the book sold over 15 million copies. The following is an excerpt:

Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment

1. Begin with praise and honest appreciation.

2. Call attention to other people's mistakes indirectly.

3. Talk about your own mistakes first.

4. Ask questions instead of directly giving orders.

5. Let the other person save face.

6. Praise every improvement.

7. Give them a fine reputation to live up to.

8. Encourage them by making their faults seem easy to correct.

9. Make the other person happy about doing what you suggest.

(Carnegie, 1936/1981, p. 205–243)

Relationships were accorded more value. In *Dynamics of Administration,* Follett Parker emphasized shared power, coordination, and the relational aspects of leadership (Folett Parker, 1941). She was one of the few prominent management experts whose background was in social work (Ginsberg, 2008). Follett Parker practiced what would now be called early macro practice, establishing vocational and community training programs for adult education in schools. She is also one of the most notable women to be recognized as a management theorist. She was sought after by President Roosevelt to provide consultation on leadership of non-profit, voluntary, and public organizations. Boje and Rosile (2001) contend that Follett Parker was seeking to temper scientific management with her own science of the situation, "one in which management and workers together cooperated to define not only productivity but situations of social justice" (p. 92).

The Open Systems Model (1951–1975). The Open Systems Model emerged during a period of technological change and dramatic shifts in social values. What began as a period of unquestioning dominance of the United States as the leader of the capitalist world, ended with cynicism and upheaval driven by rejection of authority, institutions, and the Vietnam War

(Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007). Television became the dominant source of information. Women began to take on roles traditionally held by men (Zinn, 1995). Increasingly, leaders faced ambiguous and turbulent environments where flexibility and responsiveness were critical. No longer were managers viewed as rational decision-makers controlling a mechanistic organization, but rather, managers were bombarded with constant stimuli, rapidly making choices in highly unpredictable environments. The research of Henry Mintzberg revealed that the highly structured theories of rational management were out of synch with the actual experience of leaders (Mintzberg, 1973; 1994). *Contingency Theory* developed during this period. Key variables that determined the appropriateness of leader/manager actions in economies of scale included (p. 9):

1. Size. Problems of coordination increase as the size of the organization increases. Appropriate coordination procedures for a large organization will not be efficient in a small organization, and vice versa.

2. Technology. The technology used to produce outputs varies. It may be very routine or customized. The appropriateness of organizational structures, leadership styles, and control systems will vary with the type of technology.

3. Environment. Organizations exist within larger environments. These may be uncertain and turbulent or predictable and unchanging. Organizational structures, leadership styles, and control systems will vary accordingly.

4. Individuals. People are not the same. They have different needs. Managers must adjust their styles accordingly.

Risk is high when decisions are made quickly. In keeping with this model, leaders are expected to manage change, use power and influence, and effectively communicate a shared vision and values (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007).

The Both-And Assumptions Model (1976–Today). "In the 1980's, it became apparent that American organizations were in deep trouble" (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007, p. 9). Japanese products became increasingly competitive. Trade deficits were commonplace. Labor unions lost ground. Conservative social and economic values took root to fully replace visions of the Great Society. Ronald Reagan framed the problem of this era from the perspective of the ruling elites; *government* was the problem (Piven, 2007). Reaganomics marked the beginning of a period of substantial deregulation of markets and financial services and the dismantling of the social welfare state (Karger & Stoesz, 2006).

At the close of the 20th century, the Berlin Wall fell and the USSR was disintegrated. The development of the Internet and e-commerce added to the complexity and turbulence of the new global environment. None of the previous four models offered a solution. Leadership was increasingly seen as more as complex than offering *either* stability *or* change. The key was to stop assuming that it was an either-or decision and stop trying to decide between the two (Quinn, 1988; Quinn, Kahn & Mandl, 1994). Martin (2007) described a successful leader in the *Harvard Business Review*, as someone who can "hold two opposing ideas at once. And then, without panicking or simply settling for one alternative or the other, [she/he is] able to creatively resolve the tension between those two ideas by generating a new one that contains the elements of the others, but is superior to both" (p. 62). This is a tenet of social construction theory.

The Competing Values Framework. A simple framework combines the evolution of management and leadership theory, in addition to being empirically validated at the individual

competency level factor analysis (Cameron, Quinn, DeGraff, & Thankor, 2006; Quinn, 1988; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair, 2007, Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; see also Figure 2.). This framework was developed and used extensively at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, but arguably it holds some potential for social work leaders. The model illustrates the *both-and* dimensions of leadership, with diagonally opposing quadrants having the highest inherent tensions. To integrate opposites, a successful leader must create *and* control, and collaborate *and* compete.

Leaders' predominant use of a particular set of values creates organizational culture. The four cultures associated with the CVF are the: clan, adhocracy, bureaucracy, and market. Denison and Spritzer (1991) have noted that when leaders overemphasize one set of values or leadership model extensively, without the inclusion of others, the organization becomes dysfunctional. Quinn (1988) and Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath, & St. Clair (2007) refer to this imbalance as a "negative zone"; the related organizational-cultural pathologies are listed parenthetically in figure 1. Conflict in this model is inherent feature of the values of opposing quadrants.

Figure 1. The Competing Values Framework & Evolution of Theories of Leadership (adapted from Quinn, 1988)
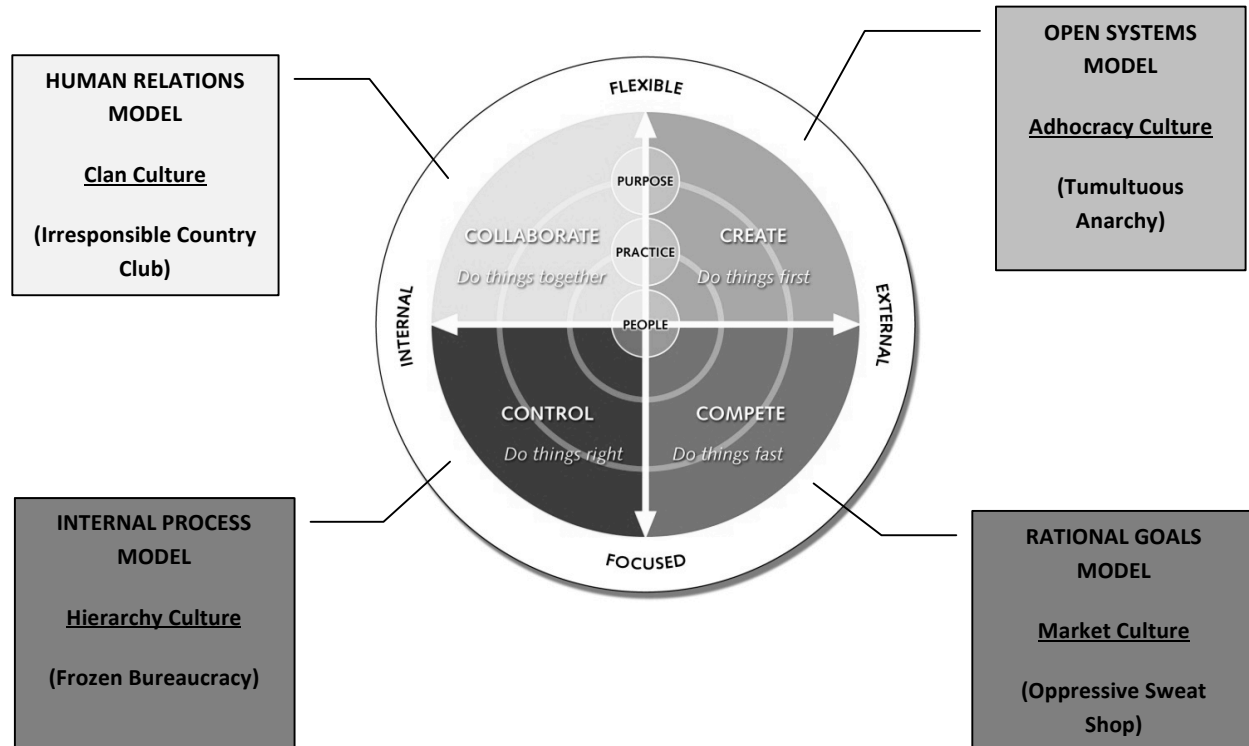
For example, leaders overemphasizing rational goals by directing and producing, to the exclusion of human relations considerations (as well as internal processes and open systems approaches), will develop an organizational culture that is like an "Oppressive Sweatshop." Likewise, those leaders who emphasize internal processes by monitoring and coordinating, to the exclusion of open systems considerations such as innovating and brokering (as well as human relations and rational goals functions), will create an organizational culture that is like a "Frozen Bureaucracy." The CVF model is an empirically grounded, competency or role-based approach to leadership that highlights the tensions in values in organizations and the subsequent need for integrative, *both-and* management approaches. It also provides a useful summation of the evolution of leadership and management theory.

Other theoretical frameworks for leadership. Finally, Morgan (1997) suggested several metaphors for organizations: machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, and psychic prisons. Each metaphor has a unique set of assumptions. Each metaphor has implications for leadership, management, and leadership development. For example, a mechanistic organization suggests leadership based on scientific management and techniques. A brain-like organization suggests that leadership play a key role in organizational knowledge and learning. Similarly, Schein (1996) suggested that a leader's primary role is in managing the culture of organizations. Schein (1996) defined three levels of organizational culture: (1) artifacts – visible organizational structures, processes, and things; (2) espoused values – conscious goals, strategies, and philosophies; and (3) basic underlying assumptions – unconscious, taken for granted assumptions, beliefs, feelings.

Leadership has also been defined as being a function of power (French and Raven, 1959; Yukl, 1989). Five types of power have been defined: (1) reward power, (2) coercive power, (3) legitimate power, (4) referent power, and (5) expert power. Table 2 summarizes the bases a leader may have in exercising power.

Table 2. Five Bases of Power

Base of Power	Types of Influence
Reward	• Leader is capable of providing a reward. • Follower finds the reward desirable. • Follower perceives the leader's offering rewards as legitimate.
Coercive	• Follower perceives that the leader is capable of administering punishment for nonconformity to influence attempts.
Legitimate	• Arises from internalized values or norms in the follower that legitimize the leader's right to influence the follower and the follow to accept this influence. • May be derived from cultural values, acceptance of social structure, and designation.
Referent	• Follower perceives oneness and identification with the leader.
Expert	• Follow believes that the leader has some superior knowledge or expertise in a specific area and that this power is limited to this area of expertise.

Yukl (1989) defined power as an individual's capacity to influence one or more persons. To influence means to have an effect on the other person's attitude, perceptions, and/or behavior. This influence may be directed in three directions within the organizational structure or hierarchy: upward, downward, or laterally. By combining bases of power, another framework for leadership emerges. Three sources of power are: position power, personal power, and political power. Personal or legitimate power is derived from the organizational hierarchy. Personal power may be expert, referent, or charismatic. Political power is based on controlling decision-making processes through building coalitions and alliances though one's relationship and information connections.

Historical and Ethical Context of Social Work Leadership

The Industrial Revolution brought a radical reconstruction to the landscape of work and with it came social problems that demanded new approaches to management and leadership practices. The massive transition from an agricultural, land-based economy to a largely urban, industrial-based economy required intensive retraining of laborers and a fundamental shift in daily life and work orientation (McGerr, 2003).

In 1819, the Supreme Court accorded the corporation with rights as an individual, enabling a "pathological pursuit of profit" over the centuries that would follow (Bakan, 2004, p. 1). While corporate endeavors developed in for-profit markets, social work has been, for the most part, a product of not-for-profit and public institutions (Herman, 1994; Karger & Stoesz, 2006). The three sectors function interdependently, with government providing regulatory functions and a buffer to market fluctuations and non-profits providing human services that are not particularly profitable (Denhart, 2000; Donahue & Nye, 2001). The social work profession emerged with the growth of the corporate, philanthropic, and public sectors. Progressive

reformers, primarily women, attempted to address the unintended negative impact of industrial corporations in the form of human and environmental impacts. At the same time, social work has functioned as a mechanism for the control and regulation of workers, including women (Abramovich, 1996; Reisch & Andrews, 2001; Kennedy, 2006; Piven, 2007).

The early leaders of the social work profession were born into a time of Civil War, reform, expansion, and transition (McCree, Bair, & De Angury, 2003). Poverty was not yet seen as a social problem. Northern abolitionists called for the end of slavery on a moral and religious basis. Victorian values, notably individualism, self-discipline, self-denial, hard work, and domesticity began to yield to progressivism—an extraordinary era of middle-class activism, which was precipitated by a crisis of extremes of wealth and poverty in America (McGerr, 2003). The middle class demanded changes in themselves and the world around them.

Women had few options outside of marriage, child bearing, and a life of domesticity. However, the growing activism of women, particularly within the Abolition and Women's Suffrage Movements, was a beginning point for organized social resistance of women (Reisch & Andrews, 2001). The divorce rate grew from 1870 to 1900, and many educated women like Jane Addams postponed or rejected marriage (McGerr, 2003). Concerns over vices such as divorce, alcohol consumption, and prostitution, were characterized by reformers as "the worship of the brazen calf of Self" (p. 86).

Individualism. Victorian individualism developed into a new form. Capitalism rapidly expanded, and individualism was revised to incorporate the new notion that each person had ownership of their own labor (McGerr, 2003). Marx asserted such control over one's labor was illusory. The myth of American self-generated success in the face of insufferable working

conditions contributed to feelings of despair among poor workers, largely immigrants (McMurty, 1978).

Upper class people often attributed the plight of the poor to individual moral failings, defects of character, personality, mind, or body. Individualism became the basis for the upper class to deny the growing inequities of the social classes, despite all the signs of conflict around them (McGerr, 2003). Structural issues were obscured by elites when individuals were blamed for their own suffering and lack, caused by the exploits on industry but wrongly attributed to morality.

It was Alexis Tocqueville who coined the term *individualism*. The French observer is often cited as an authority on the role of voluntary associations and private philanthropy in early America. Commenting on the role of such associations, Tocqueville noted, "that they were more important to those who for reasons of wealth, gender, religion, race, could not influence public life through the electoral process" (Herman, 1994, p. 11). What is implied is that individualism was applicable, at least in the ideal sense to affluent white, Protestant men. Others needed the safety and assistance of others drawn from philanthropic and voluntary associations.

Social Darwinism. It was British social theorist Herbert Spencer who distorted Charles Darwin's 1859 classic, *Origin of Species*, by suggesting that "survival of the fittest" can be applied to the laws of society (Spencer, 1904). According to Spencer, America's William Graham Sumner and other Social Darwinists, social welfare thwarts nature's plan for evolutionary progress toward higher forms of life. Because they claimed that subsidizing the poor allowed them to survive, and the poor reproduced more rapidly than the middle classes, elites asserted that society was contributing to its own downfall:

It seems hard that widows and orphans should be left to struggle for life or death.

Nevertheless, when regarded not separately, but in connexion with the interests of

universal humanity, these harsh fatalities are seen to be full of beneficence, the same

beneficence that brings to early graves the children of diseased parents, and singles out

the intemperate and the debilitated as victims of an epidemic (Spencer, 1904, p. 186).

Social Darwinism was a form of pseudo-science that legitimized the victimization of the

poor and vulnerable as part of the natural order. Jane Addams understood that this set of

assumptions was seriously flawed (Reisch & Andrews, 2001). Addams keenly understood that

"tyranny can come through ideas, as well as political systems" (Tyson, 1995, p. 3).

Social Gospel. Proponents of the Social Gospel were concerned with the abuse of power

of industry, greed, and the excesses of capitalism (Herron, 1912; McGerr, 2003; Rauschenbusch,

1912). They sought to rekindle the militant spirit of Christ by taking on the issues of social

justice and poverty. Social Gospelist George Davis Herron wrote:

When Cain replied to God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" he stated the question to which

all past and present problems of man's earthly existence are reducible…The question of

Cain is the master question of our age. It has grown articulate with greed and cruelty of

history. It threatens our American day and nation with the crisis of the centuries. It must

be answered with justice and righteousness. The blood of Abel cries out through the

toiling millions…No arrogant reply as to the historic and legal rights of private and

corporate property will silence these voices (Herron, 1912, p. 277–278).

Rauschenbusch (1912) provided a clear statement of the Social Gospel in *Christianity*

and the Social Crisis (Karger & Stoesz, 2006). Jane Addams was influenced by the ethical and

practical aspects of the Social Gospel, and from the Quaker beliefs and Christian Socialism of

her father (Reisch & Andrews, 2001).

Expansion of the university. Northern advocates of private power combined older notions of noblesse oblige (private responsibility for the public good) with social Darwinism to forge a justification of the role of elites and the private institutions they supported (Herman, 1994). From 1865 on, reform-minded private business corporations and university administrators sought each other out. Businesses needed new types of skilled workers and technologies to take operations to a national scale. Universities needed the support of private wealth to expand facilities, develop new curricula, and open up new fields for teaching and research. Women were initially excluded from higher education on the grounds that by nature, they were not suitable for advanced learning (Hegel, 1973; Gilbert & Gubar, 1985; Freeland, 1994).

However, eventually women-only seminaries, colleges, and universities were developed. Mary Richmond was among the first to call for technical training of social workers (Reisch & Andrews, 2001). The New York School of Philanthropy was established in 1904 and offered a one-year training program in social work (Austin, 1986). The school later became known as the Columbia School of Social Work. The University of Pennsylvania and Smith College also offered social work training.

Professionalization and social problems. The professionalization of the social *problems* of educating, policing, helping, and healing evolved as a result of the development of industrial capitalism (Dawley, 1976). Immigration from Europe and migration of emancipated slaves from the south caused a population explosion in the cities of the north. From 1890 to 1920, 22 million immigrants came to the United States (Karger & Stoesz, 2006). The supply of workers exceeded the need for laborers by industrialists. Professionally trained police officers "were an instrument used by one class in the community to discipline another during the critical years of industrial conversion (Dawley, 1976, p. 110).

The interests of manufacturers, politicians, and private property owners were threatened by the poor, sick, drunken, or otherwise justifiably angry people. Massive strikes in the railroad and textile industries exposed the failure of repressing uprisings (Reisch & Andrews, 2001). A softer, more subtle form of manipulation was needed. Social reformers such as "church women, clergymen, educators, and men of letters" were considered guardians of the public morality (Reisch & Andrews, 2001, p. 117). The professional middle class shared the same bourgeois values that the industrialists did, and poor relief functioned as a form of social control. "They were the moral police for middle class virtues" (Reisch & Andrews, 2001, p. 114).

Charity work rapidly expanded and grew to national philanthropic organizations. Over time, the classification of problems and symptoms of poverty became a highly specialized service provided by social workers. The social work profession expanded the number of training institutions and adopted professional standards of practice and requirements for credentialing (Leighninger, 1987).

Two approaches: early social work and poverty. Many of the early social workers were more concerned with the morality of client than morality of the profession (Reamer, 1990). In the mid 1800s, as social work emerged as an early profession, there were two basic approaches to addressing poverty. Charity Organization Societies (COS) utilized home visitors to meet with individuals in hopes of reforming their character flaws and work ethic. The COS emerged from a concern to make almsgiving scientific, efficient, and preventative (Franklin, 1986). Mary Richmond (1917) was affiliated with the COS and is often identified as the originator of social work case management. In her book, *Social Diagnosis*, Richmond articulates a pragmatic approach to classification and treatment of social problems, charting the course for social work to align with the medical profession in providing individual diagnoses.

In contrast, Settlement Houses sought to address structural issues and environmental factors through social and political action (Addams, 1960; Reisch & Andrews, 2001). Jane Addams founded Hull House working *with,* rather than *for* the people. Jane referred to those she served as "neighbors" with equal standing (Rudnick, 1991). Addams was critical of Richmond's approach and what she referred to as the "daintily clad charitable visitor" (Addams, p. 66). The clash between the two approaches has been characterized as the tension between the spiritual orientation of moral certainty (Addams and the Settlement House) and the scientific orientation of rational inquiry (Richmond and Scientific Case Management); it represents a paradigm shift as religion gave way to science as the dominant discourse (Franklin, 1986).

Social Work Leadership in a Gendered Profession

The social work profession also served as an early forum for women's leadership. At the turn of the 20th century, women had relatively few options for paid work in the public domain. Middle-class women with access to higher education initiated an unprecedented level of social change. Prominent leaders included women like Grace Abbott, Jane Addams, Frances Perkins, Mary Richmond, and Ida B. Wells (McGerr, 2003). Jane Addams "felt that women had distinctive interests that could no more be served by men than the interests of the proletariat could be served by the bourgeoisie" (Bolin, 1973, p. 10–11). Addams was adept at developing and empowering women. In *Twenty Years at Hull House,* she describes her work:

> We found ourselves spending many hours in efforts to secure support for deserted
> women, insurance for bewildered widows, damages for injured operators, and furniture
> from the clutches of the installment store. The Settlement is valuable as an information
> and interpretation bureau. It constantly acts between the various institutions of the city
> and the people for whose benefit these institutions were erected. The hospitals, the county

agencies, and State asylums are but vague rumors to the people who need them most

(Addams, 1910, p. 167).

Likewise, Addams helped to organize four labor unions at Hull House. Addams and

Settlement leaders walked in picket lines to demonstrate solidarity, testified before civic groups

as to the rights and needs of working women, and helped to raise strike funds (Chambers, 1980).

Other well-educated women were inspired to join Addams at Hull House. The residents of Hull

House formed an influential group of advocates for social change: Florence Kelley, Dr. Alice

Hamilton, Julia Lathrop, Ellen Gates Starr, and Grace and Edith Abbott (Reisch & Andrews,

2001). Hull House afforded them an alternative to domesticity and a chance to apply what they

had learned in college.

In 1915, Addams called together the peace committees of all the American women's

organizations, and 3,000 delegates responded (Schott, 1985). This meeting was the beginning of

the Women's Peace Party (WPP) and the antecedent of the Women's International League for

Peace and Freedom (WILPF), of which Addams became president in 1919. Addams and her

colleagues were convinced that women and men "had fundamentally different moral values" that

were not innate, but came from different experiences (p. 19). Male-dominated values resulted in

an out-of-balance society where competition, violence, and destruction prevailed. Women's

experiences in nurturing human life led them to a deeper understanding of the importance of

preserving life (Klosterman & Stratton, 2006).

At the same time, women filled front-line positions in fights against the exploitations of

industry, e.g., child labor, poor housing and sanitation, and segregation. Yet, most of the

management positions in agencies were filled by men. Early social workers protested this unfair

representation as early as 1880 (Vandiver, 1980). Today, social workers are predominantly

female. A recent survey of NASW members found that 80% were female (NASW, 2005). "The numerical dominance of females in the social work profession has not translated into authority, power, and pay equity or equality" (Dressel, 1987, p. 297).

Leadership has been gendered as a term (Burns, 1987; Carli & Eagly, 1991, Rhode, 2003; Wilson, 2007). Social work is and has been a gendered profession, specifically a *male-dominated, female-majority* profession (McPhail, 2004; 2008). While feminist constructions of leadership integrate the personal with the political (Addams, 1960; Buzzanell, 2000; Carli, 2000; Caizzia, 2005). Greenhouse & Haynes, 2004), male constructions of leadership tend to view the political and the personal as separate domains (Drucker, 1954; Hesselbein, Goldsmith & Beckhard, 1996). Social work leadership is "the communication of vision, guided by the NASW Code of Ethics, to create proactive processes that empower individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities" (Rank and Hutchison, 2003, p. 499).

History lessons for leaders today. Jane Addams epitomizes social work's first leader. She exemplifies several leadership traits, including humility, moral courage, empowerment of women, and innovation. Among her many achievements, Jane Addams won the Nobel Prize for Peace, created and successfully maintained *Twenty Years at Hull House,* fought for women's voting rights, worked as Chicago's first Garbage Inspector, collaborated with labor unions for workers' rights, and conceptualized and implemented the first playgrounds (Addams, 1960; McCree Bryan, Bair, & De Angury, 2003; McGerr, 2003).

In spite of the magnitude of social changes implemented by progressives like Jane Addams, Mary Richmond, and Grace Abbott, Flexner (1915) criticized social work and questioned its legitimacy as a profession, charging social workers with the lack of a clearly articulated values-base and ethical foundation. It is true that social workers had varying views

about methods and philosophical issues, not unlike any other professional group. For example, Mary Richmond founded *Social Diagnosis* and case management approaches to address social problems. Jane Addams approached social work from her liberal arts educational background with an emphasis on social justice. In spite of their shared goals, Addams and Richmond often publicly clashed in their views. Their dislike for each other spanned decades, with their ideological differences never being fully resolved (Franklin, 1986).

An examination of conflicts of early social workers may be instructive for social work leaders, revealing much about social change, challenges to the inequitable status quo, power, and gender. Discovering the complexities of leadership opens up a topic that is, perhaps, not fully addressed in social work classrooms. Structural changes through individual and collective efforts to reorder society are fraught with internal conflicts and met with fierce political opposition, personal attacks, corporate resistance, and at times, government corruption (Adams & Balfour, 2004; Freire, 1970/2007; Freire, 1998; Gandhi, 1927/1992; Lukes, 1974; Mandela, 1994, Sen, 2001).

Well-intending social workers may collude with elites in regulating women, the poor, and powerless under the guise of good work. The concept of administrative evil, as discussed by Adams and Balfour (2004), has been an explanation for the use of the bureaucratic apparatus for the purpose of social control of a group of people designated as a *surplus population,* one that is devalued by elites.

Leadership, paternalism, and social control. Paternalism is defined as (Webster): "A system under which an authority undertakes to supply needs or regulate conduct of those under its control in matters affecting them as individuals as well as in their relationships to authority and to each other." Thus "paternalism supplies needs for those under its protection or

control, while leadership gets things done. The first is directed inwards, while the latter is directed outwards" (Leadership Styles, 2010, para. 21).

A Review of Recent Social Work Leadership Research

This study emphasizes the transformational leadership approach, which appears to be compatible with social practice and values (Arches, 1997; Fisher, 2009; Packard, 2003;). Packard (2003) asserts that transformational leadership principles are compatible with social work principles of valuing individuals and empowerment. Arches' (1997) description of transformational leadership is "empowering and participatory as it promotes input into decision-making, delegation of tasks, and responsibility, and it fosters local leadership" (p. 114). Three major studies have been selected and will be discussed in some detail. Empirical research on transformational leadership has been limited to only a few studies in the social service literature (Arches, 1997; Gellis, 2001; Mary, 2005). Perceptions of social work leadership skills needed for the 21st century are also an important focus (Rank & Hutchison, 2003). Conceivably, as the environment changes, the leadership skills needed for the social work profession will also change.

Analysis of leadership study. Rank and Hutchison (2003) conducted an exploratory study entitled *Analysis of Leadership within the Social Work Profession.* The researchers sought to create a definition of leadership in the social work academic and practice domains by investigating perceptions from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Rank and Hutchison (2003) obtained a random sample of 75 deans from 460 CSWE accredited social work programs and 75 executive directors and presidents of 56 chapters of NASW to participate in a telephone interview, with eight open-

ended questions about leadership. The following questions were used, after being tested in a pilot study (p. 491).

1. How do you define the concept of leadership for the social work profession?

2. Does your leadership concept for the social work profession differ from that same concept for other disciplines? If so, what do you believe distinguishes it?

3. Whom do you identify as the most important leaders of the past? (Please list three individuals.)

4. Whom do you identify as the leaders of the social work profession today? (Please list three individuals.)

5. In your opinion, do you believe leadership roles have changed over the past century? If so, how?

6. What do you believe are the essential leadership skills for social workers for the 21st century? (Please list no more than three.)

7. In your opinion, what is the mission for the social work profession for the 21st century?

8. What content, if any, should programs of social work include in creating leadership development curriculum for baccalaureate students? For master's students? For doctoral students?

The total sample consisted of 98 women and 52 men (n=150). The sample was somewhat diverse, with 13 African American, 5 Asian Pacific Islander, 85 Caucasian, 1 Chicano/Mexican American, 2 Native American, and 2 Puerto Rican participants. The authors utilized a posteriori approach to content analysis (McGranahan, 1951), with categories of analysis being derived inductively to classify the content. Results were organized in response to each question. Five

common elements emerged from the qualitative data concerning the concept of leadership for the social work profession, with the number of comments for each listed parenthetically (p. 492-493):

1. Proaction – acting in anticipation of future problems (n=161)

2. Values and Ethics – to demonstrate ethical behavior and the values of the profession (n=76)

3. Empowerment – the process of helping individuals, families, groups, and communities to increase their strengths and develop influence (n=71)

4. Vision – willingness and ability to translate future directions to goals and objectives (n=38)

5. Communication – verbal and non-verbal exchange of information, representing the mission of the profession to the public (n=16)

In addition, four themes were identified that distinguish leadership in the social work profession from others. These included: a commitment to the NASW Code of Ethics; a systemic perspective; an altruistic, participatory leadership style; and a concern for the profession's public image. Negative statements about the profession were grouped into four themes. Social work leadership: has become more cautious and unwilling to lead (n=18), has become self-serving (n=15), has abandoned the mission of the profession (n=15), has become defined by the organization or agency (n=8) (p. 494).

Leadership roles in social work have changed over the past century. A total of nine skills were identified by respondents as essential leadership skills social workers in the 21st century (N=370) (p. 495).

1. Community development (n=81)

2.   Communication/interpersonal (n=67)

3.   Analytic (n=46)

4.   Technological (n=36)

5.   Political (n=34)

6.   Visioning (n=29)

7.   Ethical reasoning (n=29)

8.   Risk taking (n=29)

9.   Cultural competence/diversity (n=19).

Similarly, the four themes that emerged within the varied responses for the *mission of social work in the 21st century* were: political advocacy (n=67), professional identity (n=66), social reconstruction and redistribution of wealth (n=9), and vision for a fair and equitable society (n=8) (p. 497). Nearly all participants reported that leadership development should occur at all levels of social work education, BSW students (n=143, 95.3%), MSW students, (n=147, 98%), and PhD students (n=142, 94.7%).

The study contributes to the leadership knowledge base of the social work profession. Limitations of the study include the lack of generalizability of the findings to all social work leaders. However, the authors' intent was simply an exploratory study of the perceptions of social work leaders. Increased transparency on the use of coding procedures for the qualitative data would improve ability to assess and replicate the study. In addition, sample occupational characteristics such as total years of social work experience and highest degree held would be of interest.

Health Care Transformational Leadership Study. Gellis (2001) conducted an exploratory study of the perceptions of social workers of leaders in a health care setting to

examine the association between leadership behaviors and organizational performance. The sampling frame included 234 social workers from 26 hospitals in an urban setting. A cross-sectional survey design was utilized. Demographic data of respondents (age, gender, and education) were collected, along with responses to a standardized instrument, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, MLQ Form 5X. A total of 187 completed questionnaires were returned for an 80% response rate (p. 19). The identified leaders were the participants' direct supervisors in their respective health care organizations.

The MLQ Form 5X is a 45-item measure designed by Bass and Avolio (1990). Twelve subscales measure transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership factors. Internal consistency measures using Cronbach's alpha range from .74 to .96, which is acceptable (p. 19). Confirmatory factor analysis was used by Bass and Avolio (1990) to obtain convergent and discriminant validity for the constructs. Transformational leadership factors included: idealized attributes, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual motivation, and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership factors included: contingent rewards, active management by exception, passive management by exception. Three outcome variables were used to examine leader success: the extra effort the leader inspires the follower to give, the organizational effectiveness of the leader, and the follower's satisfaction with the leader.

The sample consisted of practicing social workers at two levels of educational attainment 168 (89%) MSW and 19 (11%) BSW. Most respondents were female (86%), and the average age was 42 years. Hospital treatment areas included: medical/surgical, emergency, pediatrics, rehabilitation, geriatrics, intensive care, neonatal, burn unit, and cardiology (p. 20–21).

Gellis (2001) calculated means and standard deviations and used bivariate analysis to evaluate relationships among the variables in the study. Hierarchical regression analyses were employed. Results indicated a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership behaviors and extra effort, leader effectiveness, and satisfaction with leader. One transactional leadership behavior (contingent rewards) was also positively correlated. Pearson Product–Moment Correlations between the MLQ Transformational Subscales and the outcome variables ranged from .66 to .80 and were statistically significant at the p < .01 level. Satisfaction with leader was first entered into a model predicting perceived effectiveness, followed by the other factors. Regression analysis revealed that only one MLQ factor (individual consideration) significantly augmented the predictive power of satisfaction, which increased the model R-squared from .74 to .82 (p < .01).

This study delineates five dimensions of transformational leadership that may prove useful in producing work behavior beyond expectations. Social workers reported more satisfaction with leaders expressing transformational qualities. Limitations include the reliance on a single questionnaire, which can be subject to interpretation problems from common method variance. This variance can result when two or more constructs are measured by a single rater. In addition, measures of rater and leader racial/ethnic diversity have proved beneficial.

NNSWM Transformational Leadership Study. Mary (2005) measured perceptions of leaders among social workers who identified as members of social work macro-practice organizations, the National Network of Social Work Managers (NNSWM) (n=340) and the Association of Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA) (n=495). In a survey, participants in the study were asked to rate a leader in a formal position of authority in a human services organization where they have worked. In addition, participants were asked to

report information about the leader they rated, including their educational background, and characteristics of their organization.

The researcher used a standardized instrument, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which was used by Gellis (2001) to measure social workers' perceptions of leaders in health care and developed from studies in business management (Bass and Avolio, 2000; Bass & Riggio, 2006). The *MLQ Form 5x Short* contains 12 subscales, with 5 factors measuring to the construct of transformational leadership, 3 factors measuring the construct of transactional leadership, and 1 factor measuring the laissez-faire approach to leadership. Additionally, 3 subscales measure outcomes that tend to correlate with the transformational leadership style: perceived effectiveness of the leader, satisfaction with the leader, and perception of the "extra effort" the leader inspires in the employee or follower (p. 110). Reliabilities for the total items and for each factor ranged from .74 to .94.

Of the 835 members sampled, 177 completed and returned the questionnaires, for a 21% response rate. The sampling frame was primarily female (118), educated at the master's level (109), and averaged 48 years of age, with a range of 22 to 83 years of age (p. 111). Of the leaders that were rated by respondents, 95 (54%) had a social work background, 28 (16%) were educated in business or pubic administration, 19 (11%) had degrees in education, and the remaining in psychology, divinity, law, and medicine. Overall, leaders were seen as being more transformational than transactional in leadership style.

There was a strong, positive relationship between perceived transformational leadership style and positive leader outcomes; transformational characteristics correlate strongly with leadership success. Results revealed a strong, positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, commitment, leader effectiveness, and satisfaction with the

leader. Pearson correlations for all five transformational factors (charisma, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual motivation, and individualized consideration) were statistically significant at the p < .01 level, and for one transactional characteristic (contingent rewards) at the p < .01 level. Results indicated that rater characteristics of age and gender were not related to leader outcomes, nor did the educational background of the leader make a difference in how they were rated. These findings confirmed the results of Gellis (2001).

Additionally Mary (2005) examined the relationship between organizational style and perceived leader effectiveness. Organizational style was measured by asking the rater to place the organization on a 10-point continuum from autocratic, to bureaucratic, to democratic, to laissez-faire. The mean scores for all three outcome variables, extra effort, leader effectiveness, and satisfaction were significantly higher in agencies perceived to be democratic (p < .0001). Scores for other styles were lower, decreasing from bureaucratic to autocratic to laissez-faire.

The low response rate was a limitation of the study. Likewise, it is unclear whether the sample was racially diverse. Questions about the racial/ethnic identification of respondents and leaders were not included but may have had an impact on outcomes. Another criticism is that leaders are defined as *someone other than the respondent*, instead of emphasizing the assessment and development of *self as leader*.

Policy-making and Social Work Leadership Development

The social work profession also has a history of courageously championing the causes of exploited workers, children and women, the disabled, and similarly vulnerable populations (Addams, 1902, 1911, 1914; Richmond, 1917; Reamer, 1998; McGerr, 2003). While micro-practice social workers play important roles in addressing social problems at the individual level, structural economic and political problems that disproportionately impact at-risk populations

must also be adequately addressed through legislative and policy-making processes. The past three decades have been challenging, as the social welfare state has been dismantled by privatization and budget cuts (Abramovich, 2001, 2006; Karger & Stoesz, 2006; NASW, 2008; Piven 2007; Havemen, 2008). The need for macro-practice social workers who are ready to lead is evident. Making structural changes to improve social and economic conditions involves leadership in organizational, political, and policy-making domains.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and National Association of Social Workers (NASW) are the primary sources for policies that impact social work education and leadership development. In addition, Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) have a direct bearing on the education of social work leaders. All three sources of policy-making and their impact on leadership development are discussed in the following pages.

Policy context: decline of the American social welfare state. Abramovich (2001) notes that profit motives and the interests of the elite drove the social reform process in two major waves. The economic collapse of the 1930s was blamed on a failure of the markets, and investment in public programs, the solution. The recession of the 1970s was blamed on greater public spending, and "personal responsibility" of welfare recipients, the answer in a new form: a purportedly self-regulated economy and a smaller welfare state. Moral arguments obscured economic realities. Welfare was blamed for high divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births. Calls for race-neutral programs actually led to racialized outcomes. Vocal and visible leadership in the form of organized resistance from the social work profession was notably absent.

Widely publicized moral arguments blaming the poor for their plight, and relative silence on the distribution of public benefits to the rich, obscured the massive upward transfer of wealth (Abramovich, 2001; Wright, 1994). Former presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Sr.,

pointed to the moral failures of poor mothers, and the Conservative agenda replaced postwar liberalism with hostility toward social welfare programs. In the face of massive cuts to welfare, from 1995 to 1997, the average income of the top 1% of tax filers' rose nine times faster than the average income of the bottom 90% (p. 302).

Growing social inequality. In 2000, programs for advantaged Americans represented 77% of the entitlement dollars, while the poor received only 23% (Abramovich, 2001). Ironically, higher benefits to the middle and upper class such as social security are protected from inflation, while the value of public assistance for the poor is eroded by inflation. Regressive tax spending through mortgage interest deductions, medical expenses, charitable deductions, and property taxes reflect similar class dynamics. The notion of the "upside down welfare state" proposed by Titmuss reveals that the middle and upper classes are favored by these systems (p. 298). Corporate welfare, humorously termed, *aid to dependent corporations*, intensifies this effect. Over the past 40 years, the proportion of federal revenue paid by *individuals* through income and social insurance taxes has increased (from 63% to 72%), while *corporate* income and excise taxes have declined (23% in 1962 to 13 % in 2000).

Jantti (2008) brings the notion of class mobility into focus. Americans rationalize marked income disparities as a trade-off, the illusory *equality of opportunity* for *equality of outcomes*. Ironically, in the *land of opportunity*, the "son of a man from the lowest quintile group from the U.S. has the lowest probability of becoming a member of the highest quintile group, compared with Nordic nations" (p. 24).

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The Council on Social Work Education was established in 1952 and consists of partnerships of educational institutions, professional associations, social welfare agencies, and individuals (CSWE, 2010a). Currently, there are over

3,000 individual members, as well as graduate and undergraduate programs for social work education. As of February 2010, there were 470 accredited baccalaureate social work programs, 200 accredited master's social work programs, 22 baccalaureate social work programs in candidacy, and 19 master's social work programs in candidacy (CSWE, 2010b). CSWE is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting entity for social work education in the United States.

> CSWE aims to promote and strengthen the quality of social work education through preparation of competent social work professionals by providing national leadership and a forum for collective action. CSWE pursues this mission through setting and maintaining policy and program standards, accrediting bachelor's and master's degree programs in social work, promoting research and faculty development, and advocating for social work education (CSWE, 2010a, para. 2).

CSWE Leadership Development Initiative. In a 2006 report of the Leadership Development Initiative of the CSWE:

> There was nearly universal agreement that social work education has not adequately planned for leadership development. The three most clearly recognized goals for leadership development were: 1.) to prepare and encourage social work faculty members to engage in campus leadership roles that affect campus policies and procedures in order to make campus environments more compatible with social work values and goals; 2.) to strengthen the administrative leadership of social work education programs; and 3.) to provide leadership development opportunities for future and emerging leaders in social work education (p. 1).

The focus of the CSWE is primarily on developing leaders in higher education. However, the perception of where leadership development is needed in social work education spans from the education of doctoral students to higher administration roles in academia and beyond. CSWE is advancing collaborative relationships with groups such as the International Association of Social Work Education, the Baccalaureate Program Directors Association, and the CSWE Minority Fellowship Program.

In 2006, CSWE issued a "Call for Courses and Content on Leadership" to membership, a total of 639 institutions (Lazarri, 2007). Syllabi were collected for six months, and 35 institutions responded to the request. Of the 74 syllabi submitted, a total of 5 baccalaureate and 15 master's-level courses referred to "leadership" in the title. No doctoral programs responded to the request. Special leadership certificates were offered in: "Child Welfare," "Social Work Management," and "Executive and Administrative Development in Social Work" (p. 2). Special curricula in developing "Field Advisory Committees" and "Urban Leadership" were also included. The following theoretical bases for leadership were noted:

1. Trait

2. Behavioral and Social Learning

3. Situational and Contingency

4. Transactional

5. Transformational

6. Feminist

7. Relational–Cultural (p. 3)

While less than 7% of membership responded, it is unclear whether other courses exist that could have been included in the review. At the same time, the need for leadership development within social work education is evident.

The 2010 Leadership Development Institute. CSWE and the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education combined efforts to help more social work managers and leaders participate in a two-week education, training, and mentoring program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (CSWE, 2009). CSWE funded up to one-third of the cost for a total of five social work administrators accepted to the Harvard Management Development Program or the Harvard Institute for Management and Leadership in Education. Tuition for these programs is approximately $7,000. This represents a concrete, albeit relatively small investment in the future leaders of the social work profession. Results from the 2010 and ongoing leadership programs may prove valuable for future research and education.

Other population-based leadership development programs. Programs like the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education seem to follow a population-based pattern of leadership development rather than a broad-based systemic leadership development plan. Other programs include the Harford leadership development initiative, which is specific to those who are leading in the context of gerontology (Hartford, 2009). This program emphasizes four areas of focus for leadership development: training, mentoring, peer networking, and the call to lead. Likewise, the National Child Welfare Workforce Initiative (2011) focuses on five pillars of leadership in the child welfare context: adaptive, collaborative, distributive, inclusive, and outcome-focused.

The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) set forth requirements for curricular content and the educational context for social work programs. EPAS describes four features of an integrated

curriculum design: (1) program mission and goals, (2) explicit curriculum, (3) implicit curriculum, and (4) assessment (CSWE, 2008). Social work education—at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels, "shapes the profession's future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, and the exercise of *leadership* [emphasis added] within the professional community" (p. 1).

Leadership appears to be of secondary importance in the explicit curriculum. Indirectly, the implicit curriculum addresses social work BSW and MSW program directors' leadership in creating a learning environment that supports diversity and the spirit of inquiry and "an educational culture that is congruent with the values of the profession" (p. 10). Overall, leadership is minimally addressed in EPAS.

EPAS sets thresholds for professional competence. Within the explicit curriculum, only two policy standards directly address social work leadership. *Educational Policy 2.1.9 – Respond to contexts that shape practice* states:

> Social workers are informed, resourceful and proactive in responding to organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively…Social workers provide *leadership* [emphasis added] in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services (p. 6).

Similarly, EPAS *Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities* states:

> Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the

knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and

communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing

evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and

technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness;

developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing *leadership* [emphasis added] for

policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice (p. 6-7).

NASW Code of Ethics and Leadership. Leadership is addressed indirectly, in the

NASW Code of Ethics, under section *6.0 Social Workers Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader

Society*. Leadership is implicit in promoting *6.01 Social Welfare* "from local to global levels and

the development of people, their communities, and their environments" (NASW, 2008, p. 21).

Likewise, this section addressed the need for social workers to "promote social, economic,

political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social

justice" (p. 21). Leadership is also implied in *6.02 Public Participation*, the imperative for social

workers to facilitate "participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions" (p.

22).

Political activity is encouraged by the National Association of Social Workers, as part of

social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society (NASW, 2008). Under section 6.04

(a), NASW reaffirms that, "Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks

to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and

opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs." Social workers are advised to be

aware of the impact of leadership in the political arena on practice and advocate for changes in

policy and legislation to improve social and economic conditions.

Social Work Speaks policy statements. On the topic of women in leadership, *Social Work Speaks*, the NASW social work policy statement, supports the following action: "identifying and overcoming barriers to the advancement of women in social work…including challenging internalized restrictive gender role stereotypes," " increasing management training for women," and "adopting and teaching non-oppressive leadership styles to males and female social work administrators that more congruently fit both social work values and women's preferred style of interactional leadership" (NASW, 2006a, p. 384).

Leadership is indirectly addressed in the policy statement addressing the "Role of Government, Social Policy, and Social Work" (NASW, 2006a, p. 316). Recounting the dismantling of the social welfare state in the past 30 years, *Social Work Speaks* reaffirms the essential role of government in establishing a social safety net. In this publication, NASW articulates a need for social work leadership in government and human service organizations. Furthermore, NASW advances the need for leadership in "curbing the excess of a free market economy" (p. 319).

Likewise, on the topic of electoral politics, *Social Work Speaks* asserts that, "Social work is inextricably linked to electoral politics in a variety of ways. The political authority of decision-makers confers ability to determine access to and distribution of vital resources" (p. 123). The NASW maintains a political action committee called Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) in accordance with federal law. The NASW PACE supports electoral politics by contributing to candidates financially, endorsing candidates, and communicating with public officials, with attention to candidates that support social work values. The "NASW reaffirms that participation in politics is consistent with fundamental social work values, such as self-determination, empowerment, democratic decision-making, equal opportunity, inclusion, and the

promotion of social justice" (p. 124). Moreover, *Social Work Speaks* asserts that the ability to achieve public policy goals is contingent upon full participation in a wide range of legitimate leadership and political activities. In the furtherance of educating social workers, "NASW seeks to work collaboratively with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to develop appropriate curriculum materials on and field placements in electoral politics, and to expand opportunities for political social work practice" (p. 124).

Strategies to Encourage Women's Leadership

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) identified six strategies for increasing women's political activism, an expression of public service and leadership. Women need the following: (1) examples or role models of women who "break the mold," (2) a forum to address their fears and embrace their anger, (3) the opportunity to make connections across race and class, (4) a "gentle push" or encouragement from others to get involved, (5) mentoring programs with political/activist components, and (6) to be met "where they are at," recognizing that the unique patterns and locations of women's lives differ from men's lives in the need to balance care giving demands for others (Caizzia 2005, pp. 16, 18, 39, 43).

The IWPR also revealed that women's motivation for leadership is often religious or value-based. It is women's "anger" at injustices or violations of their values that propels them to action (Caizzia, 2005, p. 5). For most women, the personal is political. Likewise, Caiazza (2005) found that women describe four basic values or principles underlying their leadership: the basic worth and dignity of people; interconnectedness; love, peace, and compassion; and stewardship. Women differ from men in their fundamental approach to leadership, in that women routinely connect the collective good with their own well being (Addams, 1960; Wilson, 2006; Lawless

and Fox, 2005). At the same time, women may undermine or hold back other women, as they operate within a competitive, male-dominated business culture (Wilson, 2006).

Political advocacy and social work leadership. Political advocacy was the number one leadership skill identified for the social worker of the 21st century (Rank & Hutchison, 2003; Mary, 2005). For women, there may be a crucial link between organizational leadership positions and leadership positions in the policy-making domain. Executive leadership experience is often seen as a pre-requisite for women seeking public office, but not necessarily for men (Wilson, 2006). Social service agencies and organizations may be *feeders* to the pipeline of potential leaders in the domain of policy-making. Social workers may benefit from leadership development and knowledge of leadership theory and practice. Untapped opportunities exist within social work educational forums to develop women as leaders in the public and non-profit sectors.

Similarly, the field of social entrepreneurship, addressing social problems using entrepreneurial skills, to create and manage a venture to make social change, represents a balance or *both-and* integration of the profit and human development motives. Social change efforts require financial resources. Social entrepreneurs use blended business models that combine a revenue-generating business with social-value-generating components (Bornstein, 2007; Peredo & McLean). The potential strengths of these approaches have been, for the most part, unrecognized by the social work establishment (Bent-Goodley, 2002).

Contradictory issues. Gender and leadership are complex and contradictory issues in social work. Early social work served as a legitimate forum for women to lead, hold power, and participate in the public discourse (Addams, 1902; 1911, 1914; Richmond, 1917; McGerr, 2003).

At the same time, social work has functioned to regulate the lives of poor women (Abramovich, 2001; Kennedy, 2006; Reisch & Andrews, 2001).

There appears to be a gap in the stated goals and values of the social work profession and the allocation of resources to develop social workers, women in particular, as leaders. The NASW and CSWE acknowledge the need for social workers to engage in leadership, including administrative roles in higher education, non-profits, public agencies, and electoral and public offices. However, there appears to be a lack of curricula and resources dedicated to achieving these goals, a lack of interest on the part of social work students, or both (CSWE, 2006). The CSWE 2010 leadership seeks to address the development of leaders in social work by providing partial scholarships to five leaders in the social work profession. Transformational leadership principles are congruent with professional values. Qualitative research that addresses the challenges and experiences of social workers is needed. When we embrace leadership, and the equitable and legitimate use of power, we will quite likely see more equitable distributions of resources. As Jane Addams famously wrote, "Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics" (Addams, 1902, p. 86).

Summary

Prior to the industrial revolution, notions of leadership were narrowly constructed in military or elitist terms. Prevailing ideas about social Darwinism influenced understandings of leadership, including the idea that leaders were born, not made. With the emergence of management and leadership theory, the importance of the social, political, and economic context was understood to be a determining factor. Scientific management was replaced by human relations models, rational, goal-oriented, and, finally, open systems approaches to leadership.

The fields of business and public administration have contributed substantively to the theory and practice of leadership in the public and private sectors. In particular, the Competing Values Framework and recent work on transformational leadership address the human conflict as an integral part of human development, and by extension, social change. Social work leadership development must build upon the theory and practice of these approaches to develop a unique, multi-system level, culturally competent, and critically conscious method of leadership development.

Specifically within social work leadership literature, empirical studies of leadership have tended to focus on transformational styles of leadership (Arches, 1997; Gellis, 2001; Mary, 2005) and social workers' perceptions of leadership competencies and skills needed for the 21st Century (Rank & Hutchison, 2003; Wimpheimer, 2004). The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) initiated a leadership development program in 2010 in partnership with the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education. Each year, CSWE provides funding for five social work leaders to participate in the program as an investment in the future of leadership within the profession. At the same time, specific content on leadership is notably absent from the Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Likewise, professional organizations' publications such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) "Code of Ethics" or "Social Work Speaks" policy statements address issues of human rights and needed social action but largely avoid the use of "leadership" as a term or professional construct.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

The study of social work leaders had a two-fold purpose. The primary objective was to develop a greater understanding of the leadership development as experienced by social work leaders. The secondary objective was to add to the existing literature on the experiences of social work leaders. For the purpose of this study, 18 exemplary social work leaders were identified and interviewed to develop the findings. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Themes were described in great detail as they emerged from the analysis of transcript data. The design of the research included the following components as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Krueger and Neuman (2006): (1) qualitative methods, (2) purposive sampling, (3) inductive data analysis, and (4) critical theory. Limitations of the study were also discussed.

The qualitative study used an exploratory, ethnographic approach to answer the six principal questions raised in chapter one, namely:

1. How do participants perceive their leadership strengths?

2. What factors influence the leadership development process?

3. How do transformational experiences or critical incidents play a role in leadership development?

4. What are the common misconceptions about leadership?

5. What are the hidden conflicts or "undiscussables" related to social work leadership development?

6. How might leadership in social work be taught?

Population

The research population for the purpose of this study was social work leaders employed in non-profit, higher education, and governmental entities. Each group is considered a stakeholder in the development of leadership across sectors. Conditions within these organizational settings are somewhat different. However, the context for leaders in terms of development of a social work professional identity, the experience of transformational experiences, conflicts, and ethical dilemmas is sufficiently similar to make insights potentially useful. Social work leaders met criteria for the study if they had a director level or higher position, a Master of Social Work degree, a minimum of two years, post-MSW employment experience in a human service agency. Human service agencies were defined as non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and higher education institutions. All leaders were employed in the Midwest. The findings suggested new lines of inquiry for social work leaders in human services organizations as well as the social work educators teaching in the field of leadership development.

Research participants. The participants for this study were 18 leaders of human service organizations, including non-profits, governmental agencies, and social work faculty administrators. The leaders ranged in age from 34 to 62 years of age, with a mean age of 49 years. A total of 10 were women, and 8 were men. One identified as a member of the LGBT community, and 1 had a visible physical disability. Participants had an average tenure of 10.5 years in their current position, with a range of 5 to 25 years. The group was relatively diverse in terms of representation of racial/ethnic groups. Of the 18 participants, 4 were African American, 1 was Asian, 11 were Caucasian, and 2 were Hispanic/Latino. Given the nature of the topic, it was essential to include representation from professionals of color in this study.

The complexity and interdisciplinary nature of this topic suggests a multi-stakeholder qualitative research approach be utilized to provide a variety of perspectives from stakeholders invested in leadership development. This exploratory qualitative study included a total of 18 interviews: NHSO executive directors (7), social work faculty and administrators (7), and social and welfare agency directors (4). These leaders minimally earned a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree and held a management position in the respective organization where they were employed. A total of six held an MSW degree and an additional graduate-level degree in business management, public administration, public health, or education. The overarching goal of this research was to explore the hidden conflicts and structural factors involved in transformational leadership development. The researcher's proper role was to be a "transformative intellectual" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 115).

Purposive Sampling

An initial group of three informants who were prominent leaders in the field of social work and known by the researcher were asked to identify colleagues in the region who would potentially meet the study criteria. From this group a total of 26 potential participants were identified. Pre-screening of employment and educational criteria was done by looking up potential participants on the Linked In social networking internet data base to ensure that they met study criteria. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify the 18 individual leaders to be interviewed, with six of these dually credentialed as master's-level social workers and as administrators (business, public, education, public health, other leadership field). A total of seven social work faculty and administrators were selected from seven universities with accredited social work programs. Criteria for selection included a primary practice and research focus on

macro-level social work and, specifically, management/leadership development as indicated in their online biographical information.

A total of seven non-profit directors were selected using purposive sampling. These NHSOs ranged from service providers in the following fields of practice: at-risk youth, domestic violence prevention, workforce development, home-based services, substance abuse treatment and prevention, developmental disabilities, and mental health services. Again, participants were asked to identify colleagues in the region who would meet the study criteria. A list was created of potential interview candidates. From this list, subjects were selected if they met the criteria for the study: (1) executive/management or director, (2) earned an MSW degree from an accredited school of social work. Additionally, a total of four governmental social welfare agency directors were selected representing Midwest departments of human services at the county and state levels using purposive sampling methods.

Time frame for the study. Participants were interviewed in the spring of 2012 and fall of 2013. Each interview was scheduled for 90 minutes. At least three business days prior to the interview, participants were provided with a list of the interview questions. Interviews were transcribed in an ongoing process, as the data were recorded and collected, using a digital recording device and Microsoft word processing software.

Qualitative Methods

In the social sciences, the relationship between the researcher and the subject has been "obscured in social science texts, protecting privilege, securing distance, and laminating the contradictions" (Fine, 1994, p. 72). There has been a tendency to view the self of the social science researcher as detached, neutral, and separate. Ruth Behar (1993) suggests, "We ask for revelations from others but we reveal little or nothing of ourselves; we make others vulnerable,

but we ourselves remain invulnerable" (p. 273). For the social worker, the ethical implications of this research stance are obvious. The "new" approach to qualitative research is rooted in a credible, self-reflexive voice, which is a "believable, compelling, self-examining narrator" (Goodall, 2000, p. 23).

In general, qualitative approaches to inquiry are best suited to expand one's understanding of the lived experiences, attributed meanings, and hidden conflicts. According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), qualitative, critical approaches acknowledge the interactive linkage between the researcher and participants. What can be known as findings are, therefore, "value-mediated" by the researcher. The researcher, to a large extent, becomes the instrument, and therefore, the inquirer's theoretical and philosophical biases shape the lenses through which data are collected and analyzed. The researcher, therefore, must be self-aware and transparent. The researcher has engaged the literature on leadership for three years and has served in a variety of non-profit, higher education, and agency leadership positions over the past 15 years.

Within qualitative methods of inquiry, critical approaches reveal paradoxical inner conflicts or contradictions that bring about change. These changes are termed "dialectics" (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006, p. 84). Dialectics unveil much about the hidden nature of social reality, including the process of leadership development. Myths, illusions, and distortions about leadership are confusing. Only by probing beneath the layers of meaning can one understand the conflict-laden process of leadership development. "Transformative inquirers demonstrate *transformational leadership*" (Guba and Lincoln, 1998, p. 206, citing Burns, 1978). The intent is to uncover forms of subjugated knowledge that point to experiences of suffering, conflict and collective struggle and to link historical understanding to elements of critique and hope (Giroux, 1988).

Instrumentation. Subjects were interviewed using a semi-structured process and the tool in appendix A. The questions were developed using the research questions as a framework. The questions are generally open-ended. Responses were recorded using field notes and an audio-recording device. Responses were transcribed verbatim.

The interview process. Interviews were conducted primarily in a face-to-face format, with five of the total interviews being conducted over the telephone. In order to frame the interview in positive terms, and consistent with the orientation toward strengths-based social work, the researcher began the interview by asking participants about their leadership strengths. To ensure accuracy of the results, the researcher framed the question in a consistent manner with an emphasis on "what you do best as a leader." Each participant was asked to describe at least three leadership strengths. From this grounding in a positive identity, questions proceeded from the semi-structured interview protocol, which is included in the appendices of this document. Demographic questions were placed at the end of each interview, for the purpose of minimizing response bias. Responses were recorded using a digital audio-recording device.

Data Analysis

Transcript data was analyzed using open and axial coding processes. Open codes were developed during the initial review of the data. A list of themes was made from the initial coding. According to Kreuger and Neuman (2006), such a list accomplishes three goals: (1) helps the researcher see emerging themes, (2) stimulates the researcher to find themes in future open coding, and (3) serves as a basis to build a universe of all themes in the study to be organized, sorted, combined, discarded, or extended in further analysis.

Several subsequent passes through the data yielded axial codes. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), open codes should relate to one another in some conceptual and structural

order. Axial coding will reveal connections between concepts and raise new questions. Initial codes were combined, refined, and restructured in an inductive manner. Coding and analysis procedures followed the process described in Kennedy, Agbenyiga, Kasiborski, & Gladden (2010). Additionally, an independent second coder was hired to ensure validity of the research. As a measure of internal validity, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each of the codes and subcodes. Initial codes were outside the acceptable range. The coders met to discuss conceptual categories, and further refine the list of the codes. A recalculation of Cronbach's Alpha resulted in a final coding list with agreement in the 79% to 88% range.

After conceptual coding, data were color coded according to each topic. Interviews were then read again, beginning to end. A data summary sheet was completed for each interview, which summarized the findings of each research question, and the exemplar quotes for that particular interview (see appendix B). Next, a labeling and coding scheme was used to separate quotes into their respective categories, by participant. For example, *leadership strengths* quotes were shaded blue and *identify formation factors* were shaded red. Each quote was physically cut apart from the interview and assigned to a folder with the appropriate category. From there, each interview was literally deconstructed. Subcategories were finalized after reviewing the quotes once more.

The remaining uncoded interview data were reviewed again to see if there were any meaningful themes that had been missed. These comments were rather tangential, idiosyncratic, and did not seem to add substantively to the analysis. These data were not found to be useful and were not included in the Findings chapter on this study.

Ethical Considerations

Informed, voluntary consent was procured from each participant. Asking participants about ethical conflicts may raise some feelings of discomfort. Similarly, asking participants to describe transformational experiences may bring up difficult subjects and, perhaps, painful experiences. The interviewer responded not as an impartial observer, but rather, as an empathic and caring colleague. Every effort was made to ensure that each participant's responses will be kept in a confidential manner. Personally identifying information was not used in the final report. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity of respondents. All research activity was conducted in compliance with the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Limitations

This study seeks to understand what hidden individual and social conflicts are involved in developing leaders in social work. One limitation of the proposed study applies to the generalizability (external validity) of the findings. This is a natural phenomenon of qualitative studies for reasons already described. No claim to generalizability is being made. Rather, according to McRobbie and Tobin (1995), "Generalizability is constrained by the perspective of the read and the potential applications the reader might consider. We cannot know, from an epistemological standpoint (in an *a priori* way) about the contexts to which the knowledge from this study might be applicable (p. 377). Such decisions will be left to the readers of this dissertation to find potential applications. Limitations of the study will be more fully addressed in chapter 5 – Conclusions and Implications.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Lincoln & Guba (1985; 1998) developed three criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These include: (1) credibility – extent to which participants' perceptions

match up with the researcher's portrayals of them (parallels *validity* in quantitative research), (2) dependability – extent to which one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret data (parallels *reliability* in quantitative research), and (3) transferability – the extent to which the research provides sufficient detail and thick description to enable the reader to evaluate connections with other contexts. Care was taken to address these issues of trustworthiness. Copies of data summary sheets were compared between coders. Procedures were documented in a detailed, step-by-step manner. Descriptions were in-depth and detailed.

Summary

A total of 18 diverse social work leaders were selected for in-depth interviews. The researcher applied purposive sampling techniques and inductive data analyses in a manner described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The interviews were conducted in person at work sites and by telephone. Axial and open coding techniques were used as the primary method of data analysis. An independent second coder was employed in order to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

Participants were master's-level social workers, with a formal management and/or leadership role in their respective organizations of employment. Social work leaders from higher education, non-profit human service organizations, health care, and government agencies were represented in the study. The researcher utilized an exploratory, qualitative approach to address six principal questions:

1. How do participants perceive their leadership strengths?

2. What factors influence the leadership development process?

3. How do transformational experiences or critical incidents play a role in leadership development?

4. What are the common misconceptions about leadership?

5. What are the hidden conflicts or "undiscussables" related to social work leadership development?

6. How might leadership in social work be taught?

Findings were organized around these research questions and are more fully discussed in chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This is a qualitative study of 18 master's-level social work leaders that explores the process of leadership development as well as their perceptions about leadership in the profession. The study is focused on the increasing knowledge of the common experiences of social work leaders in their respective roles in higher education, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies. In particular, the researcher sought to explore leadership development as a process involving an interaction of life experiences, individual strengths, conflicts, opportunities, relationships, and goals. The purpose was to develop a framework for understanding leadership development within the social work profession so that future social workers will be well prepared to lead. This chapter presents findings from 18 semi-structured interviews that were conducted over a period of six months during 2012–2013.

Results Overview

Of particular note are five major conceptual themes, within which I have identified several subcategories or subthemes. The process for identifying the major themes and related subthemes is described in the following pages. Findings are organized by each major theme. Related subthemes follow each major theme. Participants were assigned a number from 1 to 18 for clarity in the discussion of findings. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of the data and enable the reader to more easily review and interpret responses.

Purposive sampling yielded a group of participants that ranged in age from 34 to 61 years of age and included a balance of male and female participants. In addition, the sample included members of racially under-represented groups, a person with a physical disability, and a member

of the LGBT community. Participants' tenure in their current positions ranged from 5 years to 25

years, averaging 10.5 years. A total of 7 participants were employed in higher education

leadership roles, 8 in non-profit organizations, and 3 in governmental agencies. Table 3

summarizes the participant demographic data of the study. Not all factors are included to

preserve confidentiality of the participants.

Table 3. Summary of Demographic Data

No.	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Gender	Sector	Education	Years in Job	Title
1	46	African American	Male	Non-Profit	PhD, MSW	6	Director
2	39	African American	Female	Higher Education	PhD, MSW	5	Executive Director
3	51	African American	Male	Non-Profit	MSW, MPA	10	Director
4	55	Caucasian	Male	Non-Profit	PhD, MSW	16	Vice President
5	53	Hispanic	Female	Higher Education	PhD, MSW	7	Vice President
6	48	Caucasian	Female	Higher Education	PhD, MSW	8	Professor/Director
7	52	Caucasian	Female	Higher Education	PhD, MSW, MS	7	Director
8	57	Caucasian	Male	Government	MSW, MPA	19	Director
9	58	African American	Female	Government	MSW	8	Executive Director
10	53	Caucasian	Male	Higher Education	MSW, MBA	10	Professor
11	40	Caucasian	Female	Non-Profit	MSW	7	Director
12	49	Caucasian	Male	Higher Education	PhD, MSW	7	Professor/Director
13	60	Caucasian	Female	Non-Profit	MSW	25	Director
14	59	Caucasian	Female	Non-Profit	PhD, MSW	8	CEO
15	34	Caucasian	Female	Government	MSW, MPA	7	Manager
16	61	Caucasian	Male	Government	MSW, MBA	16	Director
17	39	Hispanic	Male	Higher Education	MSW	12	Program Director
18	47	Asian	Female	Non-Profit	MSW, MS	11	Executive Director

Analysis of the data revealed that social work leadership is a widely defined, gendered,

and culturally dependent construct that has been debated since the early origins of the profession.

These social workers tended to identify with leaders in the historical sense, while remaining

ambivalent, in some cases, about self-identifying as a leader. Participants did, however, self-

identify particular leadership strengths. Seeing oneself as a leader was a function of gender,

class, race, life experience, transformational events or critical incidents, professional education,

and socialization. There is a perceived gap between calls for leadership within the profession and

the notable absence of leadership in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

competencies. It should be acknowledged, however that the term "leadership" is included once in

the listing of the 41 foundation practice behaviors, namely EPAS 2.1.9, Practice Behavior #28, "Provide *leadership* in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery."

Six major themes of this study included:

1. Perceptions of leadership strengths – with a comparison to the Rath and Cochie model of strengths in leadership (2008).

2. Identify formation factors – barriers and supports, time in life, relationships, opportunities, internal and external conflicts, race, gender, LGBT, disability, core values.

3. Critical incidents – tragic, transformational, political, defining moments, positive and negative.

4. Misconceptions – common misconceptions of leadership.

5. "Undiscussables" – issues and dilemmas that are problematic or difficult to discuss in the field of social work leadership.

6. Teaching leadership in social work – knowledge, skills and values, pedagogy, clarifying misconceptions of leadership, advice for teaching and learning leadership or lessons for teachers and leaders, redefining leadership education, macro-level competencies set by individual schools.

Characteristics of Participants

Education. All 18 participants had earned a Master of Social Work degree. Additionally, 6 of the 18 (33%) held advanced degrees in another field, including business administration, education leadership, public administration, economics, psychology, and sociology. Eight participants (44%) had earned doctoral-level degrees.

Age. The mean age for this study was 49 years of age. Participant age ranged from 34 years to 61 years. This group is in middle adulthood. All participants have invested substantial time and energy into their careers in human services leadership.

Gender/gender identity. The group was relatively balanced in terms of gender, with 10 participants identifying as female and 8 as male. One participant identified as a member of the LGBT community; she reported she was fully "out," and she was comfortable being identified in this study as LGBT.

Race/ethnicity. The group was relatively diverse in terms of representation of racial/ethnic groups. Of the 18 participants, 4 were African American, 1 was Asian, 11 were Caucasian, and 2 were Hispanic/Latino. Given the nature of the topic, it was essential to include representation from professionals of color in this study.

Sector of employment. Participants identified their sector of employment. A total of 7 were employed in non-profit organizations, 4 were employed in public sector, governmental agencies, and 7 were employed in higher education. Social work leaders frequently are employed in these sectors, and it was important to include representatives from all three areas.

Title/position. Participants were in leadership positions in their respective roles in higher education, non-profit, and governmental human service agencies. A total of 11 were employed at the director level. A total of 3 were executive directors, 2 were vice presidents, and 2 were CEOs. Of these, 6 also identified as members of a faculty (assistant, associate, and full professor).

Years in current position. Participants tended to be in long-term, permanent positions. The range of years in current position was 5 to 25 years. The mean years in current position was

10.5 years. This finding is consistent with the fact that participants were in top-level leadership positions.

Concept and Theme Development

The concept and theme development of this study was informed by the qualitative dissertation study of executive leaders (Sanderlin-Nykamp, 2011) in which leadership identity formation, training/education, life experiences, and perception of leadership style were essential features. It is notable that the role of gender/gender identity, race, and disability were not part of the focus of the Sanderlin-Nykamp study. By contrast, a critically oriented analysis of the role of conflict, power, and privilege is presented in this study.

An initial coding of four interviews by the researcher and a second coder resulted in the preliminary development of six major categories and a list of open codes that could be developed into subcategories. A code check was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the codes, using the Kohen's kappa method of measuring inter-rater reliability. Initial codes ranged from 31% to 58% agreement. The researcher and second coder met to revise the initial code list to better represent the underlying concepts. Definitional terms or variables were also identified and refined. Quantitative methods of inductively coding were recursive and interactive. As codes were further refined, those with similar meanings were collapsed in order to eliminate redundancy. Final codes ranged from 79% to 88% percent agreement.

Discussion of the Data Analysis Process

A total of 18 interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each interview transcript was approximately 25 pages in length. The 18 interviews yielded a total of 454 pages of data. The analysis began with the researcher reading through each of the interviews, beginning to end, several times. On the initial reading, the primary focus was on three central questions

relating to: *identity formation factors; transformational experiences, conflicts and dilemmas; and leadership and pedagogy.* However, the analysis was increasingly open to identifying additional themes that were also evident in the data. After reviewing the interviews, three additional themes—*leadership strengths, misconceptions of leadership, and undiscussable issues*—began to emerge. This initial categorization of the data was revised after several readings.

Within each category, subcategories were also developed. After a code check was completed, codes were revised again to meet the acceptability range for Kohen's kappa. *Conflicts* and *dilemmas* were collapsed as a category, with *conflicts* becoming a subcategory of identity formation factors. *Dilemmas* had insufficient detail and substance to stand alone as a category independent from the other categories that were very similar, such as *misconceptions* and *undiscussables.* Final categories were reconceptualized to *leadership strengths, identity formation factors, transformational experiences, misconceptions of leadership, undiscussable issues*, and *leadership and pedagogy.*

Interviews were then read again, beginning to end. A data summary sheet was completed for each interview, summarizing the findings of each research question and identifying the exemplar quotes for that particular interview (see appendix B). Next, a labeling and coding scheme was used to separate quotes into their respective categories, by participant. For example*, leadership strengths* quotes were shaded blue, and *identity formation factors* were shaded red. Each quote was physically cut apart from the interview and assigned to a folder with the appropriate category. From there, each interview was literally deconstructed. Subcategories were finalized after reviewing the quotes once more.

The remaining uncoded interview data were reviewed again to see if there were any meaningful themes that had been missed. These comments were rather tangential and idiosyncratic and did not seem to add substantively to the analysis.

As described in table 4, categories were major concepts of the analysis, and these were made evident by the structure of the interview protocol and nature of the questions. Subcategories were subdivisions within a given category, while variables were terms frequently repeated by participants.

Table 4. Categories of Major Analytical Concepts

CATEGORY 1 – Perceived Strengths of Leaders	
Subcategories	Variables/Terms
1.1 Vision	Vision, visionary, future, futuristic
1.2 Flexibility	Flexible, flexibility, give and take
1.3 Supportive/Empowering	Support, empower, give
1.4 Adaptability	Adapt, adjust
1.5 Learner	Learning, new, education
1.6 Focus	Focus, control
1.7 Systems Thinking	System, thinking, global, connection
1.8 Integrity	Integrity, values, honesty
1.9 Weaknesses/Challenges/Other	Weakness, challenges

CATEGORY 2 – Leadership Identity Formation Factors	
Subcategories	Variables/Terms
2.1 Time of Onset	Youth, teen, young adult
2.2 Supportive Factors	Parents, family, expectation, teacher, mentor, job-related, supervisor, education-related, school, college, politically-related, civil rights, spiritual, religious
2.3 Barriers – Internal Conflicts	Lack of confidence, limited role models, no people like me, spiritual, religious limitations, lack of work life balance
2.4 Barriers – External Conflicts	Gender barriers, sexism, racial barriers, tokenism, scrutiny, disability barriers, LGBT barriers, institutional barriers, discrimination, other, being too outspoken

CATEGORY 3 – Critical Incidents or Transformational Experiences	
Subcategories	Variables/Terms
3.1 Educational	Education, MSW, accreditation
3.2 Spiritual	Spiritual, religious, God
3.3 Relational Conflicts/Discrimination Issues	Bully, sexism, racism, murder
3.4 Political/Civic Engagement	Civil rights, women's movement
3.5 Job Related	Job, boss, supervisor, work
3.6 Promotion	Invited, opportunity, promotion

Table 4 cont'd

CATEGORY 4 – Misconceptions of Leadership	
Subcategories	Variables/Terms
4.1 Opportunities in Conflicts and Crisis	Crisis, conflict, opportunities
4.2 Leadership Is About Values	Values, integrity, humility, honesty
4.3 "Not a Glorious Place"	Not a glorious place, criticized, decisions
4.4 Not About Having a Title	Title, formal, boss, supervisor
4.5 Not About Telling People What to Do	Boss, autocratic, supervisor, telling
4.6 Leadership as Social Construction	Social construction

CATEGORY 5 – Undiscussables – Hidden Dilemmas in Social Work Leadership	
Subcategories	Variables/Terms
5.1 Importance of Macro Emphasis	Importance, macro, students, don't know
5.2 Invisibility of Macro Social Work Leaders	Media, examples, invisible, leaders
5.3 Discrimination and Bias Issues	Racism, discrimination, disability, LGBT, gender bias, sexism, women, men
5.4 Incompetence	Incompetence, competence, skill set
5.5 Narrow Role Definition	Narrow, financial issues, budget
5.6 Our Image/Self-Image as Social Workers	

CATEGORY 6 – Leadership and Pedagogy	
Subcategories	Variables/Terms
6.1 Formal Learning Opportunities	Course, class, formal, informal, learning
6.2 Specialization vs. Infusion	Both, and, separate course, infusion, include
6.3 Need for Knowledge Base	Knowledge base, theory, practice, foundation
6.4 Methods of Instruction	Method, media, role play, speaker, field
6.5 Networking Opportunities	Professional association, peer, networking
6.6 Advice for Future Leaders	Advice, axiomatic, patience, learning
6.7 Advice for Social Work Educators	Advice, intentionality, competency

Category 1 – Perceived Strengths of Leaders

Each interview began with the participant being asked to identify their leadership strengths. Specifically, they were asked to identify their top three leadership strengths and an example of each. The strengths that were shared in the interviews varied widely across participants. However, these self-identified strengths are aligned (as indicated by the asterisks) with the strengths-based leadership model that is described by Rath and Cochie (2008) below. The model will be explained in greater detail on the following pages.

Table 5. Four Domains of Leadership Strengths and 34 Talents

Executing	Influencing	Relationship Building	Strategic Thinking
Achieve*	Activator	**Adaptability***	Analytical
Arranger	Command	**Developer***	Context
Belief	**Communication***	Empathy	**Futuristic***
Consistency	Competition	Harmony	Ideation
Deliberative	Maximizer	**Includer***	Input
Discipline	Self-assurance	Individualization	Intellection
Focus*	Significance	Positivity	**Learner***
Responsibility	Woo	Relator	Strategic
Restorative			

Achievement. "I'm an achiever. It's about getting to the finish line. If I say I'm going to do it, it's done. And that's consistent in work and everything." (Renee)

"I am a person that really wants to focus on the goals and outcomes. Which means that you have to achieve. You know, move the needle further in the positive direction." (Sarah)

Adaptability. "Adaptability is to me, something that's been the key strength to my career. And that includes a sense of determination. It's almost like a form of resiliency that you're able to survive in many different settings, even if you are not necessarily comfortable in all of them. But you are still willing to jump in and try and do the work and adjust where you need to adjust." (John)

"Adaptability is about making some adjustments and changes for growth for the organization. So you have to phrase it in a way that people can hear. Recognize their strengths and progress, but then bump it up a notch." (Joan)

Communication. "I think it's really critical to be able to give that vision of what you see and how you think it can work better. I think I have good communication skills and an ability to take what someone says, and sometimes it may be confusing as they are saying it, and reframe it and say it back in a very pragmatic way." (Diane)

"I want to be really clear, so I want people to really understand what I am saying. Because if it is important, I can't afford a miscommunication, and I can't afford for them to not understand." (Jack)

Inclusive decision-making. "I would say I am best at being able solicit views from a wide range of people and to process information that people have given me and make a good quality decision based on that. If I make a decision and it's not a good decision, and my people are not happy with it, I don't try to pass the buck to somebody else. But normally they feel it was their decision too." (Larry)

"I think the social work profession prepared me pretty well to be a leader, and that's where I think I can identify my strengths, from that training. I think first is, I make every effort to be inclusive in decision-making with all parties involved, with whatever the issue is at hand. So I make lots of efforts to do that. And in the end, people feel as if they have, and not just feel but really believe they have, a voice in the decision." (Pam)

"I try to be participatory. I do try to include people, and I try to encourage people. I'm assertive, but I do give in, even if I have the power to enforce something I want, I will give in to other people's preferences." (Samantha)

Supportive/developer. "I think I offer a lot of support for staff and friends and people that I come across. I see the needs and listen and try to encourage them." (John)

"I would say my style of leadership is a little bit more personable. I want others to feel valued in the process. That's important to me. I can come along side of people and build bridges and resolve conflicts." (Sean)

"I think I am able to capture people or connect with people in a way that attracts them to continue to remain involved or to get involved. I'm invested in them, and I support them." (Dena)

"I am a pretty good listener of staff below me when they are talking. I take their feedback and evaluations very seriously. I want to have good relationships with them because I value their work." (Tom)

Learner. "I am constantly learning from people. It doesn't matter if you have the PhD or a high school diploma. It's about the different ideas people bring." (Sophia)

"Another one of my strengths comes from my openness to learning about other people's culture. And knowing something, but having humility and learning something new from that person or community." (Joan)

Focus. "I'm very, very focused. I tend to hone in on what are the most important aspects of a complicated problem and then strategize from there. So, I stay on task with what my priorities are and move forward from there." (Jack)

"I think my ability to focus defines me. I know what I want, and I go after it." (Frank)

Visionary/futuristic. "I am futuristic. So I am always thinking ahead…trying to make progress. I am aware of what is happening in the country, in the world, and where the needs exist so I can stay ahead of the game in prepared to meet those." (Renee)

"I think that I am creative, and I am always looking toward the emerging practices that are new. I stay ahead of the curve and that vision comes from listening to others. From the research. From the community and your stakeholders." (Sarah)

Systems thinking. "I'm really global in my thinking. I tend to see the bigger picture but also the connections. And I tend to think in terms of how all the pieces fit to together and how one thing impacts another, the people, the policies, the finances, all of that." (Samantha)

"This comes from my training as a social worker. I am very much a systems thinker. I need to be able to connect the dots and see how things work together on many levels, the micro, mezzo, and macro." (Dena)

Integrity. "One of my strengths is that I don't have a personal agenda, and I have integrity. So what you see is what you get. One of the highest compliments I got was from this room full of heads of hospitals. And this black woman said to me, "You really are without guile, aren't you?" Or something like that." (Samantha)

Mapping to a Model of Leadership Strengths

The findings from this study were triangulated with existing research from Rath and Cochie's model of leadership strengths (2008). Gallup researchers interviewed leaders across human services, health care, education, and corporate sectors. In their study of "human talent," a total of 34 themes became the basis of a "strengths based leadership" model (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 24). In the book *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*, the authors assert that when a human talent is combined with an investment of education, mentoring, or personal development, a strength emerges from the combination of the two. The 34 themes, as shown in Table 4 are organized into four general domains of leadership strengths, namely: executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. The strengths identified in this study are mapped to the model and highlighted and marked with an asterisk in the table. It is noted, however, that some word choices may vary slightly. All strengths identified in this study were aligned within the model, with the exception of "systems thinking,"

which appears more related to the profession of social work, and "integrity," which seems like more of a moral standard or virtue.

Perceived Weaknesses

After participants described their leadership strengths and provided examples of each, they were asked to describe their weaknesses, or those things within their respective roles of leaders that they struggle with. Participants reported a variety of weaknesses, which are summarized below. They are not mapped to any model from research. However, they do seem to indicate that weaknesses may sometimes reflect a strength that is out of balance and taken to the extreme. For example, those who had relational strengths around supporting and encouraging others may find it difficult to give negative feedback. Likewise, those whose strengths were in the area of achievement and execution may find it difficult to delegate due to feeling over-responsible.

Not doing everything. "What I struggle most with is accepting that it's okay to make a big impact in what might be considered a small area. So you don't have to do everything. I think sometimes with even with individuals that are drawn to social work fields, they tend to be people that can do a little bit of everything, and we want to do everything and solve everything. So I think the challenge for me is being okay with making a big impact in one area versus trying to solve everything." (Renee)

"The pressure. It's like a pressure cooker. You're just doing so much stuff and you can't get it all done and you feel ultimately responsible. So, I've really worked hard on myself so I don't feel so responsible. I'm not the only one who can do things." (Jean)

"I used to feel like I had to do it all myself or it wouldn't get done right. I no longer do that. I would be crazy in this job." (Diane)

"My weakness is that I have a failure to delegate enough. So that same energy that lets me take things on, lets me take on too much and not be good enough at getting other people to take on certain tasks." (Dena)

Listening. "Sometimes I don't want to listen to what other people have to say. And I start to form an opinion based on emotions or my impressions, and I have to say, okay, I need to listen to all of the facts and information first." (Larry)

"Well, I say I am a good listener, but really while I am listening, I'm already figuring out what I want to say and do and thinking I am going to do this and that. And I need to be more patient with the collection of facts." (Greg)

Managing emotions. "I think I struggle with anger. Sometimes I get aggravated easily, depending on how stressed I am. So managing the stress, I guess, and my own personal emotions at times." (Joan)

"Sometimes, I get upset at the political and personal attacks. And I try to tell myself that it's not personal, it's the department. But, then there is a piece of what they do…what comes back to me is definitely a personal thing. These lobbying groups go to my boss and say, "She's a barrier to whatever," and I just wish they would talk to me first." (Sarah)

"I think one weakness I have, and maybe it's related to social work, is trying to make everyone happy and being disappointed in myself when I don't. And I think over my career, I've realized that that's always the ideal, but it doesn't happen very often." (Joan)

Giving negative feedback. "I think the thing I probably have to work the hardest at is giving feedback that is really stern and unpleasant. I just don't deliver those kinds of messages to people. I think there is a time and place for that kind of leadership, and some people respond well to it. Some people really kind of need that really stern, here's the line and you know that they

know what that line is. I just don't think I do it very well. I'm more of a 'You're an adult. Here's your job description. I need you to figure this out.'" (Joe)

"I don't like to discipline people. It's just not my thing. And, I really hate to have to let people go." (Frank)

"I've supervised people in the past, and I've done it for a number of years. I have difficulty with it because I'm not someone who…well it's the flip side of independence. When it comes to supervising people, I assume that they are not going to need me a lot, and they are going to be independent. But, sometimes that is not the case, and it's caused trouble." (Joan)

Patience. "I struggle with patience. I want to go and fix it too fast. And when you don't collect all the data and let things percolate, well, with a little bit of impatience, you can go and make all kinds of mistakes." (Tom)

"Sometimes I just want things to move quicker. So I think, well, I know the answer, so let me just help you along. But there is a lot to be said for being patient and kind of leaning back a little and letting people that you're working with come to their own conclusions." (Frank)

Perceived as indecisive. "One of the things that has been a little bit difficult for me is because inclusiveness is important, so I'm interested in having the discussion, I'm interested in hearing your opinions, but sometimes people think I let that go on too long. It's like Sophie, just *you* make a decision. So I have to be aware that people don't process always, and certainly that some don't appreciate process. It was initially hard for me outside the social work world." (Sophia)

"With important decisions, I take my time and let things thicken. For whatever reason, that makes some folks see me lacking in leadership abilities. What I had to come to understand is

that some people want decisions made sooner, and I didn't always think that was a good thing."
(Jack)

Category 2 – Leadership Identity Formation Factors

Participants were asked to identify several factors about their development as a leader. These questions included four main areas of identity formation: the time in life they perceived themselves as a leader, barriers or set-backs they may have experienced, internal or external conflicts they may have experienced, and supports that may have helped them in some way.

Participants tended to tell their stories of leadership as if they were a linear progression of events. This is perhaps related to the narrative structure that is imposed on the interview process. However, Quinn (2004) states that actual progression in leadership is iterative and cyclical, and that periods of stagnation or temporary setbacks are common. Both positive and negative events were perceived as important features of their leadership progress.

Barriers included internal conflicts such as self-doubts or lack of confidence, and external conflicts such as gender, racial, or disability-related conflicts in the way others perceived them. Barriers to their leadership development also included institutional or collegial conflicts that caused them to question their leadership abilities.

Supports included those factors that they considered integral to them becoming a leader within the field of social work. Supports were primarily in the form of positive relationships and expectations of persons with whom they interacted such as parents, teachers, and supervisors. Participants also identified supportive factors in their job or career, their educational experiences, as well as the political context in which they developed as a leader.

Subcategory 2.1 Time of Onset

Participants were asked to think back to when they first saw themselves as a leader and report at what point in their lifespan this awareness occurred. Responses varied across the group and subgroups.

Youth. One participant reported that she had known from a very young age that she was a leader. She says the following: "I knew from the time I was probably in Kindergarten or before, like when I was 4 or 5, because I would jump in and try to figure things out, and take over and have people follow that." (Francine)

"I learned that I was a leader in probably the third grade, from teachers in the classroom who knew that if I wanted to take the class down one direction, that could be disruption, and the class was going to follow me. So they knew if they could get me to focus, the rest of the class would focus." (Renee)

Another participant recalls being in grade school when he became aware that others saw him as a leader, and he began to see himself in the same way: "I am thinking grade school. I remember just kind of being, not following other groups, but kind of having my own group, a circle of friends and being the leader of that group. Not necessarily making every decision about that group, but definitely the leader. A kind of person connecting with other groups. I was the one that had a role in several different groups, but I would always connect my group to those other groups." (John)

High school. Some participants identified high school as a time that their self-awareness about being a leader emerged**.**

"In high school, I was captain of the cheerleading squad, I was secretary of the class, editor of the yearbook. I had really good grades. So, I think I started then, being more of a leader

and always had a strong sense not only of self, but of purpose, and my own personal set of ethics, of what I thought was right and wrong." (Diane)

"I was in high school when I really started to come into my self. I got good grades and teachers liked me. I was sort shy and intellectual, but I also excelled at track and field. And I wrote articles for the student paper." (Francine)

College/graduate studies. Some participants reported that they began to see themselves as leaders in college, once they had earned their MSW or during their doctoral studies.

"I think my college and graduate school experiences kept bringing me out of my shell. I began volunteering for activities." (Frank)

"I would say in college, when people asked me to run for…two things happened. They asked me to run for Hall president. And that was back in the seventies. And then they asked me be on a student judiciary committee. So if students were in violation of some university rules, this committee reviewed that. And I was the chair." (Larry)

"I began to see myself as a leader in college. It was working with people on group projects, and I started doing some volunteer work at church with the youth group." (Joan)

Midlife. Some participants reported that they began seeing themselves as leaders later in their adult life; this was typically linked to their career progression and maturity.

"I remember a time in my life when I was on faculty at the School of Social Work. And I'd been on faculty for a while and, actually, I got pushed into being the director of the BSW program. And then some newer faculty were coming on board, but there was a point where I realized that people were looking to me for mentorship instead of me being a mentee. And just remember it like I woke up at that moment, like, 'Oh my gosh. Can I do this?'" (Sophia)

"It was about five years after I got my MSW." (Dena)

Subcategory 2.2 Supportive Factors

When asked about supports, most participants identified a significant relationship in their lives that was an essential factor in their development as leaders. Participants also identified opportunities that their job afforded them, education-related supports, and contextual factors in their political environment.

Parents. Several participants identified that familial expectations, particularly their parents' expectations, played a role in their development as leaders.

"You look at your family's structure, and both my parents are pretty…uh, both my parents are leaders. My mom's a superintendent, and my dad ran a company. That type of thing. So that's what *you* do." (Jeanne)

"My dad was the marketing director of Xerox. The entire Xerox corporation. And he had an office down the hall from the president, so I think he put an expectation on me, a little bit like, 'Why are you not running this agency by now?'" (Tom)

"I think that I come from a family of high achievers. And, I think some competition. I have a sister that graduated from Harvard Law School. I have another sister that went to Louisiana State and U of I Law School. So I think that my family's struggle goes back even to my grandfather. You know, back in the twenties, with him trying to go to school. So I think that we were told that we were special." (Sarah)

Teachers. Some participants reported that teachers played an essential role in their lives in terms of becoming leaders.

"It started to come together for me when I was in middle school. And teachers and mentors would say to me, 'Are you a leader, or are you a follower?' And I started to learn about

the qualities that leaders have and the qualities that followers have, and where do you think I wanted to be?" (Samantha)

"I think my PhD program was a very positive experience. I had really positive experiences in my master's program, too, where teachers would let me know that I was smart and competent. I could sort of hang with them intellectually, and challenge ideas, and they could question me. And so that became very fertile ground for both confidence and my own intellect." (Pam)

One participant reported that an African American teacher helped her see herself as a leader, when up to that point, Caucasian teachers had perceived her as a student who could either positively or negatively influence other students. "I went through a period of teachers and others channeling me in a positive direction because I was a leader. It was probably the fifth grade when I began hearing that language of 'leader,' and it was an African American teacher, whom I'll never forget. And she began saying to me, 'You're a leader.'" (Renee)

Supervisor/job-related. A few participants stated that their supervisor played a significant role in their leadership development.

"Just by the fact that I was in middle management, my director would take me to these big meetings in Detroit. And that was very interesting, and I could see a whole new level of skills needed to go the next level. And so you start to mimic them. You try them on, you wear them to see if they fit." (Jack)

"At my first job, I had this incredible boss. I had an incredible mentor who was very, very grounded and also just an amazing leader. Administratively, he had tremendous skills. And he had a great deal of integrity, but also he was kind of a gruff, joking kind of guy." (Samantha)

Faith/spiritual beliefs. Participants described how their faith or spiritual beliefs were supportive to their development as leaders.

"I believe God is working inside of us and helping us, developing us, and helping us to do things really that are beyond our control. A lot of what I have achieved is not, well, I don't give credit to myself on that, but I give credit to the Lord who has certainly blessed me and enabled me to do things. When I was in high school, they had me in special classes because I failed so much. Then, I became a Christian and started to figure out who I was, and then I made honor roll." (Tom)

"I don't think I would have made it this far without God in my life. There's just no way I could have come through all of it." (Francine)

Educational achievement. For some participants, education identified as a major supportive factor. Family played a key role in imparting expectations for educational achievement.

"I would have to say in my family of origin, education was presented as non-negotiable. You know, 'Where are you going to school?' and 'When are you going to finish?'" (Sarah)

"My grandmother got a bachelor's degree at U of M in the 1920s. So there's this pattern, I mean, my grandmother was a very strong woman." (Samantha)

Political. Some participants identified political connections or events as being supportive to their development as leaders.

"For me, it probably evolved out of, well, I've always been a politically inclined person, and I probably became a social worker a little more because of the social justice aspect of the profession than wanting to be an individual therapist for someone. And in my first job as a school social worker, I found it to be tremendously isolating. So I met a social work colleague

who said why don't you get involved with this social work association. And so I did. And I was immediately captured by how this met my need to be connected with others and also a vehicle for political activism, for making progress, for advocating for children's services and all those things." (Dena)

"It was the times I grew up in. Vietnam. The Civil Rights Movement. I was in college during that time of change. I marched and protested because I cared. And, that propelled me into the career I now have." (Jack)

Subcategory 2.3 Barriers – Internal Conflicts

Participants were asked if there were any barriers that they experienced in becoming leaders. In particular, they were asked if they experienced internal conflicts, contradictions, or dilemmas. Responses ranged from religious conflicts to feelings of dissonance about their identity as a marginal group and also being a leader. Renee, an African American leader in higher education shared a particularly in-depth personal story of how internal conflicts and external inequities both constrained and enabled her self-perception as a leader.

Religious. Religious conflicts were described as having a limiting impact on leadership in how one could see future opportunities for contributing to the community**.**

"So, I grew up in a very evangelistic tradition. A very fundamental approach to Christianity. In that upbringing, I think the messaging was, you have to be all you can, but be within the church. And so I really struggled with seeing myself making positive contributions outside of the church. So, I think that was limiting." (Renee)

Samantha, as the daughter of a white Protestant minister, observed that her father was a leader and as a result believed, 'What I had to say was important.' My dad was a minister, and I feel like because of that, I had a place at the table." (Samantha)

By comparison, Renee shared that church was a place of opportunities and support, but she also was aware that there were limits placed on her, that she was more fully aware of later in life.

Limited role models. Limited role models were also described as a lack of "seeing people like me" relating to a gender or racial/ethnic group, in particular, high status leadership roles across a variety of careers and professions.

"It wasn't until college that I saw what a wider range of role models looked like. In college, I joined an AME [African Methodist Episcopal] church. And I don't know what really drew me there, but realized I was so fascinated by the fact that outside of African American school teachers and pastors, I didn't really have many models of what African Americans could become. And I remember just being fascinated, sitting in a pew [looking at a woman] like, 'She's a medical doctor' or 'She's a doctor, but not a medical doctor' and thinking what does that mean. So, it helped create a vision of what was achievable, but it wasn't until college that I saw it." (Renee)

Renee goes on to share that the lack of a variety African American role models was problematic in a racial/ethnic sense, but of the erroneous conclusions that she drew from what she observed. "That was my first year of undergrad. So I knew I was, I'd say early on, an achiever, and that I excelled academically, but I also equated a lot of achievement with white people and the white way of life. And the AME Church helped me see that, 'No, that's part of our way of life and journey.'" (Renee)

Lack of confidence. Lack of confidence is described as having experienced fear or self-doubt about one's abilities or skills in performing in a leadership activity.

"Well, internally there's always this feeling of being overwhelmed, and I shouldn't get in over my head, and I really don't have any business being here. You know, there's this sort of that whole doubting process." (Sean)

"So it's easy to sometimes be a little overly critical or self-conscious, wondering if you are doing what you are supposed to be doing. There's that, and I certainly have my own baggage." (Jack)

"I just knew at some point in my career, people had mentored me. And, essentially, I had to sort of forget about my fears and know that I had made it to this point, and I probably did have something to offer. And just bite the bullet and stop being afraid and move forward. The thing is that I hadn't really matched up my self-concept to what other people thought I could do." (Sophia)

"I think I did not really see myself as very smart until I was older. Not that I'm so much smarter than other people. But, it was also that I had to embrace the idea that my ideas were not dumb. So, it wasn't just that I needed confidence. It was really believing and knowing that I was allowed to 'know' something. And intellectual trust, I suppose." (Pam)

Work–life balance. Balance between one's work and family life was described by one participant as "difficult." She related that the lack of it was a cause for internal conflicts and feelings of guilt. She also noted that the use of technology and working from home helped to restore that balance. "There was a critical point where I questioned, 'Am I taking too much time away from my children and my family in order to do this?' But with the advent of the computer and email and things like that, I was able to continue on. Technology helped, because I could not have left my kids with babysitters all the time if everything had to be done face to face." (Dena)

"Well, sometimes I think what's difficult is trying to figure out how one's personal life impacts their work. I think some people in leadership positions don't want to go there, they just say, 'No, just do your job.'" (Sean)

Subcategory 2.4 Barriers – External Conflicts

Gender-based. Women leaders presented perspectives on how gender influenced conflicts in their experiences as leaders. These conflicts often stemmed from stereotypical and stigmatized qualities that women are supposed to have. These female qualities are constructed so that a privileged identity is assumed and the female counterpoint is devalued.

"There were times, especially early on in my career, it's a lot more common now to have female CEOs, especially of non-profits, than there was even 15 or 20 years ago. I would go to meetings, and there might be one or maybe two women in the group as a female CEO. So that felt awkward. You felt like you had to do better, perform better. And I am somewhat sensitive, so I think people take pot shots at you, and I have never really gotten used to that. And I'm sure people think I'm the 'ice maiden' because I don't ever let that show. But it does hurt." (Diane)

Diane reports being challenged by male leaders in a cruel way when some take "pot shots" at you, or engage in verbal insults. As a female leader, she likely learned that emotional reactions to this sort of pecking order behavior did not help matters. So, she learned to have a "thicker skin." This is also problematic in that she describes a stereotypical view of women leaders as emotionally frozen in her reference to others seeing her as an "ice maiden."

Samantha presents an alternative perspective about gender-based conflict. She sees herself engaging with male counterparts as a kind of sport or game in which she does not take their jabs as "personal." "I work hard enough, and I am confident enough, and I don't get into these reactive battles with people, including men. So, I think there is not much for them to

bounce off of. I was an athlete, and I tend to approach men with that kind of mentality which: this is a sport, it's not personal. I think a lot of women take it personally." (Samantha)

There are differing viewpoints as to how personal conflicts in the work place may also be political. Jeanne stated that she thinks more opportunities are needed, though some advancement has been made. However, advocating for changes can be threatening to the status quo of an organization.

"As a female you are always trying to bust through that glass ceiling, which gets you into trouble too. Because you are trying make long-term gains, and sometimes these things are not taken seriously, and they're more short, quick Band-Aid approaches to gender equity. So what happens when you want to see more growth, is that you are seen as adverse to the culture and to the environment. Even in the straight out social work fields." (Dena)

"My biggest barrier in my current situation where I'm leading is I'm female. I'm female and even though currently 51 percent of physicians are females, it's [health care] still very much a male-led field. A male-dominant leadership field." (Jeanne)

Racial/ethnic. Racial and ethnic conflicts were described in several participants' development as leaders. Those conflicts were experienced in a variety of settings by persons of color as well as racial/ethnic majorities in terms of the belief and expectations of themselves and others.

"Back in 1990, I was being mentored by upper management here. And what I think is so interesting, is that they were just fascinated at that time, to see a person of color articulate as well as I can. To be able to engage families and community. So I moved up quickly." (Sarah)

Sarah goes on to clarify her thinking around how she was chosen for her role, and why it caused conflict for her, and how she went on to resolve it. It was problematic, because the upper

management viewed her as a solution to their "past racial challenges," which by definition is a form of tokenism.

"I think the internal conflict that I faced and, I believe, resolved, was feeling that I was being selected as almost as a token, as a personal of color in this community of strong, Dutch, Christian Reformed folks. So, to come into this community as an African American female amongst all these very white male-dominated organizations, you know, I think I struggled sometimes, because [even though they were still not racially equitable] now they can say [since they hired me], 'Well, now we are racially sensitive and equitable. We have had challenges in the past but we fixed it.' And so, I resolved it by saying, 'No, I will survive. I have the skills set, the ability. I can negotiate. I can navigate systems. I do have respect and I have self-respect.'" (Sarah)

"If there is a Hispanic thing going on in the community and I am not there, people have said to me, 'Why weren't you at the march?' It's like, 'Because I didn't go.' But, the expectation is, you will go to all things *Hispanic*." (Sophia)

"The other problem we have is that it's difficult to lead when people believe that you are not qualified for the job you have. They think you are here because you are a 'fill in the blank.' And it's tokenism." (Larry)

African American leader, John relates how he has benefitted by working with members of the "majority" or Caucasian racial group. To his dismay, some of his majority co-workers and employees did not share the viewpoint that having worked with members of minority groups may be mutually beneficial experience. Cross-cultural learning can occur in such relationships, stereotypes can be appropriately addressed. John relates how his first secretary had never worked for a "Black man," and she had an unreasonable, stigmatized view of him based on her own

social constructed fears about male members of the African American community. She resigned rather than working through her own issues of power, privilege, and prejudice.

"My advantage is that I've been able to work with people who are in the majority all my life, but they haven't had the advantage of working with someone of color in leadership positions all of their life….And some people are. Well, so my former secretary, because I replaced her. She just wasn't. It wasn't a conscious thing for her. Should would never consider herself a racist or anything like that, but she was genuinely terrified to have me as her boss, and didn't know how to work with me." (John)

John goes on to share how racial/ethnic biases of individuals can manifest on an institutional level when they are magnified through media. The lack of positive images of African American men in leadership positions in the field of philanthropy is problematic. Subtle transfer of this bias occurred when John and his staff were interviewed for an article. In the final version, the magazine pictured a Caucasian staff member rather than John, who was the executive director of the organization.

"We just had a recent spread on the Center in an e-news magazine, a local one, and they came in and took photos and everything else, and my photo never appeared in the article. But one of my staff, one of my people who is actually two levels below me, his picture was all over it. So, again, it wasn't intentional, but it's definitely worth saying, 'Okay, you're doing this whole spread on the ___ Center and you don't have pictures of the director there, but you have another staff person, as if she was the director.'" (John)

"People doubt your qualifications when you first get in, and then for a period of time may be very uncomfortable taking instructions or directions from you. If they're honest, most people

of color will tell you that they've had experiences of people doubting their competency just because it's new for them to have someone of color in front of them." (John)

Other forms of discrimination. Participants discussed their observations and experiences of discrimination based on perceived abilities, disabilities, LGBT status, and being too outspoken.

"Yeah, I'm thinking about a social worker, recently, who…her job required to go into homes to do something, and she refused to go into certain homes. She was going to the homes of gays and lesbians. She had her reasons, or values, her beliefs, and all that kind of stuff, but, and I understood, when she shared with me her beliefs and everything, but it totally goes against the social work core values. And I'm thinking, 'Are you sure you want to be a social worker?' and 'Can you be a social worker?' And I think you can; you don't have those areas where, perhaps that's out of line with the social work ethics, but I think it's important to be aware of them, and to be working on that, and to realize that, 'I bring that bias to this field.'" (Renee)

"I think my physical disability may have created some tension. You know, speaking in front of groups. I questioned, 'Could I really do this…do I really have the skills and resources to pull it off?' I was their first disabled leader, a real leader. A VP with a disability." (George)

"I think there is a kind of damage that comes from white privilege that is the flip side of racism. So even though we are privileged in some ways, it's problematic because oftentimes the way we see people is so narrow or limited." (Jack)

"One of the other things that's difficult about leaders and being a woman and a woman of color is that you are expected to represent everything about that…And so then you are sent to every single event that has to do with that. And's it's like, wait a minute. They don't need me

there. They only need you there….it's hard to call an organization out on it, because then you still become the 'always complaining' person." (Sarah)

"There's something in Shakespeare someplace that says, 'Don't strike the King unless you kill him.' And I count my blessings that I am still here because of my outspokenness and being in the wrong place has caused me grief." (Joe)

Category 3 – Critical Incidents or Transformational Experiences

Participants were asked to reflect upon their development as a leader and identify a critical incident or transformational experience that had a major impact on them in a personal and/or professional way. Participants identified educational, employment-related, spiritual, and political experiences, as well as experiences of discrimination, bias, and tragedy. Participants reflected upon how overcoming these struggles helped affirmed their sense of purpose and strengthened their identity as leaders.

Subcategory 3.1 Educational

Some participants identified their educational experiences as being transformational. The experiences that they shared tended to be at the college level, particularly their graduate studies.

"I would say the end of grad school, the end of my master's program. We were doing our project, and Dan Thompson (now he's long gone) was in charge of our group project, and he gave me, I think, some additional responsibilities that he didn't give to other students. And I remember that that really changed how I saw myself." (Larry)

"For me it was finishing my PhD. I had so many doubts and challenges, and I just had to persevere and persevere. It was a time of real growth for me." (Pam)

"I would say getting my MSW was a turning point for me. My field placement was really where I started to feel like a professional person." (Francine)

Subcategory 3.2 Spiritual

Some participants identified spiritual or religious experiences as being a critical turning
point or transformational experience. For Tom, it was in high school. He was failing school and
put into special education courses. "That transformation [becoming a Christian] is what started it
all. I wasn't quite sure what was happening at the time, but I was changing and becoming a new
person. And here's my dad who is the director of marketing and my mother who's a psychiatric
nurse at the city hospital. Two big professional people. And their son was in special ed classes. I
thought I was mentally retarded. So when I hit honor roll that first semester, I just about blew my
parents away. And then I graduated with honors. That's my testimony. He's real." (Tom)

"I think that one's hard. I guess I think about, I don't know, I think something happened
after my dad's death. I got thinking about the meaning of it all, and thinking about relationships,
God, family connections…you know, they lived out East; I lived here. There were times I could
have gone, but didn't go because of stuff here. Jobs, family, what have you. And I think with
that, I just really have been much more intentional about reaching out and staying connected to
my siblings, to my children, and my faith. And then think about that in the context of the work
that I do here with kids who don't have a family." (Susan)

Subcategory 3.3 Relational Conflicts/Discrimination Issues

Several participants reported having relationship conflicts that, upon reflection, turned
out to be critical incidents or transformational experiences. In many cases, these struggles were
centered on issues of harassment, discrimination, bullying, or some type of violence. Argyris
(2010) describes an organizational culture of silence that results from sophisticated bullying
behaviors. Silence on the part of those experiencing as well as those witnessing the negative

behavior, often permits it to continue. To address these issues in a constructive manner, the silence must be broken. This assumes certain risks to all involved.

"I took a job in Louisville, Kentucky, for a year, and there was sexual harassment going on in the department. And my new-found leadership skills from my PhD program in Michigan were completely ineffective in that southern culture. And so, I was rendered helpless for a short period of time, until I figured out how to navigate the 'southern women' way of creating change. And it was really feminist-gone-underground and off the radar and off campus. They had figured out that being direct and speaking to people about what was not right made it worse, at first." (Pam)

Pam relates how she endured a situation of gender-based bias that grew to a pattern of harassment at her workplace a university, located in the southeastern part of the United States. Pam indicated that this type of harassment impacted her colleagues and students in a very negative manner. A culture of silence ensued, as people were afraid to speak out about their experiences. Pam related that her leadership skills where rendered ineffective in a southern culture that narrowly defined women's so-called "proper" roles. Pam explains how she resolved this dilemma.

"Well, I engaged actively with this group of feminists, and I told the truth no matter what, and I was willing to get fired, if that's what it meant to hold on to my integrity. And I chose to leave after a year, after we got a new dean in there, and I supported the students in their complaint process. You know, I endured. But I had to be willing to be let go. That was really the reason most people were not speaking up, is because this person had threatened their livelihood." (Pam)

Pam had to risk losing her job in order to effectively confront these issues of sexism and discrimination. Similarly, Jeanne relates an experience of being bullied at work by a supervisor.

"I'm sure that there are many, and I don't have just like a glaring one. I did have….When I worked in a non-profit agency, I had a director that was just very… he managed very bully-like. I can't even describe…there's no one word that describes it, but he yelled and screamed a lot, and if you didn't get results, he would yell and scream more. But he, and not that a female would have done it different in that situation, but I don't think there was ever an opportunity for a female to be in that position." (Jeanne)

Jeanne explained how her boss used male privilege to justify his behavior. His behavior escalated. Jeanne resolved not to show any fear in an effort to resist this abusive behavior. Having endured this treatment, Jeanne realized her own strength.

"He stood in front of me, and pointing a finger and screaming at me. Now, I am so thankful for the little bit of leadership experience I had had at that time because I knew if I had given in, or, I had shown any type of fear for that, he would have continued. I did not, and as a result of that, he did a lot of things to try to relieve me of my position." (Jeanne)

Similarly, Renee, an African American leader recalls a tragic experience in her youth that was transformative. She explains that it changed the direction of her life and made her feel much more accountable for herself and her choices.

"No, for me it was, probably when I was about 14, when I was, at that time, using my leadership in a non-constructive way. So I was participating in street gangs. I had a friend who was, must have been a year older than me, 15, he was 15, who got murdered. And I was there when it happened. I wasn't physically in the room, but standing outside the house when he got shot. For me, that was the very defining moment and a very strong reminder that I'm not using

my leadership in the right way, and even some of the other people who are involved in the gang, because they're following me. And so I didn't want my friend's murder to be in vain. So that was a defining moment that I was making a change." (Renee)

Renee described how this senseless act of violence was a critical incident in her life. As she reflects back on the incident, she regrets having been in the "wrong place" as a teenager in a white neighborhood. Moreover, she became keenly aware of how fragile life can be, how quickly it can be taken, and the finality of death.

"What it was, was more of a…there were a group of teens standing in front of this house, and our friend was there visiting his girlfriend, and she was not supposed to have company in the house. So we weren't even doing anything that we necessarily thought was bad. But there were, I'd say, 10–12 of us, and in the neighborhood we were in, they were uncomfortable with large groups of African Americans, you see, 10–12 urban African Americans. That dad came home in his house, saw our friend there. Our friend ran out the back door. His daughter was dating him. He ran out with a sawed-off shotgun, shot him right in the stomach. Killed him. And our friend who got murdered back there, his younger sister was my age, we were out in front of the house with everyone else. We could hear him pleading for his life, 'Don't kill me.' Marvin got killed. He was 14. Fourteen years old." (Renee)

For Renee, leadership began with this tragic death. She shared that she realized at that moment, she may have been able to prevent that death, if she had used her influence with her friends, to hang out some place else that day. This could be a kind of survivor guilt, but Renee was able to reconstruct a negative and tragic incident into one that was a transformational, defining moment. For Renee, she was "choosing between life and death."

Sophia, a Mexican American leader shares an experience of relationship conflict around issues of race. Sophia relates how she thinks she was wrongly accused of being a "racist" by a social work colleague at a university where they both serve in administrative roles.

"So, I had one person a while ago, a year or so ago, tell me that I was racist. At first, I was totally taken aback by that. And then I thought, 'You know what. I think I need to think about that.' Maybe I did something, or behaved…It's just something that I thought, 'Okay. I live in an environment where there is racism. I live in an environment where there is sexism. And maybe I just need to think about this a little bit. What did I say and do that would cause this person to feel this way?'" (Sophia)

Sophia goes on to share that she learned that several other colleagues had been called a "racist" by the same individual. After personal reflection and consultation with a trusted friend, she resolved the conflict. She relates that the incident really "shook" her because being a racist was something she was so strongly opposed to.

"And so it's…in the end, I don't believe I was, and I don't believe I engaged in that, but I thought, 'Okay. What's that person's perspective that…What did I do? How did that person interact with me?' But I felt like I needed to think about that…Well, and I think that's it, and what I've concluded is, that was a tactic. It was totally intended to knock me off my feet, and it did." (Sophia)

Subcategory 3.4 Political/Civic Engagement

Participants identified political events and activities that were transformational experiences. Some reflected on their involvement in civil rights issues or advocacy for clients. In these leaders' lives, their civic engagement was a memorable time of change and personal growth.

"But where, at the time I was on the national School Social Work Association board and we went to Washington every summer to do lobbying with our legislators and senators, and so on, and meet with officials, say, of the Department of Education, and so on. So we were there one summer when this legislation, as part of the special education legislation said that you had to provide positive behavior supports to students with emotional problems. You couldn't just keep punishing them for their disability. But because we happened to be there when this legislation passed, and you know we do a lot of educating of them about how, well, wow, school social workers are your go-to people for positive behavior supports and interventions. And then a few months later, out came the regulations from the Department of Ed. Low and behold, they supported us and the whole notion of school social work." (Dena)

"I was a college student in the 60s, so I grew up in a time of a lot of crisis and social change. I remember protesting the war and being so devastated when those kids were killed [by the National Guard] at Kent State. And I became radicalized in the midst of it all. That was my time of transformation." (Jack)

For Dena and Jack, they reflected on their advocacy and involvement in political issues early on in their respective roles as leaders. It was a time of national transformation and social change that had a profound personal impact.

Subcategory 3.5 Job Related

Many participants identified job-related incidents that had a transformative effect on them as leaders. For some, it was a major philosophical change in a particular field of practice or an unexpected crisis at work. For others, it was an un-expected merger. George describes what happened when his boss left without much notice, and what becoming an interim leader in a health system meant to him.

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"How did it impact me? It was definitely an ego boost, I guess, in terms of being recognized by others, as being able to do a job that I never dreamed I would do. As I said before, like being in the wrong place at the wrong [right] time in some ways, a couple of different events taking me the direction I never even thought about." (George)

Likewise, Jim relates what happened when the paradigm of mental health services shifted from a physician-centered practice to a person-centered approach.

"This would have probably been around 1988, `89, around in there, somewhere late-`80s, the Muskegon Regional Center was going to be closing, and we still had a number of people that were still living in the Center. And one of my tasks at the time was to get two group homes up and running. And my familiarity with that was pretty slim. So we got the homes up; we got the homes running. A lot of challenges with the people that were living there…And then around that same time we started talking about things around person-centered planning, and stuff like that, and that it really kind of connected with my whole idea of independence. It was the idea that what we needed to do, was to ask people a question like, the question that I like is, 'If you were the star of your own movie, what would your movie look like?'" (Jim)

Upon reflection of his work in mental health, Jim shares that the fundamental assumptions of freedom and independence are critical to effective services.

"I'm convinced that you can't really teach person-centered planning to professional people. They either have it within them, to think in terms of independence, and freedom, and things like that, versus your personality is such that you want to be controlling." (Jim)

For Diane, a merger was the source of a transformational change in her life. This change stemmed from confronting a climate of fear about how the merger would impact her personally as well as the broader community.

"It was when we merged with _____. And the fear around all of that. That kind of merger and change management, it's just about fear. And not only from staff, but from boards, and they get worried, you know, 'What does this mean to our community? What does this mean to the agency overall? What does it mean to me as a staff person?' Et cetera. It's just…yeah. And you really just have to push forward. And I think it's like rowing this boat, and at the same time there are these arrows that get slung at you in that process that…I mean, it was painful. There were times that it was just awful. But we came through." (Diane)

Similar to Diane, Pam identified a difficult time at work, when her university was going through preparation for re-accreditation in its social work department. She relates that major changes in the way courses were taught and evaluated were perceived as threatening by faculty and staff. At the same time, the proposed changes were deemed necessary to be complaint with the CSWE educational standards.

"Radical change that would threaten the long-term viability of the school. And then there was this formal leader that was brought in, this innovative person that we hired as the new director. She was amazing, but a lot of the faculty would not work with her. They would undermine her leadership. Like information hoarding. Sitting on stuff. In some cases, lying. It all happened." (Pam)

Pam said that the process was a real struggle. Ultimately, they were able to pull together and complete the re-accreditation process. Later that year, they presented at a national conference and shared how they overcame these struggles in the process of completing their self-study.

"And, you know, it still got done, and we felt proud of that. But I learned a lot about leadership from that. And then we presented the… in the leadership institute at CSWE, the

following fall, we presented on teams, and trajectory, and change, and sort of some of the forces that were at work, and how we went forward. And that was very healing, I think." (Pam)

Subcategory 3.6 Promotion

Promotions at work were identified as a time of personal transformation. This was a time of stretching one's perception of their leadership abilities to meet the new demands of the organization. George relates how he was promoted quite unexpectedly.

"I think the one defining moment I would point to was, I was the director of social work at Indiana University Hospitals, and my boss was the administrator of the Children's Hospital, and I reported directly to him. I took like a three-week vacation, two- or three-week vacation, that summer, and I would call in a couple of times a week to check in. 'Oh my god, am I going to get fired?' You know, my boss had left. 'Who was going to protect me? What am I going to do?' Everybody was waiting to see what was going to happen and who was going to take his office. And long story short, I become the acting administrator. And then, after two or three months, I got some experience and felt good about what I was doing and was getting positive feedback from colleagues and others. The president came back and said, 'Well, you do pretty good with this. Do you want to make it permanent?'" (George)

Like George, Jim had an opportunity for promotion that came quite unexpectedly. It was a time where he felt personally challenged as he began to take on more formal leadership responsibilities.

"I guess when my boss came to me one time and said, she said, 'I want you to take over the supervising the… assessment unit at the health department as part of their merger.' So that was kind of a defining moment. To go into an area I really didn't know much about, take over the unit, supervise all the staff that were existing there, and then, actually move them across town

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30 days later and integrate them into a mental health access center. So that was kind of a challenge. It was like the day after I finished my masters." (Jim)

Jim had just finished his Master of Social Work degree when this opportunity presented itself. Jim admitted that he had some self-doubts. But, he was able to overcome them with perseverance and belief in himself.

"I was saying, 'What's wrong with me for taking this position,' after that. It was like, 'Oh, I'm really doing this.' Because it was a very difficult staff, and they were all UAW unions. So, I had to deal with the union conflicts. Actually, I'm still pretty close to all of the staff that were there. So, I think, for me, it was just kind of a progression. I had done enough work up to that time that I was prepared… Just kind of had to trust my own decisions. There was no one above me to bounce things off of, I was really kind of out there on my own making these decisions, and doing all the things that I needed to do. So I learned to trust my own decision making ability." (Jim)

Jim also went on to share that social work leaders need to embrace the idea that we are leaders. For Jim, this includes having a "language" of leadership and celebrating our role rather than "downplaying" it.

"You know, we talk about even in the role of therapy, that we're kind of there to guide, we're kind of there to do… we're facilitators. We use all the language to avoid that we are actually leaders, and that we have to change. So we have this whole lingo of social work to kind of downplay that, and I think it's part of the legacy of social workers primarily being women, also primarily being at a time when women… it wasn't cool to be strong, be a strong woman. And so, I think the language that we've grown up with in our profession has downplayed it somewhat." (Jim)

Category 4 – Misconceptions of Leadership

Participants were asked what were some common misconceptions about leadership in an effort to gain better understanding what they have learned about leadership during their careers. For some participants, the notion that leadership opportunities may come unexpectedly during times of conflict or crisis was key to understanding how leaders develop. For others, leadership was more about their values and being tested under scrutiny. Others explained misconceptions of leadership by describing what leadership is "not." For example, leadership is not about a title or about telling others what to do. Rather, it is an interactive process of development that is influence by relationships, opportunities, and environmental factors.

Subcategory 4.1 Opportunities in Conflicts and Crises

"When I look back over my own journey, it just happened. I never aspired to get my PhD or to direct a social work program, to lead a board. Like when I was in Kentucky, I ended up on a board. A lot of it was crisis. I see a crisis and I fall into it. Certain things have just fallen my way. You have to lead to respond to crisis. And also be a person that doesn't burn bridges. I think sometimes, when people get upset or frustrated, they can be filled with this righteous indignation. And they inadvertently burn bridges with the very people they need to come alongside with." (Sean)

"My organization was going through this major merger, and there was a lot of fear and chaos for a while. It was terrifying, really, because we all knew that the top management team would probably lose out jobs…But, as it turns out, I was promoted." (Joan)

Subcategory 4.2 Leadership Is About Values

"The fact that leadership ought to involve social justice, and that our work ought to be based in social justice. They talk about social justice, but nobody wants to do social justice,

really, because social justice requires sacrifice and personal risk. And people really don't get it, in a lot of ways." (Sarah)

"True leadership is about having humility, and I don't mean humility in the sense of being humble, per se, but humility in the sense of understanding that leadership entrusts someone with power, and that a good leader protects power by not using it. Or that power is only used to protect, it's not used to…I think a lot of people, one of the misconceptions, I guess, is that being a good leader is getting your way, and I think that is absolutely, diametrically the opposite of what I think good leadership is. I think good leadership is never putting your own needs ahead of the common good." (Jeanne)

"I had learned that you get as much, or more, than you give, as a leader. Or at least that was true for me. And so it would seem as if you're giving up your time on behalf of the profession, but for me, my life was immensely enriched by the leadership positions that I held. The influence on my career, even on my personal life, and the opportunities to connect with this really talented group of people that I have so much in common with. Whenever I meet a social worker or a social leader in any other situation, I am always struck by how much I have in common with them. So I would say a misconception could be that you're giving a lot of your time and resources, but not so much realizing how much you get in return for your involvement." (Dena)

"That it's something that you aspire to and achieve, versus, it's something that is. I think the leader in me existed and manifested itself long before I knew the term 'leadership.' I think it is just something that is, and that's implied… I also think it's something that can be developed and achieved, but I think sometimes we undermine, or under-value, or are unaware of that

leadership that we just experience daily. The interactions with people who may not even be in formal leadership roles." (Renee)

Subcategory 4.3 "Not a Glorious Place"/Criticized by Others

"It's like people think, 'Oh, I want to be a leader. I want to be up front and make all the decisions.' No. What you're asking for is to be criticized, all the time. Yeah. Because everybody has their opinion about how things should be working. And guess what? They don't agree." (Jack)

"People think it's some glorious place. Well it's not a glorious place. It's hard work, and inevitably somebody is not going to like you or the decisions you make as a leader." (Sarah)

Subcategory 4.4 Not About a Having a Title

"Well, I think the first one would be that having the title and being the leader are the same … If you have the title but you don't have trust, or you have people being suspicious of your agenda, that interferes with your ability to lead." (Joe)

"I think that confusion between this idea of positional leadership and management is confusing. You can be a good manager and not a good leader." (Jack)

"I see people that are leading, but they are not necessarily in a leadership position, and that's common. So they kind of lead from the side. And unfortunately their contributions are not always recognized." (John)

Subcategory 4.5 Not About Telling People What to Do

"For me, I think one of the misconceptions is that people in leadership positions are authoritarians." (Larry)

"And conversely, people can be in lower positions and develop good leadership qualities, or demonstrate leadership qualities. So I think sometimes there's a [sense of] confusion that good leadership is not about just being a good manager." (Dena)

"Sometimes good leaders are not authoritarians and, not to get political but, if I could use President Obama, one of his strengths is that he doesn't react emotionally, and he doesn't say, 'It's my way or the highway.' And he takes a lot of information in before he makes a major decision. And a lot of times some people have seen him as being authoritarian, but I don't see that with him so…." (Larry)

"Yes. I think I suffered, myself, from this misconception that leaders are the people in charge, who tell you what to do, rather than all the different ways people lead: through relationships, and by example, and with ideas. So there are lots of ways to lead… Yeah. That was how I had been trained to think about it. And to really widen my lens on the different kinds, and the different methods, and the different talents." (Pam)

"And the misconception is like, 'Well, you're the boss. You tell me what to do.'"

"No. And as a leader, I want you to critically think about that." (Leanne)

"Oh, I think one of the biggest misconceptions is that you're a leader, so you tell people what to do, and people do it. That is…that's an autocrat or a manager. And I think one of the big misconceptions is, people don't understand the difference between a leader and a manager." (Sophia)

"You don't tell people what to do. You know, my family says, 'Well, Sophia, you're in charge. Right?' It's like, 'No. That's not what this about.' You're really not in charge, you are responsible, but being in charge is totally…that's not about the work you do as a leader." (Sophia)

Subcategory 4.6 Leadership as a Social Construction

"I think leadership is kind of a combination of personal characteristics, in a social environment or context. That, together, they make to the formation of the leaders. It's not what happens in the classroom. It's experience and personal characteristics." (George)

"Do you think that leadership is a social construction?" (Dee)

"Yes, definitely it is a social construction." (George)

"Well, this is going to sound funny, but you have to be a tall, white man…Yeah, with a big smile. Every place I've ever worked, the leader is a big, tall, white Dutch guy. And not necessarily that bright, but when you're tall—and I'm five-ten, so I was always a little shorter than most—but you're tall, you're immediately considered leadership." (Tom)

Category 5 – "Undiscussables" – Hidden Dilemmas in Social Work Leadership

Participants were asked about issues in social work that were hidden dilemmas or for some reason difficult to discuss. Participants shared a range of responses. These "undiscussables" are defined by organizational behavior experts as hidden contradictions or conflicts that people are aware of but generally unwilling to voice because of the political ramifications (Agyris, 2002). For some participants, the dilemma was most apparent in the micro–macro divide of the social work profession, with leadership being undervalued as a social work competency. Others pointed to the invisibility of social work leaders, as compared with how many images and role models there are for micro-level clinicians and therapists. A number of participants described issues of bias and discrimination on the basis of a protected group, such as race, gender, or disability status as being problematic in social work. Some pointed out that issues of incompetence amongst colleagues is an undiscussable issue. Others were concerned

about the narrow role definition for social workers, stereotypes about social workers not being financially competent, and the overall image of the social work profession.

Subcategory 5.1 Importance of Macro Emphasis Is Not Clear to Students

"And I know when I do the Intro to Social Work class, and I come to the section of the course where I talk about macro practice and community organizing and advocacy, and the class is like, 'Why do we need to know this stuff?' So they're groaning because they think that there's no realistic connection to the real world, and so they're saying, 'Why do we need to know this?' And they are thinking, 'This isn't why I want to be a social worker.'" (George)

"They don't see themselves as being leaders. They see themselves as being someone's therapist. So it's also driven by economics. Yeah, there isn't a billing code for the changing the structures. Right?" (Jeanne)

"Yeah. So, the fact that students have been influenced by the media, and go by the lack of media examples, and they have a stereotype about the profession that they're getting into, and they think it's [macro] not applicable." (Jack)

"I think it's a part of professional identity that we develop as educators. They come with the social script already, and it's so difficult to break that down when we see it, but we've got a few years with them to inspire them. When I see students come in and say, 'Yeah, I want to work in human trafficking, and I want to help women get out of this,' I think to myself, for that kind of work you need leadership skills, you know, as much as you need clinical skills." (Francine)

"As social workers we have the perfect skill set, with both the macro and micro parts of our work… I had a professor in graduate school that used to, she taught organizational theory. And so, we would be, these future therapists would be sitting there all bored, and she'd say, 'I know you're all bored, but I want you to send me a postcard in five years if you don't use what

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I'm teaching you and if it is not one of the most valuable things you learned in graduate school, I want you to send me a postcard.' And of course, she was correct." (Dena)

Subcategory 5.2 Invisibility of Macro Social Work Leaders

"Well, I think… well, yeah. I think it goes back to the fact that we don't have as many social work leaders. I mean, it's not that you can point to all of these hundreds of people who are social work leaders. Clearly, they exist and there are hundreds or thousands of [social work] leaders. …but they are largely invisible." (Jeanne)

"You don't see that. So it's a lot to get them to think that…I think it comes back to the fact that social work leaders are largely invisible to kids, or they don't think about it as a model, think about it as a role model." (George)

"Yeah. I think it makes sense. That's a really, really good point that I hadn't really considered, is how social workers are portrayed in media, and how that macro piece is not visible to students for a long time, until they get into a work situation, you know, and sometimes years, and years later. Right?" (Francine)

"You know, being the driving force behind some social changes and directing people, I think in that direction. So I think that's a big area that we need to do more talking about. About how we have been leaders…we are leaders." (Larry)

"No. Well, no. They're not and that's the whole rise of the non-profit leadership and non-profit sector…how social work didn't embrace that whole area and focused more on individual treatment…the medical model, and following it. So, I think that is something the profession has to deal with, and has to realize that there should be a strong macro, a strong leadership portion of it, just by virtue where social workers end up, to have that training." (John)

Subcategory 5.3 Discrimination and Bias Issues

"I think one of the undiscussables is that there has been this competition between groups, in terms of vying for leadership…And it's almost this, 'Who's been the most oppressed?' kind of thing. And maybe it's because we are willing to talk about things. Maybe it is because we do promote inclusion and diversity. I know that there's been lots of oppression across the board. But I'm not interested in competing with you on this. And I see that more than I would ever…and at all levels of social work. I'm talking about in our national organization, as well as in schools of social work. And it's something that I don't think we have an honest discussion about. I think we see it. We skirt around it. But we really don't… we don't really address it. And there's a huge thing going on right now, on the CSWE, on the LISTSERV, you know, of this group and that group. And it's like, 'Oh my gosh, people.' There's enough oppression to go around, there really is." (Sophia)

"Undiscussable leadership can be biases toward persons of color, or even reverse bias in schools of social work where white men, in some ways, are discriminated against or seen as excluded from diversity. Or, what's another undiscussable…oh, just maybe micro/macro separation in either/or-ing are practiced to the point where we're opposing each other and kind of fighting these philosophical battles, but we're really not working together to solve social problems and work in the community, we're really more interested in ideological arguments that polarize us, rather than the practical matter of taking action to make things right." (Jack)

"When I hired in and started looking at the part-time faculty that we had, and the curriculum, and meeting with my students, I felt like the school was silent on the issue of LGBT identity. And that there was no class discussion, as a matter of cultural competence, about people being gay and what that means. And I think that's a bias of heterosexism, really." (Tom)

Sarah is noticeably awkward in the following discussion about the presence of LBGT contractual staff working with her agency. The fact that no one addresses this topic directly is notable. A culture of silence indicates issues of underlying biases and a system of power and privilege. "We have conversations about race disparity. We have conversations about gender…I'm just trying to think, I think that maybe within the private sector, I'm trying to think about when private agency providers [work with us]…I don't see as much of a presence of LGBT [people], but I know that we do have them out there [but we don't talk about it]." (Sarah)

"I think, perhaps, one of the things that, in social work, that perhaps we know and struggle with, is that we know that we are to serve, I think, all populations, and try to meet all needs. And I also think we know that there are just certain things, I don't care how much we read and how much we study, some things that we just don't want to deal with, certain populations we don't value, and so, I think it's the… I don't know, kind of the double-edged sword of being in this role, that should be embracing all, and at the same time you might have personal value systems or convictions that…." (Renee)

In addition to racial bias, gender and gender-identity bias was cited as a problematic issue within the field social work. Sarah shares how women supervisors who are perceived as being gay are subject to more scrutiny than others in similar positions.

"Right. And again, I know that that's an undiscussable here. We have gay women in leadership here, first-line supervision, first-line investigators. I think, in terms of our court system, I'd have to say that I think our court system is more critical of them…has higher expectation of them, and often they are really worried about their ability to do a good assessment." (Sarah)

"Well, I think there's a projection of sexism in social work because there's so many females. It's started by females, run by mostly females—and I don't think they're taken as seriously—it's a female profession. Psychology is a male profession, started by male doctors." (Jack)

"We were started by Jane Addams, who we don't know if she was a lesbian or not…. And so, in a way, society doesn't see us as a very prominent profession." (Tom)

"And typically, if you are a male in the social work field, it's this underlying assumption that nobody really talks about, but well, if you're a male in a predominately female field, then you must be on the leadership track." (Jeanne)

"So, my own legislator is a social worker, you know, over in Muskegon. She had to, she really had to overcome, now that I think about it, so I won't take too much more time with this, but she had to overcome a lot to get the endorsement, even of the Michigan Education Association. First of all, she was a woman in her, maybe, early sixties, and I think, I believe there's a certain amount of bias against women as we age. But she overcame that with a lot of tenacity, with the skills we've been talking about." (Dena)

Subcategory 5.4 Incompetence

"Well, I don't want to bring this up, but I am concerned about how much incompetence there is in our field, and how unwilling we are to actually talk about it and really deal with it." (Francine)

"It was so taboo to even talk about standards at all. I've heard social work educators say, 'We don't want criteria. How could we possibly set criteria?' Everyone can be…it's almost like everyone can be a social worker. And I don't agree…. You have to be able to think abstractly, be creative. You have to critically evaluate different situations that are highly complex. I mean, that

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requires, well, it's a pretty advanced level of intellect and skill. And we don't want to deal with incompetence or even say it out loud because of our wish to empower and believe that all people are capable; we tolerate a high amount of inappropriate and incompetent behavior." (Pam)

"Because we have this, you know, the inherent educational system that disadvantages students of color. And that's real. So students of color arrive at our door less prepared than students from affluent, well-educated families and communities. And so rather than have an honest discussion about how could we invite bright, capable people, with potential, we just refuse to talk about it because there's no safe way to say, or there's no good way to decide. It's a hard thing. People in the best of worlds with the best intentions have a hard time doing it. And so I think we just avoid it. I think it's worth a great discussion, and actually, the leader we had, had some great ideas about how to set standards that allowed for non-traditional preparation through adversity, or years of experience, and she wanted all that as part of it. And then, we would be accountable." (Pam)

Subcategory 5.5 Narrow Role Definition

"This probably happened about two years ago, and it was in a leadership meeting, and I've been there for some time. And somebody said something about, 'Well, we're social workers, so we tend to give things away or not be accountable for money.' And for me, that is a hot button when somebody says that." (Joe)

"We cannot accept this stereotype of ourselves that we're not capable of managing budgets and financial planning in all aspects. Not all social workers can do this, but certainly some social workers could be in that role…we don't have to have a business person. And I feel like I even sell myself short in that regard. That's again where I'm accepting the outside conception, maybe, of our profession." (Dena)

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"I see what you're saying. Yeah, so where a social worker's role is fairly narrowly constructed, it's case management, utilization management in health care, something like that, or hospice, it's medical social work then, and that particular environment, where it's a lot of specialization, then, they want you to kind of stay in your track, or whatever, narrow." (Francine)

"A lot of the misconception about leadership in the health care setting is that the leaders are about the big corporation ones, and that they don't really care about the employees, the people that they manage. And that they always have a goal to have the goal of…like the board members. So the goal of the budget is met. And not the goal of professional and personal development…. You can do both, and you can do them seamlessly if you just have that conversation." (Leanne)

"I think that's a problem especially in those areas where I was—a health environment, where basically in social work, and not a common or dominant professional environment. A social worker, especially with a degree in social work for the director of a kind of family services, or Catholic Social Services, that isn't much of a problem. When you go into a hospital, or a business, or something like that, social work plays a very different role within that environment. I think it can be limiting." (George)

"It's a political act to self-define and say, 'This is how I'm going to see myself.' Someone might look at me and say 'case manager.' I know I've been trained in systems theory and community organizing and a lot of other areas. And just because I don't work in for-profit or make decisions based on profit, doesn't mean I can't handle and understand finances." (Jeanne)

Subcategory 5.6 Our Image/Self-image as Social Workers

"Okay. That is a good example. I guess I could offer at least something I don't think we talk enough about, is our self-image as a profession." (Francine)

"Our self-esteem as a profession. I don't know if it's that we can't talk about it, but I don't think we talk about it as much as we should. We just don't appreciate ourselves, and I couldn't say…so maybe it's hard to talk about because I'm embarrassed, almost, myself at having bought into some of the stereotypes about social workers that are around. One day I looked around at my colleagues, at the people, and I thought, 'These people have IQs,' not that it's all about IQ, but they're 130, or better, all of them. They are extremely talented, capable people who could have been anything." (Dena)

"But they are attracted to be social workers, and that would not be fiction, I don't think, that group of people. There are many, many, very capable, very talented professionals. And somehow, I guess, it's just coming to my mind, it's like Debbie Stabenow. She will not say she's a social worker, and cannot. So why, I don't know, she cannot. She will not. She does not out of a sense, I'm assuming, that, boy, that would be a negative if she were. So if you look on her website extensively, I don't think you can find anywhere that she's a social worker." (Dena)

"Well, I think in social work, I think that we don't necessarily see ourselves as leaders." (Jeanne)

"We see…and I think that is a major misconception about social workers and especially, I think not only within our field, but in society as a whole. And that we need to do more talking about our leadership and how we do take leadership, and sometimes it can be in the form of different things such as social action." (Larry)

"And that we need to, I'd say, demonstrate that more, and discuss that more so people don't just see us as people who are trying to gather information about you and force you to sign government forms, etcetera." (Jack)

"I'll go back to the way we are using the term 'leadership.' And because that term speaks across disciplines, I think it's really important for social work to look at how it's being used in the social work field. So people are coming through these programs [social work]…and the assumption is you're helpers. It's not, you are being prepared for leadership. And when people think about who is going to help, they think social workers. Not who is going to come in to lead—social workers. But, I think because of the *content* of our studies, we *are* equipped for leadership. But I don't think that the degrees right now, when you say BSW or MSW say leader to the rest of the world…why do we have to get a PhD for them to think—leader?" (Renee)

Category 6 – Leadership and Pedagogy

Participants were asked about their views and experiences in teaching and learning leadership. Many had taken formal courses in leadership, while others had more informal learning experiences. The need for a knowledge base, networking opportunities, methods of instruction, and curricular design are discussed below. Of particular interest were participants' perspectives about how to best prepare future social work leaders. Developing a sense of patience, seeing oneself as a leader, and common axioms for leaders were key findings. In addition, advice for social work educators included being "intentional" about including leadership in the social work curriculum, addressing competition for human service leadership positions with MBA and MPA professionals, and the importance of community engagement in developing leadership within the profession.

Subcategory 6.1 Formal Learning Opportunities

"I did a macro social work program, so I had a lot of coursework in leadership, administration, and management." (Jack)

"I was in a Policy, Planning, and Administration track in my MSW. And I've done some CEUs and conference workshops." (Larry)

"I did the macro track. So, I took all those classes. And I went into the MSW thinking, 'I want to run the agency, not work at it.' So that was my thought." (Renee)

"I think I was fortunate enough to go through leadership training through Georgetown Institute…it was part of a community family partnership. And a very dynamic speaker." (Sarah)

"I have been to some trainings about leadership. Again, for me, it's more reinforcing or giving language to certain things you're doing already. So you go to those trainings and go, 'Oh that's right! Okay that makes sense. That is why I am doing it that way.' You know, that kind of thing. And I think there should be more formal education. As a part of any master's program, there should be leadership because, just by virtue of people getting a master's degree in just about any topic area, you are going to be called upon to be a leader." (John)

"I did a Leadership Journey group. It was kind of an adventure-based model…it promoted the idea of healthy risk taking…Yeah, so you just learn stuff through experiential processing with people." (Sean)

"We had in-services. The board would bring people in to do in-services with us on leadership, and how to run a board, and finances, and what the finances of the organization should look like. So, I guess that's where most of my training came from, and then I did my own research and reading." (Dena)

"You know, Dee, I probably did, once or twice. But, I cannot remember them. Because of that, I would say they probably were not all that effective." (George)

None. "No. Not specifically in leadership. I think the closest would be a supervision class." (Frank)

"No, I never took a course in it. I was sort of just thrown into it…I remember when I went to Pinewell [pseudonym for a mental health institution], I had 45 minutes of training. And then some kid set the unit on fire, and so on my first day, I am trying to put the fire out, literally." (Tom)

"I've done some reading. I have not had formal classes. I have certainly had the great privilege of observing some strong leaders up close in various organizational situations.... I've also done well by watching, discussing, and reflecting, I suppose." (Pam)

"I learned from my family, in my own family system. Everyone that I was surrounded by was a leader. And leaders in my family looked very different than other leaders, right or wrong. My home was my classroom." (Samantha)

Subcategory 6.2 Specialization vs. Infusion

Both-And. "When you think about the different content areas that we already have, I do think that a leadership course would be a good thing. But, obviously there are elements of it [leadership] like, for example, a groups and organizations course that could be infused." (Sean)

"I think every single solitary course should have one or two classes on leadership in what they're doing…if it's an individual's class, then absolutely. I am going to talk about leadership. What if you want to start your own practice? You have to be a leader. And I think that, that part could be unpacked as a separate course, where they do a business plan, and a budget and all of that. So it's really both." (Samantha)

Infused. "Well, I think it [leadership] needs to be included. It needs to be infused in the same way we did with cultural competency. It used to be if you missed the class on cultural issues, that was it." (Larry)

"Number one: It [leadership] needs to be included in all aspects and all disciplines of social work. Number two: We need to do more research on leadership in social work so that we have the resources and information we need to teach future generations of social workers. And it needs to be included, I think, in the Council of Social Work Education." (Larry)

Separate course. "It depends on if you're an advanced generalist or concentration [social work] program. I see it as a separate course. But, the problem is that I doubt that micro students will have the foresight to see that down the road they are going to need it [leadership course]… I could see it as a post-MSW course for CEUs, too." (Dena)

"Yes. I think you need to teach some competencies when it comes to leadership. Basic competencies like communication skills, problem solving, personnel management, and what you can and cannot do with employees. So, yes, I think the technical side can be taught." (Joan)

Subcategory 6.3 Need for Knowledge Base

"I think it would be good to do some research on what are the upcoming strategies about workforce development, workforce design, and what are ways that leaders can continue to feel like they have quality supervision and quality connections." (Francine)

"There needs to be a solid foundation of leadership and management theory. And then on top of that, a skill-based curriculum." (Jack)

"I think we can articulate and demonstrate a broader definition of what leadership is. Then, I think when we do that, we are going to find that, 'Oh it's not just the captain on the baseball team that's the leader. It's that player.' You know. So I think there are strategic ways that it could be done through redefining it [leadership]." (Renee)

"We need to do some work on gender issues. Like in class, I do a couple of sessions with the women on how they speak. And by saying 'I'm sorry' all the time or by talking in a tentative

or hesitant manner, they undermine their success. So we would have to talk about language patterns. I did some training in that, and it's a hard thing to change." (Tom)

"It would need to include macro theories of organizational management and change...interpersonal skills for leadership, assessment skills, some understanding of the barriers to change in organizations. Grant writing, administration, and the general philosophies of leadership." (Francine)

Subcategory 6.4 Methods of Instruction

"One thing that is more available now is multi-media and the use of technology in the classroom. I would show videos, short videos of social workers doing leadership." (Dena)

"I would want to have a nice array of speakers. I would want to have some corporate-level speakers. I think it would be fantastic to have like, I know Lynn Farrell is the CEO of the Frey Foundation…She has to come and tell her story." (Sarah)

"I think there's some fun to be had with doing some kind of role playing in leadership. Maybe some kind of project like that TV show with Donald Trump…where they get fired." (Jeanne)

"I think in the classroom, we need to bring in good examples of people in the human services, and particularly social workers, who are in positions of leadership in the community…and have them present to the class examples of their leadership work, both positive and negative, including such items as human resources, budgeting issues, licensing issues and…. then maybe have some vignettes on typical challenges and have the students figure out how they would resolve them." (Larry)

"We talk about change, but we don't prepare students to create it. It's almost like a historic lesson, and not a current challenge…And the best practices that we have, I think are

some of our more grassroots internships with agencies that are creating community change…. But you have to know how to use power in a way that does not exploit anybody and doesn't get you into too much trouble. And you have to learn how to sustain the personal attacks without taking them personally, even when they are." (Pam)

"Well, I think role plays would be effective. I do this exercise where I have people do a confrontation, and we do the right and the wrong way to do it." (Tom)

Subcategory 6.5 Networking Opportunities

"What comes to mind most easily is encouraging membership in professional associations. It's an important way that leaders could begin to connect and be developed. I think that faculty could probably promote that. When you continue to network, you become more effective at it." (Dena)

"Leaders are developed in peer-to-peer relationships. That's what the research shows. And, so we need to be able to make meaningful connections with each other through networking, mentoring, and other kinds of relationships." (Diane)

Subcategory 6.6 Advice for Future Leaders

See yourself as a leader. "We really need to be reinforcing for them that they're leaders, because they're out there. They are out there [representing the organization in the community], and they need to see themselves that way." (Diane)

"They need to realize that they are leaders all the time, and therapists when they are at work." (Jack)

"It's about seeing yourself as a leader. Yes, you are a clinician, an advocate, a therapist, and all of those roles. But, at the end of the day, you are a leader." (Francine)

Patience. "Be patient, but understand the fine line of being patient and giving way too much away." (Sophia)

"The easiest part of your job is seeing clients. The more difficult parts of the job are making sure things like paperwork and stuff is on time. And learning how to work with your colleagues. Sometimes we need patience. Everything doesn't have to be fixed today." (Sarah)

Be open to learning. "Be open to opportunities…don't lock yourself into a more typical social work path. And look for opportunities. That would be my words of advice." (George)

"Be open to new ideas as well as new ways of seeing yourself." (Pam)

"Be open to learn. Be open to self-evaluation, self-reflection, and self-care." (Sarah)

"I guess I would try to communicate to them, demonstrate to them, the benefits that will accrue to them in the profession…. And, they will become a better social worker if they are always learning. Because when you're at a political school social work board meeting, you'll also be talking about school refusal and you wind up talking about clinical issues as well. And then you get to go to conferences where you'll learn a tremendous amount." (Dena)

"Don't feel like you have to be held back. So, start asking questions even if you don't know the answer. Those are the best questions, because they push you…Don't be afraid to step out and try to find the answer." (Samantha)

Axiomatic. "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." (Sean)

"Avoid pig-wrestles. Some time in your career, there will be people that will try to bring you down to their level in terms of arguing and fighting and things like that. And if you get into a pig-wrestle, you're going to come out muddy, and the pig will have had a great time because they've accomplished what they wanted to do. They didn't want to solve the problem, they just wanted to get you dirty." (Joe)

"Bring solutions. Don't just come in and complain and raise the flag. You've got to bring some solutions." (Sarah)

"Build bridges. And continue to build bridges and don't be blinded by passions and burn the bridges that we need to effect change." (Sean)

"Money does talk. So, I think social workers need to know that talking about money is okay. And it's important, I think, to understand that and not vilify it." (Joe)

"Don't look at what you can't do. Look at your strengths and your potential and believe in that. You can do more than you think you can…and when you stretch yourself, you'll be surprised." (Tom)

"Yeah, and maybe another thing to recognize is how, no matter if you're rich or poor, we all have some common things within our lives that we struggle with. Rich people struggle with depression. Middle class people struggle with depression. Poor people struggle with depression. What we do isn't just for poor folks." (Joe)

Subcategory 6.7 Advice for Social Work Educators

Intentionality. The need for intentionality on the part of social work educators was emphasized, particularly when it comes to structuring leadership into curricula.

"There definitely needs to be intentional programming. This shouldn't be left to chance. I think it [leadership] should be right there, bold and explicit in their outcomes for students in their course." (Renee)

"Embrace the notion of competency, especially when it comes to leadership." (Pam)

"We need to distinguish the content around the concept of leadership. Is this bachelor's level or master's level? And also whether we are talking about organizational leadership or does it include the whole political and social action arena." (Sean)

"As you are teaching clinical skills or skills that can be used in a clinical setting, be sure you are intentional about also giving examples about how those same skills can be used in a non-clinical leadership setting. This is going to take more effort on the part of educators." (George)

"I guess the first thing would be for them to be leaders themselves." (Joe)

"Social work doesn't have a clear language and definitions around leadership. We just went through a period of doing that, and we have changed all our verbiage around our supervisors and managers. They didn't see themselves as leaders. They were aligned with staff…. So we changed all of our wording around. When we send out emails to our supervisor groups, we say, "Hello, leaders. Good morning." (Diane)

"I wonder if we minimize what can be learned from just really looking at the literature on leadership…. I wonder if it's because we assume it's implied, but then it's implied to a fault…in maybe an arrogant kind of way, like we already know this." (Sean)

Issues with MBA/MPA practitioners in human service organizations. Participants highlighted some concerns with the roles of leaders with educational backgrounds in Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration programs, but lacking any graduate-level education in social work as being problematic for human service organizations. It was a point of emphasis that professional social workers should be leading in these roles.

"And maybe one of the reasons that we've gotten away from it [teaching leadership] is because we've allowed, and. particularly I think, I've seen this shift in budgets and shift in priorities, that we've allowed other disciplines such as MBAs and MPAs to come in and say, 'Okay, well, we'll now be the leaders of the organization. You just do the work.' And I think that what we need to do is to come back and reclaim that and say, okay, we can do both." (Larry)

"I don't think that those degrees prepare individuals as well as social work degrees, again with some leadership, would prepare someone. I just think that those degrees end up being very narrow, and I know they're working on it. Everybody's working on it, even MBA programs. They're trying to work on not being so narrow. So I think they're working on it, but I think those degrees are so…I think that they don't always emphasize systems thinking. And they have multiple levels, and so I just think social work education can be the best way to get well rounded management executive level people, but we are missing that leadership training." (John)

"In the meantime, MPAs and MBAs are focused on strengths, which is ours, and talents, and how do we develop the best in people, and we get this pathological focus." (Sophia)

"I think there are fields that can learn from us. And, we can learn from them. I think we can learn from business. And, I think we are as good of leaders as they are, if we have financial abilities. And I do think we can learn it. You don't have to be a CPA to be able to run an agency and make good clinical and/or financial decisions." (Diane)

Community engagement. It was important to participants to request that social work educators maintain close connections with community so that they are responsive to the needs that the community may have as well as the resources it may offer.

"Does the faculty at your school know what's going on in the community related to those kinds of things [leadership initiatives]? Like developing regional entities for mental health services and things like that… And those being current examples of how people need to share and people have to be leaders and recognize different people's strengths and all of that to make it work." (Joe)

"Don't just leave it to the MBAs or even the psychologists, because we need to have people with your [social work] experience in those positions because you can understand what

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the people in the trenches are dealing with because you've been there, you've had the experience." (Larry)

"I would ask them what's getting in the way of seeing the importance of nurturing leadership in their students. And I would go back to the professional associations and promote that kind of involvement with developing leaders." (Dena)

Other. Participants also shared meaningful advice for social work educators that is included as an "other" category. It covers a range of topics such as relationship building, competence, values, and vision.

"Invest in your students. Don't treat this like it's a paycheck, but invest in your students, and you model to them, they will catch your inspiration and motivation and passion for the profession." (Tom)

"Embrace the notion of competence. Openly. I'm not saying I know what everything looks like, but I do think accountability and competence will take us further than watering everything down so everybody gets included." (Pam)

"We contribute to the organization in many different ways, beyond just being leaders in an organization. And then, again, we tend to downplay that [our contributions] as social workers." (John)

Summary

In summary, analysis of the interview data revealed that leadership development is a process that can be understood from a theoretical stance of conflict and transformative change. Leadership strengths of participants varied across race and gender, but were well aligned with strengths-based models of leadership. Identity formation factors included time of onset of leadership identity, securing the requisite relational and educational supports, navigating barriers,

including internal conflicts and external conflicts, and involvement in peer networking and political advocacy.

In addition to identity formation factors, this study examined the role of critical incidents and transformational experiences. As participants reflected on their development as leaders, they revealed personal struggles that had some bearing on their future success as leaders. For some, experiences of discrimination, violence, and being bullied were seen as turning points, where they found courage and clarity to become more engaged as leaders. For others, job-related changes, promotions, and religious experiences were viewed as pivotal moments in their journey as leaders.

Misconceptions of leadership, including confrontation of stereotypes of autocratic, top-down styles of leadership, were generally viewed as ineffective. Leadership is "not a glorious place" but, rather, one that may invite criticism of others. Hidden dilemmas within social work included discrimination and bias, the micro–macro divide, incompetence among professionals, and the image of the social work profession.

Many participants reported that they had formal learning opportunities in leadership, including courses, CEU workshops, in-service trainings, and executive education seminars. Some learned informally through their own reading and observation, particularly of leadership whom they admired. Participants reported that leadership should be infused in the social work curricula, as well as taught as a separate course. There is need for a distinctive knowledge base in the theory and practice of leadership within the social work profession. Suggested methods of instruction ranged from traditional classroom lecture, to role play, entrepreneurial business projects, guest speakers, panel presentations, field education, and multi-media presentations.

Advice for the next generation of social work leaders and educators was noteworthy. For new leaders, participants emphasized proverbial sayings, such as "avoid pig wrestles" or "keep your friends close and your enemies closer" as well as the need for a well-developed sense of patience and the ability to see oneself as a leader. Advice for social work educators was centered on the need for intentionality in developing leaders. Participants related that leadership development was a matter for individual instructors, as well as an administrative issue. Curricula must be improved at the institutional level. Moreover, at the national level, competencies and practice behaviors for leadership should be developed and expanded. Participants shared concerns that social work leaders were as or more qualified to lead human service agencies than their MBA and MPA counterparts. However, public perception of social workers does not accurately reflect our abilities as leaders.

Analysis, Synthesis, and Integration Over Time

The study asked participants to reflect over present and past leadership skills and experiences as well as their advice for future leaders. Leadership strengths are described in the present tense by each participant. Experience of barriers and supports in their leadership development, as well as the onset of seeing themselves as leaders required them to reflect on their pasts. Descriptions of critical incidents or transformational experiences invited leaders to pinpoint a time of change when they were impacted in a memorable way. Finally, participants were asked for their advice to future leaders and educators in the field of social work. This was an opportunity to redefine social work leadership and related issues of pedagogy.

It is important to emphasize the role of conflict, crises, and change in the process of developing leaders. Conflict and crises can be difficult, but also they present opportunities for leadership development. Change of the transformational type is fraught with setbacks,

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difficulties, and pain. The path the leadership of this type is similar. It is not a linear path, but in reality, one of iterative cycles of progress and growth.

This study focused on building a framework for understanding leadership development, from a philosophical grounding in critical theory. In keeping with this perspective, qualitative methods were utilized for analysis, while quantification of findings was minimized. Oftentimes, particular concepts transcended categories and could not easily be placed in one category or another. They were interrelated and connected, for example, the role that family and education and religious beliefs played in leadership development. I did my best to conceptually separate these ideas into distinct sections, but it reality, they are interconnected.

Finally, it was noted that the narrow or limited roles for women and persons of color are mirrored in some ways by the narrow or limited roles for social workers. This is paradoxical in some ways. As the profession has attempted to advance its status and increase educational requirements, it has become more insular, clinically oriented, and less centered on issues of leadership, human rights, and social justice. Pay structures for clinical billing codes reinforce this. Effective linguistic resistance is needed to address stereotypical notions that social workers (or women or persons of color) are not able to do certain things like manage finances or be CEOs of human service organizations.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the implications of these findings, the possible limitations of this study, and recommendations for policy, education and future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

From the early formation of the social work profession and into the current millennium, the importance of leadership development has been well documented (Fauri, 1976; Ginsberg, 2008; Reamer, 1993; Wimpheimer, 2004). At the same time, relatively little progress has been made in developing leaders within the field of social work (Brilliant, 1986; Hoefer, 2003; Rank and Hutchison, 2003). Social work continues to grapple with issues of identity and authority (Flexner, 1915; Gummer,1987; Gillis, 2001). This study examined leadership development as a process of social construction and transformation of oneself and, ideally, one's environment within the field of human service organizations. Of particular interest was how leaders negotiate this transformation. Within these experiences of transformation, leaders must resolve ethical dilemmas and conflicts. Conflicts may be of an internal, personal nature or an external, interpersonal, or institutional nature. Conflicts may also center around privileged definitions of gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, ability/disability, class, and the like. Social work leaders are developed within the dynamic context of professional and interpersonal relations. Social work educators, non-profit leaders, and public sector social welfare agency leaders are collectively involved in the process of leadership development.

This study was designed to explore the following questions regarding social work leaders:

1. How do participants perceive their leadership strengths?

2. What factors influence the leadership development process?

3. How do transformational experiences or critical incidents play a role in leadership development?

4. What are the common misconceptions about leadership?

5. What are the hidden conflicts or "undiscussables" related to social work leadership development?

6. How might leadership in social work be taught?

A multi-stakeholder research approach using qualitative interviews of non-profit executive directors, social service agency directors, and social work faculty was utilized to gain a multi-faceted, in-depth understanding of the context and processes involved in developing leader. Critical factors in successful leadership development included securing the social supports, such as parents, teachers, mentors, and supervisors, navigating life experiences, pursit of educational success, and effectively managing common barriers such as discrimination, bias, and lack of self-confidence. As a profession, structural supports are needed by placing a greater emphasis on the inclusion of leadership competencies and practice behaviors, in bachelor's- and master's-level social work curricula.

The Identity Development Theme

Identity development is a key theme in this study. Leadership develops in one's sense of identity in a context of particular supports and barriers. Positive relationships, access to quality education, spiritual beliefs, and employment were supportive factors common to resiliency and ultimately, success as a leader. Self-doubt, lack of confidence, discrimination, and bias were common barriers that participants struggled to overcome. In the process of dealing with these challenges, participants engaged in the process of self-definition, as they were unwilling to yield to the limiting definitions that others' tried to impose upon them. Privileged definitions of the

concept of a leader may stem from people groups (gender, race, disability) as well as from academic traditions (business and public administration) that subordinate one way of knowing and being over another.

Seeing oneself as a leader may begin in youth, teenage years, young adulthood, or middle adulthood and beyond. In some ways, seeing one's self as a leader may have been a function of individual differences, such as introversion/extroversion, intellect, and social skills. Leadership identity was also constructed in reference to relationships with significant figures, such as parents, grandparents, and extended family, teachers, peers, supervisors, mentors, and role models. These relationships were supportive factors in helping participants to realize their potential as leaders. Access to education, employment, and religious and community organizations were also main sources of supports. These macro-level institutional supports may be sources of transformative development, as they play a key role in the formation of identity development all leaders, particularly those from under-privileged backgrounds.

The Conflict Theme

Navigating conflict is essential to understanding leadership development. Conflicts may be of an internal, intrapersonal nature or an external, interpersonal, organizational, or institutional nature. Commonly, leaders experienced self-doubt, a lack of confidence, or feelings of fear, inadequacy, anger, and frustration. It is important to discuss and normalize to some degree these difficult experiences with aspiring leaders. This will prevent them from isolating or believing that they are alone in their experiences of internal conflicts. Likewise, external conflicts were common in the workplace and educational setting. Leaders experienced discrimination, bias, bullying, and unfair treatment. In some cases, they cited their ability to overcome these negative conflicts as essential to their success as leaders. The location of the

conflict is itself a political question. Such conflict occurs at all levels; however, the structural origins of inequality are of central importance.

The Transformational Experience Theme

When asked to reflect on their life experiences, leaders identified particular incidents that were transformational in their impact. Participants recalled times during their college and graduate education where they began to see themselves as leaders. Others shared that they were promoted unexpectedly at work. Some were involved in political advocacy or social justice movements. Some leaders experienced tragedy, death, discrimination, and personal loss, but were able to find the support and internal resources to overcome these difficulties. Transformation involved how these leaders saw themselves as well as the world around them. This process of transformation has been described as a developing "critical consciousness," which comes through personal reflection and action in the dynamic social context of oppression and freedom (Friere, 1970/2007, p. 18).

The Teaching Leadership Theme

Social work education is an essential component of leadership development within the profession. Findings from this study indicate that a distinctive knowledge base in leadership theory and practice is available and needed for the development of leaders. This content may be infused across the curricula and/or delivered as a separate course. Most leaders interviewed for this study had experienced some formal education on the topic of leadership. This occurred in their graduate studies, but more often was part of their ongoing professional education or employment-related in-service training.

Participants indicated that leadership could be taught through a variety of methods: traditional classroom, role playing, field education, dialogue and observation, group projects, and

hybrid or online coursework. There are essential fields of knowledge, skills, and values related to leadership functions within an organization such as: finance, human resources, public relations, and strategic planning, which are not currently codified in the CSWE competencies and practice behaviors. If social workers are to effectively compete with human service professionals for leadership positions, they must be proficient in these areas.

Advice for social educators included the need for intentionality in the inclusion of leadership within the curricula. Moreover, aspiring leaders need ongoing, relational support, access to peer networking opportunities, and current best practice research on leadership within human services. It is also essential for leaders to share their common struggles and obstacles. These stories can be especially motivating when shared and serve as a source of inspiration for others grappling with similar struggles.

The Misconceptions Theme

Leaders interviewed in this study overwhelming agreed that leadership is not about a formal position, being autocratic, or telling people what to do. Leadership is "not a glorious place" that some may imagine it to be. Being in leadership often invites the criticism of others because of increased visibility and potential disagreements about a particular course of action.

Opportunities for leadership roles result from having access to power and privilege. These opportunities also may present themselves in times of crisis or difficulty, such as a major paradigmatic shift in a field of practice, an organizational merger, or even a violent tragedy. Participants shared that these "accidental" leadership opportunities were presented in their lives, and they met the challenge. Being in a new role of leadership resulted from events that were perceived as positive and negative changes.

The Undiscussables Theme

There continue to be aspects of social work leadership that are difficult to discuss and resolve. Such "undiscussable" issues include a lack of appreciation for the importance of the macro-practice perspective, of which leadership is an integral component. From the perspective of some participants in this study, calls for leadership are acknowledged, but without the commensurate action needed to make leadership an essential component of social work education. Some participants noted that examples of micro-practice "therapists" are commonplace in television, movies, and daily life, while their macro-practice counterparts, social work leaders are "invisible." At the same time, clinician and leader are not mutually exclusive terms. They do, however, represent competing values, which are graphically displayed in figure 2.

Bias and discrimination on the basis of protected groups (gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity and disability) occur in social work. On an individual, organizational, and institutional level, participants described the impact on their development as leaders within the field of social work. In a parallel manner, bias and discrimination also occur with regard to how the profession is viewed by others. For example, a narrow view is prevalent that social workers cannot manage finances, understand accounting functions, or be concerned about money within an organizational setting. This false view, if accepted as valid, severely limits social workers in their leadership endeavors. Such a stereotypical view is an inaccurate representation of the actual skills and abilities of social work leaders. Reclaiming one's right to self-define is a critical feature in the development of leadership identity.

The findings of this study may be visually summarized by depicting themes as a graphic of the relationships among themes and subthemes. The social construction of leadership

development may be understood as a process that involves a complex interaction among the

factors displayed in figure 2.

Figure 2. The Construction of Social Work Leadership Development
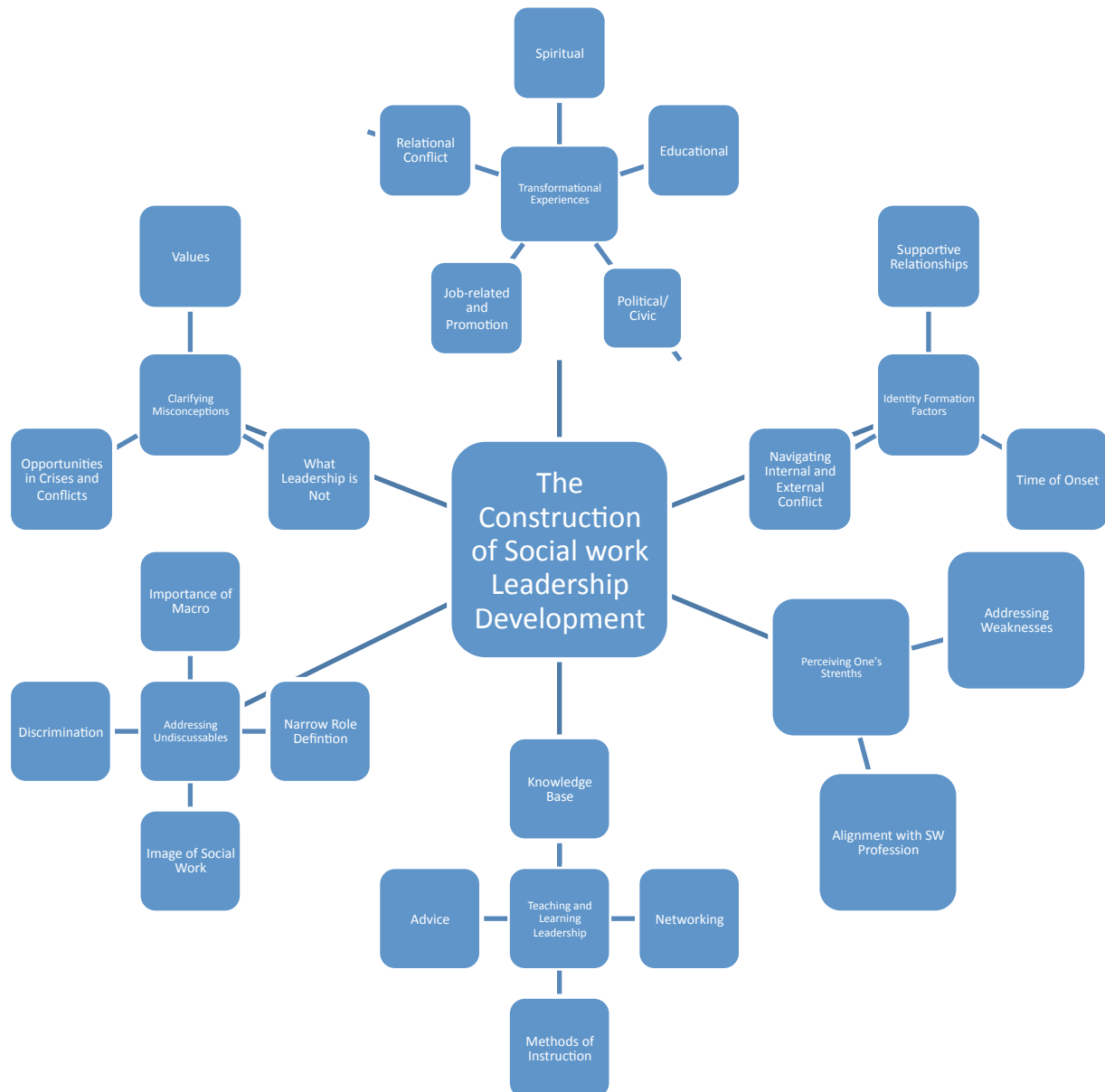
Limitations of the Study

This study may have been limited by several factors. The qualitative design had an inherent limitation due to the methodological processes of this form of inquiry. Iterative forms of analyses are prone to idiosyncratic biases. To safeguard against these biases, a second coder was employed to assist with the confirmation of coding categories. Initially, data summary sheets were compared to evaluate points of agreement and disagreement between the two coders. A code check and subsequent revision of the coding categories was completed to ensure agreement between coders.

Another potential source of bias may have been the fact that I am a social work leader in a higher education institution. While this role may have added to my knowledge and skills in the area of leadership, it may also have been a source of potential bias in both the interviewing and analysis process. I was aware of this potential bias and made attempts to guard against it by maintaining a professional demeanor during interviews and, in large part, adhering to the interview protocol. Some participants may have been more or less forthcoming with information about their experiences based on their perception of my role as a leader or the responses that the believed I was looking for in the study.

Another limiting factor was the small sample size of the non-random group of 18 human services leaders. The study was narrowly focused and limited to the input of these 18 participants. It cannot be generalized beyond this group. The study did not include any participants who were not successful at becoming leaders. This limited the sources for divergent data which could be compared and contrasted to those who were successful at becoming leaders in the field of social work. However, the findings did suggest new lines of inquiry and suggest ideas that could be evaluated with other samples and leader populations.

The questions were narrowly constructed, in part, because they were informed by previous qualitative studies that explored the qualitative experiences of leaders in human services (Greenhouse & Haynes, 2004; Sanderlin-Nykamp, 2001; Quinn, 2004). In addition, this study was developed from a critical theoretical perspective, rather than a grounded theory approach. Questions were framed around exploring the process of conflict, reflection, action, and transformation. This introduced a level of bias into the study. In spite of these limitations, the study may have important implications for practice and future research.

Implications of the Study

This research provided a considerable body of information about the experiences of 18 social work leaders in human service organizations in the Midwest. However, given the limitations of the study, one must caution against broad generalizations. The goals of this study included developing a deeper understanding of the process of leadership development in the context of conflict, barriers, supports, employment, education, and transformational life experiences. This study confirmed the finding of previous research that leadership identity develops in a context of supportive relationships from family, teachers, supervisors, mentors, and colleagues. These relationships may provide some support as the leader develops a sense of identity in addressing conflict, change, and opportunities for growth.

Like learning, leadership may be transformational. Transformation is not necessarily a comfortable or enjoyable experience. Leaders in this study reflected on their development as leaders. They were able to identify times of personal growth and change that stemmed from a particular incident or experience that had a memorable impact in their lives.

Implications for social work education. Leadership in social work must be infused into the curricula and at the same time developed as a distinctive set of knowledge, skills, and values.

Infusion of leadership will require the consideration of structural changes within the foundational curricula of bachelor's- and graduate-level social work education. While most social workers agree that leadership skills are an integral part of social work practice, the term "leadership" is mentioned just once, in the CSWE EPAS competencies and practice behaviors, EP 2.1.1, PB #28. Sufficient detail on how one demonstrates leadership skills is lacking. Intentionality and sustained efforts on the part of community leaders, educators, higher education administrators, and accreditation organizations will be required if our profession is to make substantive changes to the curricula. Continuing education is another avenue that may be developed for ongoing leadership education.

Social work educators, particularly those engaged in teaching leadership, must take note of the decline of students who are specializing in the field. According to studies by Wuenschel, (2006) and Patti (2000), the proportion of social work students specializing in leadership is estimated between 3% and 6.5%. It is unclear whether this is a result of lack of interest, curricular changes, or external trends. In any case, the need for social leadership is greater than ever in the current context of war, famine, globalization, and privatization. The responsibility for communicating the value of leadership as a social work competency is one that should be shared by all social workers, but particularly embraced by social work educators.

Redefining social work education in the area of leadership will require special attention to how leadership is constructed as a social identity. Words have creative and destructive power. As such, social work educators must be adept at the linguistic nuances that either support and/or challenge the development of leadership as identity. Since the profession is represented by persons of color, women, members of the LGBT community, and persons with disabilities, special regard and care should be taken to explore how these identities interface with leadership

identity. This stance is consistent with the values of the professional as represented in the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2008).

In the past five years, some progress has been made in the area of development of population specific leadership programs such as the Hartford (2009) leadership initiative in gerontology, the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute's (2011) leadership competency framework and the Harvard Institutes (2010) summer leadership program for social work administrators working in higher education. While the programs are specifically applied to the population in which the leader practices, lessons learned across these programs could be derived and shared the profession as whole. Replication and expansion of these leadership programs could be of benefit social work educators and practitioners.

Curricular implications for leadership development must be considered by social work educators. There is a need for the development of a leadership knowledge base, as well as the requisite skills and related values. Separate specialized leadership courses may need to be developed, at the same time leadership competencies are infused within the curriculum. This both/and approach will likely be more effective than an either/or approach. Leadership competencies have been development by the National Network of Social Work Managers (Neosoff, 2007) and by the National Child Welfare Workforce Initiative (2011). However, the connection to social work education appears to be missing. There is no evidence that these competencies have been used to inform formal social work education at the bachelors- or master-level. In the current competency-based environment, such reforms must be at least in part, be driven by the accrediting body, CSWE.

Implications for educational policy. Political activity is encouraged by the National Association of Social Workers, as part of social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader

society (NASW, 2008). Such advocacy must also occur within the social work profession itself. Policy-making organizations such as NASW and the CSWE may have influence on the direction of leadership development through educational policy standards, ethical standards, and regulatory activities that ensure professional competency. Some further exploration of the policy implications of the EPAS educational policy standards is needed, with particular emphasis on the concept of leadership development.

At present, accredited schools of social work with advanced generalist degrees at the master's-level must demonstrate that students are proficient across 10 competencies and 41 practice behaviors. Only two practice behaviors mention the term "leadership," and little definition is provided. For the remaining accredited schools that have concentration-based programs specializing in micro-practice or macro-practice schools, the CSWE policy standards indicate that each school must create their own advanced practice behaviors for the specialized programs in addition to the 41 practice behaviors learned at the foundation level. Those universities with concentrations in administration and/or leadership development are of particular interest. Advanced practice behaviors from these programs could become the basis for redefining education for social work leadership development.

Likewise, the National Network of Social Work Managers has defined ten management competencies and established the Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM) credential (Neosoff, 2007; Wimpheimer, 2004). These competencies include: contemporary and public policy issues, advocacy, public/community relations and marketing, governance, planning, program development, financial development, evaluations, human resources management, and staff development (Wimpheimer, 2004). Once again, *leadership* as a clearly articulated, concrete term is notably absent. The avoidance of the term contributes to the pattern of ambivalence within the

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field of social work. A CSWM credential should arguably include a mastery of leadership theory and practice, since management and leadership are inextricably interconnected in organizational and community settings. Packard (2004) suggests that an administration concentration in social work be structured in a manner (described in table 1, p. 12) that includes both leadership and management skills.

Implications for practice. Social workers are trained in the specific use of neutral language when referring to a client's gender or gender identity. For example, they may use the word "partner" rather than husband or wife to refer to the person with whom the client is committed to long-term relationship. However, this attempt at neutrality may subtly contribute to the false understanding that we live and practice in environments that are gender neutral. To the contrary, we experience the projection of other's biases of others routinely, on the basis of gender/gender identity, race/ethnicity, disability, class, and the like. The language we use carries symbolic meaning and a set of assumptions. The avoidance of certain words should be attended to with care.

For example, three prominent women leaders—Condolezza Rice, Sheryl Sandberg (CEO of Facebook), and Anna Maria Chavez—are collaborating on a national movement to remove the descriptor "bossy" when it is used in reference to young women (Keating, 2014). The #banbossy campaign makes extensive use of social media. Moreover, parents and teachers are encouraged to use more positive words to describe girls when they exhibit leadership behaviors (termed leadership qualities when observed in boys) and termed "bossy" when observed in girls. Chavez, the CEO of the National Girl Scouts organization, is leading this effort. The central message is that words matter and contribute substantively to the development of identity. Leadership is a part of one's identity.

On a broader level, the lack of a knowledge base and clear language of leadership within the field of social work is problematic. It is indicative of the profession's ambivalence with the use of the term. Moreover, a lack of knowledge and language is also indicative of culture of silence. A culture of silence is created when one discourse is privileged over another, and the subordinated knowledge is then ignored or invalidated (Freire, 1970/1997). Social workers must embrace the notion that they are leaders as part of their professional identity. Moreover, social workers must support the development of fellow leaders within the profession.

Aspiring leaders should be aware that leadership is not always "a glorious place." This may be helpful when they experience similar setbacks and hardships, so that they see it as part of the process and not necessarily personal failure on their part. Leaders experienced criticism and opposition. It was common for leaders to share that they had times of difficulty along the way to becoming a leader. Experiencing self-doubt, feelings of fear and anger, and a lack of self-confidence were common internal conflicts experienced by leaders. Overcoming these conflicts was part of their journey as leaders. Leaders also experienced external conflicts in their education, employment, and personal relationships. Examples included gender and racial bias, discrimination on the basis of LGBT identity, disability, and religious affiliations. Upon reflection, participants recalled that they were able to overcome these challenges as they developed as leaders. In the process of doing so, they affirmed the right to self-define in the face of opposition and limitations imposed by others.

Recommendations for Future Research

The social work profession needs empirical research on leadership in order to effectively develop the next generation of leaders. One productive line of future inquiry would be to expand the subject pool to include a broader sample of leaders from across the United States. This may

make it possible to ascertain whether the findings were a regional phenomenon or more common to the field of social work in North America. Another potentially valuable area of research may be expanding the study across international boundaries. Cross-cultural research with social workers from different parts of the world, whose economic, social and political circumstances may vary widely, may be helpful in understanding whether the findings of this study are unique or whether they have characteristics in common with social work leadership development elsewhere.

In addition, more research is needed to support best practices in teaching leadership, developing curricula, and measuring student learning outcomes. This study focused on the qualitative experiences of human services leaders from a critical perspective. Similar research might be implemented in the areas of evaluating leadership curricula, particularly in graduate social work programs that have specialized concentrations in macro-practice fields that include leadership. Quantitative studies are needed to better understand where social work leaders are employed and their relative frequency and effectiveness compared with other professions. This may help dispel some of the misconceptions about the perceived abilities, or lack thereof, of social workers as leaders.

A national study facilitated by a professional association such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) or the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) would be of great value to explore the educational context of social work leadership development. Approximately 11 years ago, the large study conducted by Rank and Hutchison (2003) surveyed representatives from these organizations on the concept of leadership. A follow-up study on leadership education and the process of development could be very instructive.

Likewise, an analysis of the impact of the annual summer Harvard Leadership Institutes, funded by CSWE beginning in 2010 may prove valuable for future research and education. This program focuses on the development of social work leaders in higher education. Qualitative or evaluative research on the experiences of social work leaders who participated in the program may be very instructive for the profession. Evaluative research of the Hartford (2009) leadership initiative in the field of gerontology or the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute's (2011) leadership competency framework may by valuable to the social work profession at large.

Summary

This study explores leadership development as a process of identity formation in the context of conflicts, barriers, supports, and life experiences. Leadership development may be seen as part of a process of social construction and transformation of one's self and, following, of one's environment. Of particular interest was how leaders negotiated conflict, dilemmas, and transformation. Social workers have special regard for oppressed groups. This special regard includes an interest aspiring leaders within the profession who have come from marginalized backgrounds. Personal transformation of experiences of oppression is a process medicated by supportive relationships, education, religious affiliation and spiritual practices, political advocacy, and economics.

A multi-stakeholder research approach using qualitative interviews of non-profit executive directors, social service agency directors, and social work faculty was utilized to gain a multi-faceted, in-depth understanding of the context and processes involved in developing leaders. The overarching goal of this research was to explore the meaning of intra- and inter-personal conflicts to reveal critical factors involved in leadership development, resulting in a new framework for leadership development in the 21st century. Understanding these interactive

processes will enable social work leaders and educators to better support leadership development within the profession. Much can be gained by deeply listening to what these leaders have shared about their life experiences and how they overcame personal struggles and conflicts to serve as leaders within human service organizations. Biases may be transferred to create institutional discrimination, as observed in oppression linked to gender/gender identity, racial/ethnic, class, and disability status. Socially constructed identities play a key role in the construction of leadership as identity. Understanding the common barriers and struggles can serve to inoculate aspiring leaders from setbacks and hardships. Progress has been made in population specific leadership programs in the areas of social work administration in higher education, gerontology, and child welfare. Lessons learned can become the basis for redefining social work education with an emphasis on a framework and language for developing leaders.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Interview Tool

Identity Development Experiences
Name, age, gender, education, job title, years in position, type of position (agency, non-profit, higher education).

1. Describe your top three strengths as a leader.

2. When did you begin to see yourself as a leader? How did awareness in seeing yourself as a leader begin?

3. What, if any internal conflicts did you experience? How did you resolve them?

4. What external conflicts did you experience? How did you resolve them?

5. Describe a transformational experience in your professional development as a leader.

6. How did this experience impact you as a person? As a professional social worker?

7. What is the biggest misconception about leadership?

Ethical Dilemmas/Conflicts
8. What sorts of ethical dilemmas have you faced as a leader?

9. How did you resolve them?

10. How does the Social Work Codes of Ethics influence your decision-making as a leader?

11. What are the "undiscussables" of leadership development?

12. Describe a conflict at each level and how you resolved them as a leader:
    a. Individual
    b. Interpersonal
    c. Organizational

Teaching/Learning Leadership
13. Have you taken any courses in leadership? What type? If, so how helpful did you find them?

14. What should be taught in leadership development courses? What pedagogies should be utilized?

15. Do you think leadership development can be infused within the Social Work curricula? If so, how?

Participant Data Summary Form

TEMPLATE FOR PARTICIPANT SUMMARY FORM 2014

Name: _____   Age: _____

Document #: _____   Gender: _____

Sector: _____   Race: _____

Education: _____   Title: _____

Years in Position: _____

Type of Contact: (Check where appropriate)   Contact Date: _____

☐ Face to Face   Today's Date: _____

☐ Phone

Summary of Information for each Research Question:

Research Question 1

Research Question 2

Research Question 3

Research Question 4

Research Question 5

Code	Page #	Key Words/Concepts	Comments: Relationship to Research Questions

Questions, Concerns, Implications, Issues to be Addressed:

_____

_____

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