

PERSON-ORGANIZATION INCONGRUENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF RIGHT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM, SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION, AND HETEROSEXISM

Kristie L. Seelman

University of Denver

N. Eugene Walls

University of Denver

Using a sample of 124 incoming social work graduate students, we examined whether levels of perceived incongruence with social work values and the perceived culture of a graduate social work program significantly correlate with social psychological constructs. The social psychological constructs are associated with maintenance and support for social stratification in general and with prejudicial attitudes based on sexual orientation more specifically. Results suggest that higher levels of cultural incongruence are associated with significantly higher levels of right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, hostile heterosexism, aversive heterosexism, and paternalistic heterosexism. Nonsignificant results emerged for amnesic heterosexism and positive stereotypic heterosexism. Implications for social work education and future research are discussed.

THE FIT BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS and their profession has been a topic of research in the academic literature since the 1950s (see, e.g., Holland, 1959, 1966). The right job, it is argued, is as much about one's psychology as about one's skills and aptitudes. One aspect of this fit is the set of core values that an individual embraces. Research demonstrates that people's values tend to be congruent with the values that are dominant in their workplace (Ad-

kins, Russell, & Werbel, 1994; Holland, 1996); furthermore, higher levels of congruence are associated with increased job satisfaction and commitment (Cable & Judge, 1996; Meir, 1995) and have been shown to coincide with better performance (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999; Kuo, Cheng, & Wang, 2001). Haley and Sidanius (2005) argue that value congruence not only is normative but also benefits both the worker and the organization.

Recently, social dominance theorists have demonstrated that a similar fit exists for sociopolitical attitudes associated with social stratification (Pratto & Espinoza, 2001; Sidanius, van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2003). Persons who endorse the subordination of others tend to select and thrive in careers that support and reproduce social stratification, while persons who endorse egalitarian attitudes tend to select and thrive in careers that attenuate social inequity (Sidanius, Liu, Pratto, & Shaw, 1994; Whitehead, 1998). Hierarchy-attenuating disciplines, such as nursing, social work, and public health, are more likely to attract more egalitarian students than hierarchy-enhancing disciplines, such as law and marketing (Sidanius et al., 1994).

The empirical evidence suggests both that *self-selection* into a discipline is one mechanism by which strong person-organization congruence is achieved (Sidanius, Pratto, Sinclair, & van Laar, 1996; Sidanius et al., 2003) and that at least some percentage of individuals who initially choose a field of study experience cultural *incongruence* with the values and predominant attitudes of the discipline into which they are entering.

Using a sample of 124 incoming master's of social work (MSW) students, we examined cultural incongruence with social work values and the norms of social work education, as well as various social psychological constructs that might be correlated with the incongruence. We anticipate that significant differences will emerge in social dominance orientation (SDO), right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), hostile heterosexism, and modern heterosexism based on the level of cultural incongruence experienced by students.

Literature Review

Social Work as a Hierarchy-Attenuating Field of Practice

Sidanius and colleagues (2003) have demonstrated that social work is a profession that is perceived to be hierarchy-attenuating among laypersons, not surprising given that the profession's *Code of Ethics* (National Association of Social Workers, 1996) explicitly states that "social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups" (p. 5). Social workers are not expected to create change on behalf of people who already benefit from extant systems of power and privilege; rather, the profession is committed to producing change that benefits groups of people who have traditionally been exploited, dominated, abused, and disadvantaged by the existing and historical group-based systems of hierarchy (Barnoff & Moffatt, 2007; Pearlmutter, 2002; Sünker, 2005). Both the professional literature and central theories of social work advocate for an approach to practice that promotes change in favor of equality, a change that tends to improve the well-being of social work clients (Abramovitz, 1993, 1998).

Cultural Incongruence Among Social Work Students

Because of social work's commitment to hierarchy attenuation, equality, and anti-oppressive practice, it is vital that future practitioners demonstrate a commitment to the profession's values and ethics. In social work, the term *gatekeeping* is often used to identify the process for screening students for entry into the profession based on their skills, knowl-

edge, academic performance, character, and commitment to social work values (Koerin & Miller, 1995; Moore & Urwin, 1990; Reynolds, 2004). Gatekeeping helps the profession to differentiate itself by identifying the qualities that are vital to engaging in efficacious and ethical social work practice (Moore, Dietz, & Jenkins, 1998). A student's suitability can be questioned at any time, from the application and admissions process to field placements and coursework to the selection of candidates for graduation (Curren & Atherton, 2008; Koerin & Miller, 1995; Moore & Urwin, 1990; Morrow, 2000).

The general consensus in the discipline is that the task of gatekeeping is primarily the responsibility of social work faculty (Curren & Atherton, 2008; Moore et al., 1998; Moore & Urwin, 1990). For professions that involve interaction with vulnerable populations and that require practitioners to adhere to a code of ethics, numerous legal decisions have supported the notion that faculty are expected to fill the role of gatekeepers by determining who is suitable for the profession and who should be denied entrance into the field (Cobb, 1994). As such, the Council on Social Work Education requires social work programs to have procedures for terminating students for both academic and nonacademic failures (Koerin & Miller, 1995).

There is, however, disagreement about whether and how to analyze students' personal values as part of the gatekeeping process (Curren & Atherton, 2008; Gross, 2000; Koerin & Miller, 1995; Reynolds, 2004; Ryan, Habibis, & Craft, 1997). Many social work programs evaluate student applications for qualities that go beyond the standard measurements of

undergraduate GPA and volunteer experience (Fortune, 2003). Social work programs commonly require students to demonstrate a match with social work values prior to admission and entry into field placements (Morrow, 2000; Ryan et al., 1997). At all points in the gatekeeping process, schools can evaluate whether students are demonstrating a commitment to the *Code of Ethics*, including adherence to such values as social justice and the dignity and worth of a person (Moore et al., 1998; Moore & Urwin, 1990; Morrow, 2000; Reynolds, 2004). Studies in the United States and Australia have found that the most common reason for termination of a student is related to ethical issues and nonconformity to social work values (Koerin & Miller, 1995; Ryan et al., 1997).

Those who function as gatekeepers have the enormous task of determining the point at which a student's behavior, personal values, or attitudes will not allow for effective social work practice. Thompson (2006) queries whether social work educators must filter out applicants from the start who do not agree with the values of the profession or take time in the university environment to encourage students to analyze their values. Gross (2000) suggests that this is neither a matter of selecting only the students without any prejudice nor countering student opinions so forcefully in the classroom that they hide incongruent attitudes. Rather, he claims that gatekeepers must acknowledge that we *all* have struggles with prejudices and suggests that social work programs provide space for students to consider how their own attitudes and values contribute to oppression and how to manage biased attitudes and values so that they can

practice effectively and ethically (Gross, 2000). There is an inherent risk in teaching students to counter discrimination and oppression, because this requires that students face and transform their own personal values and beliefs that maintain systems of inequality and oppression (Gross, 2000; Sullivan & Johns, 2002). Nevertheless, as Moore and Urwin (1990) state, "Social work education has a responsibility to affect values in the educational process" (p. 114).

Potential Social Psychological Constructs Undergirding Cultural Incongruence

A number of social psychological constructs have potential to correlate with levels of cultural incongruence with social work values. These include constructs that have been linked with support of systems of stratification in general (RWA and SDO), as well as those associated with prejudicial attitudes toward a specific social group (hostile and modern heterosexism). Given that social work is seen as a predominately hierarchy-attenuating discipline, it is logical that increasing levels of cultural incongruence would be associated with increasing levels of each of these constructs.

Right-wing authoritarianism. RWA is an individual-level trait that is characterized by a need for clear-cut distinctions between groups and an understanding of the world that is based on group-based hierarchies and an unequal distribution of power. The construct emerged out of research on the authoritarian personality and its relationship to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988, 1996). Those with higher levels of RWA tend to support policies that maintain

current distributions of power and to think that people who break the rules of the system should be severely punished (Duncan, Peterson, & Ax, 2003). It is correlated with increased levels of racism, stronger adherence to religious doctrine, and expressions of aggression towards out-groups (Peterson & Lane, 2001). Levels of endorsement of RWA among individuals tend to be similar to those of the surrounding environment or workplace (Duncan et al., 2003; Kurpius & Lucart, 2000) and, over time, become increasingly aligned with that culture (Carlson & Sutton, 1974; McNamara, 1967; Peterson & Lane, 2001).

Social dominance orientation. SDO is an individual-level trait that plays a central role in explaining how systems of stratification are maintained (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social dominance theory argues that every complex society is organized by systems of social group-based hierarchies in which at least one social group has dominance over others and at least one group occupies a subordinate position (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The theory suggests that there is variation in the degree to which individuals support group-based hierarchy (SDO), and that SDO plays a direct explanatory role in support for hierarchy-enhancing public policies as well as an indirect explanatory role in various cultural scripts, such as prejudicial attitudes. Empirical evidence suggests, as the theory predicts, that prejudicial attitudes correlate with levels of SDO because they function as a form of ideological justification for group-based dominance (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; van Laar, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Sinclair, 1999). In fact, sexism, nationalism, and various forms of racism have all been

shown to correlate with SDO (Pratto et al., 1994). People in hierarchy-enhancing careers and undergraduate majors have been shown to have higher levels of SDO as well as more prejudicial attitudes (Sidanius et al., 1994; van Laar et al., 1999).

Hostile heterosexism. One form of prejudicial attitudes that continues to be documented among social work and human service practitioners and students is anti-lesbian and anti-gay attitudes (Crisp, 2006; Newman, Dannenfelser, & Benishek, 2002). These attitudes have historically been referred to as homophobia, but more recent prejudice researchers have termed them either *old-fashioned homonegativity* (Morrison & Morrison, 2002) or *hostile heterosexism* (Walls, 2008b); the latter is the term we have chosen to use within the context of this study.

Based on ideologies that pathologize homosexuality, hostile heterosexism has emanated from a number of sources including religious beliefs (homosexuality as immoral and sinful), cultural constructions of hegemonic masculinity (homosexuality as weak and submissive), and natural law (homosexuality as unnatural). Higher levels of hostile heterosexism have been linked to evaluating same-sex couples as less emotionally stable, less able to have strong parenting potential, and less able to provide a caring home to adoptive children than opposite-sex couples (Crawford & Solliday, 1996). Social work practitioners with less than affirmative attitudes may minimize or exaggerate the importance of sexual orientation in their client's life (Messing, Schoenberg, & Stephens, 1984) or devalue lived experiences by changing the topic or cutting short a client's discussions of

sexuality (McHenry & Johnson, 1993). Crisp (2006) has argued that heterosexist attitudes reduce the effectiveness of services and result in inferior treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients.

Modern heterosexism. Modern heterosexism is a less overtly pathologizing, yet still prejudicial, cluster of attitudes toward lesbian women and gay men. The construct has emerged out of modern prejudice theory that is based on the idea that the expression of prejudicial attitudes toward historically marginalized groups changes based on history and social context, particularly in response to the successes of social movements. For example, in the United States, overt expressions of racism, sexism, and heterosexism that were much more prevalent in the recent past have decreased (Bachrach, Hindin, & Thomson, 2000; Farley, 1997; Jones, 1999) and been replaced by forms of prejudice that are much more subtle and covert (McConahay, 1986; Swim, Aiken, Hall, & Hunter, 1995; Walls, 2008a, 2008b). Rather than proclaiming that homosexuality is perverse or sinful, as might be done with hostile heterosexism, modern heterosexists might deploy suggestions that lesbian and gay individuals are militant, demanding too much, too quickly (aversive heterosexism). They might argue that discrimination against the lesbian and gay community is a thing of the past (amnesic heterosexism), or that although they have nothing against gay and lesbian people, they would not want their daughter to be a lesbian because it would make her life more difficult (paternalistic heterosexism). They might also endorse positive stereotypes of the community (positive stereotypic heterosexism).

Method

Participants

The study's participants were incoming graduate students enrolled in a 2-year MSW program in their first quarter in the program. Data were collected during the 3rd and 4th weeks of class to allow new students to acclimate to the environment and get a better sense of the values of social work and the culture of the graduate program. Of the 143 students enrolled, 132 agreed to participate in the study, representing a 92.3% response rate. Eight records were dropped due to missing data on either one of the questions used for construction of the dependent variable or on more than one question per scale for the independent variables. Multiple imputation by chained equations (van Buuren, Boshuizen, & Knook, 1999) was then used to replace missing values in the remaining 18 records that had no more than one missing answer per scale, leaving a usable sample of 124 participants.

Slightly more than 93% ($n=116$) of the sample identified as female, and 9.7% ($n=12$) identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning. In terms of urbanicity, 38.7% ($n=48$) were suburban, 26.6% ($n=33$) were from small cities and towns, 23.4% ($n=29$) were from cities, and 11.3% ($n=14$) were from rural communities. In terms of religion, 21.8% ($n=27$) identified as liberal or mainline Protestant, 21.8% ($n=27$) as secular, 18.6% ($n=23$) as conservative or evangelical Protestant, 16.9% ($n=21$) as other religions, 12.1% ($n=15$) as Catholic, and 8.9% ($n=11$) as Jewish. For undergraduate majors, 40.3% ($n=50$) reported having a psychology degree, either singularly or in combination with another major; 40.3%

($n=50$) reported having a sociology, anthropology, or other social science degree; and the remaining 19.4% ($n=24$) reported having a non-social science degree.

Procedure

The researchers provided information on the general purpose of the study, assured the participants that their answers would be anonymous and their participation voluntary, and provided each potential participant with a project information sheet that had been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. After the project information sheet was reviewed, questionnaires were distributed to every student. Two envelopes were provided, and students were instructed to return either a completed questionnaire or a blank questionnaire (if they chose not to participate) to the first envelope and a completed lottery form to the second envelope for the lottery drawing.

Measures

In addition to demographic questions, the survey included scales to measure the social psychological constructs previously discussed. All scales used have been psychometrically tested to ensure adequate reliability and validity. These scales were the Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (RWA; Altemeyer, 1981, 1988), the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG-S; Herek, 1984, 1988), and the Multi-dimensional Heterosexism Inventory (MHI; Walls, 2008a, 2008b). Cronbach's alphas were .83 (SDO), .91 (RWA), .88 (ATLG-S), .93 (MHI-Aversive), .91 (MHI-Amnestic), .97 (MHI-Paternalistic), and .91 (MHI-Positive Stereo-

typic). All scales used a 7-point Likert scale and were recoded so that higher scores represent greater endorsement of the construct the scale is measuring. In addition, to provide some degree of comparability across scales, final scores calculated for each scale were standardized to a range from 1 to 7 by dividing the total raw score for the summed scale items by the number of items on the scale.

To capture cultural incongruence with social work values and the perceived culture of the graduate social work program, we devised a nine-item scale to tap into potential areas of dissonance. The response set for the nine items was a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. All items were coded such that higher levels of agreement indicated greater levels of cultural incongruence. The items can be found in the appendix. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale in the current sample is .69.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

SDO scores ranged from 1 to 4.69, with a mean of 2.04 ($SD=.64$). Scores ranged from 1.22 to 5.48 for the RWA, with a mean of 2.56 ($SD=.74$). For the ATLG-S, we found scores ranging from 1 to 6, with a mean of 2.01 ($SD=.92$).

Regarding the four subdomains of modern heterosexism, we found participant scores ranging from 1 to 6 on the MHI-Aversive heterosexism subscale, with a mean of 2.14 ($SD=1.11$). For the MHI-Amnestic heterosexism subscale, scores ranged from 1 to 4, with a mean of 1.59 ($SD=.69$). The full range of potential scores—from 1 to 7—was present in

the sample on the paternalistic heterosexism subscale of the MHI, which had a mean of 2.82 ($SD=1.90$). For the last modern heterosexism subscale, measuring positive stereotypic heterosexism, we found a range from 1 to 4.5, with a mean of 2.34 ($SD=1.09$). Finally, with regard to the scale capturing cultural incongruence, scores ranged from 1.25 to 5.25, with a mean of 2.67 ($SD=.76$).

With the exception of the paternalistic heterosexism subscale of the MHI, the ranges of the scales were truncated so that the highest levels of the attitudes were not present in the sample. This is most likely a product of having a sample of social work graduate students among whom one might expect to find scores at the lower ends of the scales given the constructs that the scales examine. While this truncated variability seems logical given the sample, it does pose an issue of statistical power. As such, we anticipate that the tests of significance utilized will be conservative in their results.

Inferential Statistics

To determine whether cultural congruence theory has the ability to differentiate between groups of incoming social work students, we divided the participants into three categories based on their cultural incongruence scores. We identified the 33rd and 66th percentile scores and categorized the participants as either *low incongruence*, *middle incongruence*, or *high incongruence*. This resulted in 45 participants falling into the low incongruence category, 35 into the middle incongruence category, and 44 into the high incongruence category. Using STATA 9.2, we first ran a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to determine

whether statistically significant differences existed among the groups of students on the combination of the dependent variables using the Pillai-Bartlett trace criteria, because it has been shown to be the most robust statistical test against any violations of assumptions (Olson, 1974, 1976; Stevens, 1979). We then ran seven separate one-way analysis of variances (ANOVAs) to determine whether significant differences emerged in the individual variables of interest based on incongruence category. Table 1 summarizes the bivariate correlations among the study's measures, and Table 2 summarizes the findings for the individual ANOVAs. Figure 1 contains graphs for the variables where statistical significance was found.

Multivariate Test of Differences

The multivariate test of differences among the three groups of students based on level of cultural incongruence using the Pillai-Bartlett trace criteria was statistically significant: $F(14, 232)=2.12$; $p=0.01$. Follow-up multivariate comparisons showed that the high incongru-

ence group was significantly different from the average of the low and middle incongruence groups ($F[7, 115]=3.34$; $p=.003$), while the low incongruence group was not significantly different from the average of the middle and high incongruence groups ($F[7, 115]=1.33$; $p=0.24$), nor was the middle incongruence group significantly different from the average of the low and high incongruence groups ($F[7, 115]=1.82$; $p=0.09$). Further, it was determined that the low and middle incongruence groups were not statistically significantly different from one another ($F[7, 115]=1.05$; $p=.40$).

Social Dominance Orientation

Participants who were in the low incongruence category had a mean SDO score of 1.88 ($SD=.53$), those in the middle incongruence category had a mean SDO score of 1.88 ($SD=.54$), and those in the high incongruence category had a mean SDO score of 2.34 ($SD=.72$). ANOVA resulted in an F -score of 8.02, which results in a statistically significant p -value of .0005, and a medium effect size ($\eta^2=0.12$).

TABLE 1. Bivariate Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SDO	1.00						
2. RWA	0.40***	1.00					
3. HH	0.37***	0.65***	1.00				
4. AvH	0.29***	0.67***	0.66***	1.00			
5. AmH	0.24**	0.40***	0.34***	0.41***	1.00		
6. PH	0.20*	0.29**	0.38***	0.20*	0.15*	1.00	
7. PSH	0.22*	0.31***	0.28**	0.32***	0.33***	0.09	1.00

Note. SDO=social dominance orientation; RWA=right-wing authoritarianism; HH=hostile heterosexism; AvH=aversive heterosexism; AmH=amnestic heterosexism; PH=paternalistic heterosexism; PSH=positive stereotypic heterosexism.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$.

TABLE 2. Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations of Social Psychological Constructs Across Levels of Cultural Incongruence

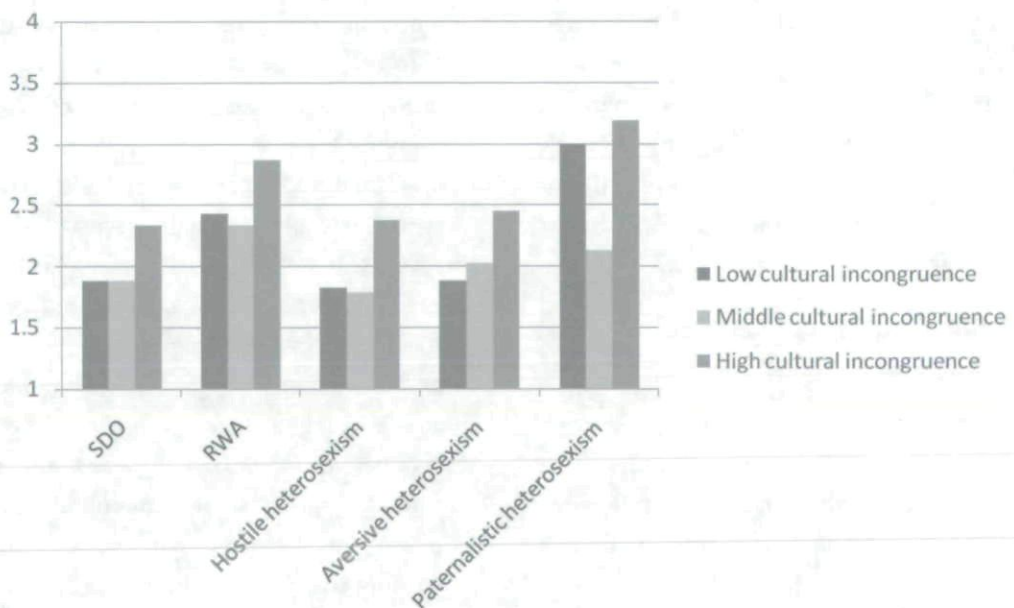
Construct	Low Incongruence		Middle Incongruence		High Incongruence		F-Test	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
SDO ^{a,b}	1.88	0.53	1.88	0.54	2.34	0.72	8.02***	.0005	0.12
RWA ^{a,b}	2.43	0.62	2.34	0.62	2.87	0.83	6.89**	.0015	0.10
HH ^{a,b}	1.82	0.65	1.79	0.62	2.37	1.21	5.63**	.0046	0.09
AvH ^a	1.88	0.94	2.02	0.98	2.45	1.30	3.12*	.0477	0.05
AmH	1.48	0.58	1.51	0.51	1.78	0.86	2.32	.1030	0.04
PHb	3.00	2.00	2.13	1.56	3.19	1.94	3.53*	.0323	0.06
PSH	2.28	1.05	2.24	1.11	2.49	1.13	0.62	.5391	0.01

Note. SDO=social dominance orientation; RWA=right-wing authoritarianism; HH=hostile heterosexism; AvH=aversive heterosexism; AmH=amnesic heterosexism; PHb=paternalistic heterosexism; PSH=positive stereotypic heterosexism.

^aLow incongruence category is significantly different or marginally significantly different from high incongruence category.

^bMiddle incongruence category is significantly different from high incongruence category.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

FIGURE 1. Mean Scores on Scales by Cultural Incongruence Category

The post-hoc Scheffé test indicated that participants in the low incongruence category were not significantly different from participants in the middle incongruence category ($p=1.000$). However, the difference in SDO scores between the low and high incongruence categories as well as between the middle and high incongruence categories were both statistically significant at the .01 level ($p=.002$ and $p=.005$, respectively).

Right-Wing Authoritarianism

The mean score on the RWA for the low cultural incongruence group was 2.43 ($SD=.62$). For the middle category on cultural incongruence we found a mean of 2.34 ($SD=.62$). Finally, for the high cultural incongruence group, the mean was 2.87 ($SD=.83$). We obtained an F -score of 6.89 ($p=.002$), which indicates statistical significance, with $\eta^2=0.10$ indicating a medium effect size.

Again, examining the post-hoc Scheffé test, we found the same pattern that emerged with the SDO scale. The low cultural incongruence category was not significantly different from the middle cultural incongruence category ($p=.829$), but both the low and middle categories were significantly different from the high cultural incongruence category ($p=.015$ and $p=.004$, respectively).

Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men

The pattern that emerged in the mean scores on the ATLG-S for participants in the differing categories of cultural incongruence followed a pattern similar to that found with both the SDO and RWA scores in which the low and middle cultural incongruence category means are sim-

ilar, while the high cultural incongruence category is significantly higher. For participants in the low incongruence category the mean was 1.82 ($SD=.65$), for those in the middle incongruence category the mean was 1.79 ($SD=.62$), and for those in the high incongruence category the mean was 2.37 ($SD=1.21$). ANOVA produced a score of 5.63 ($p=.005$), which is statistically significant. The effect size is medium ($\eta^2=0.09$).

Again, similar to the previously identified pattern, the Scheffé tests indicated that those in the low and middle cultural incongruence categories were not significantly different from one another ($p=.989$), while they were both significantly different from those in the high cultural incongruence category ($p=.017$ and $p=.019$, respectively).

Aversive Heterosexism

On the MHI-Aversive subscale, we found increasing mean scores by category. The means were 1.88 ($SD=.944$), 2.02 ($SD=.98$), and 2.45 ($SD=1.30$) for the low, middle, and high incongruence categories, respectively. The ANOVA F -score of 3.12 ($p=.048$) indicates statistically significant differences in aversive heterosexism among the participants in the three categories of cultural incongruence ($p=.048$), with an $\eta^2=0.05$, denoting a small effect size. Unlike the prior scales, however, the Scheffé test indicates that not only are the low and middle categories not statistically significantly different from one another ($p=.707$), but neither are the middle and high categories ($p=.336$). The difference between the mean of the low and high cultural incongruence categories almost reaches a level of statistical significance ($p=.051$), suggesting that it is this difference that drives the significance found in the ANOVA.

Amnestic Heterosexism

For the MHI-Amnestic subscale, we found that for participants in the low incongruence category the mean score was 1.48 ($SD=.58$), for those in the middle incongruence category the mean was 1.51 ($SD=.51$), and for those in the high incongruence category the mean was 1.78 ($SD=.86$). The ANOVA test indicates no statistically significant difference in the amnestic heterosexism scores across incongruence categories.

Paternalistic Heterosexism

For the third domain of modern heterosexism, using the MHI-Paternalistic subscale, the means were 3.00 ($SD=2.00$), 2.13 ($SD=1.56$), and 3.19 ($SD=1.94$) for the low incongruence, middle incongruence, and high incongruence categories, respectively. The F -score of 3.53 on the ANOVA indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores among the three categories, with a medium effect size ($\eta^2=0.06$). In a pattern very different from the previously identified patterns, we find that the low cultural incongruence category is not statistically significantly different from either the middle or high cultural incongruence categories ($p=.115$ and $p=.895$, respectively). However, the middle cultural incongruence category mean is significantly different from that of the high cultural incongruence category ($p=.045$).

Positive Stereotypic Heterosexism

In our final test of difference with the MHI-Positive Stereotypic, we found means of 2.28 ($SD=1.05$), 2.24 ($SD=1.11$), and 2.49 ($SD=1.13$) for the low, middle, and high incongruence

categories, respectively. These differences are not statistically significant ($F=0.62$, $p=.539$).

Discussion and Implications

Person-organization congruence has been shown in the literature to be a valuable predictor of success within organizations and within undergraduate majors, with some scholars arguing that a match between personal and organizational values and political attitudes is beneficial both to the individual and to the organization. In this study, we examined whether differing levels of cultural incongruence with social work values and the perceived culture of a graduate school of social work program was associated with differences in SDO, RWA, hostile heterosexism, and four subdomains of modern heterosexism, in both the multivariate context and individually. The linear combination tested in the MANOVA was statistically significant, and of the constructs explored individually, five of the seven examined were significantly associated with the differing levels of cultural incongruence.

No significant differences were found among the groups in terms of amnestic heterosexism or positive stereotypic heterosexism. This suggests that incoming graduate students who report the greatest level of personal incongruence with the values of social work were no more or less likely to deny the discrimination against lesbian and gay people (amnestic heterosexism) nor endorse positive stereotypes of gay and lesbian people (positive stereotypic heterosexism) than those who perceive the greatest congruence.

However, significant differences did emerge among the groups on SDO, RWA, hostile heterosexism, aversive heterosexism, and

paternalistic heterosexism. The patterns that emerged in the data among the three groups were very similar with the exception of the pattern of paternalistic heterosexism. The general pattern suggests that individuals who experienced a low level of cultural incongruence were not significantly different from those who were in the middle category of cultural incongruence, but both were significantly different from those who were in the highest category.

The data suggest that students in the higher cultural incongruence category are significantly more likely to endorse a hierarchical view of the world whereby certain groups deserve to have more power and access to resources than other groups (social dominance). They are more likely to have a stronger tendency toward authoritarian attitudes (RWA), which includes submission to authority, aggression toward those who are disliked by those in authority, and a strong sense of conventionalism. Finally, they are likely to endorse more discriminatory attitudes toward lesbian women and gay men—those attitudes based in traditional notions that homosexuality is perverse and immoral (hostile heterosexism), as well as those based in the idea that lesbian women and gay men are too militant and too demanding of equal rights (aversive heterosexism).

The unique pattern that emerged in the data relates to paternalistic heterosexism. In this case, those who were at the middle level of cultural incongruence had the lowest levels of paternalistic heterosexism. It is important to remember that the questions capturing this domain are couched in such a way so that higher endorsement indicates that the respon-

dent would prefer his or her child not to be gay or lesbian combined with a justification that his or her child would experience some type of *unfair* disadvantage. While the pattern does not mirror the stair step effect of increasing means with each level of increase in cultural incongruence, as found in the other variables, the mean of paternalistic heterosexism for the middle level of cultural incongruence is not significantly different from the mean of the low level of cultural incongruence, while it is significantly different from the mean of the high level of cultural incongruence category.

It is difficult to surmise why this pattern deviates from the other patterns in the data, and it deserves closer examination in future research. It could be that those in the low cultural incongruence category are focusing on the unfairness indicated in the question, while those in the high cultural incongruence category are finding the idea of having a gay or lesbian child problematic, leading to each group arriving at similar responses, although through different motivations. However, without additional data, this is merely a supposition.

Another issue raised by the patterns in the data concerns the lack of statistically significant difference between those in the low cultural incongruence category and those in the middle cultural incongruence category. If the cultural incongruence difference between the two groups is not correlated with SDO, RWA, or different types of heterosexism, then what is at the root of the difference? What attitudes, beliefs, or experiences might be associated with why one person experiences a midrange level of cultural incongruence whereas another experiences a low level?

A few limitations are worth noting that restrict the generalizability of our findings. First, the study was conducted within the context of only one graduate school of social work. Although we had excellent response rates, it is unclear whether the patterns identified herein might hold for other graduate schools or for undergraduate programs. The program where the study was conducted may differ in important ways from typical graduate programs, particularly given that we might anticipate that different programs have their own unique cultures. In the future, researchers may want to replicate the study using multiple social work programs to address this limitation.

Second, the scale constructed to capture cultural incongruence with social work values and graduate social work school culture has not been empirically tested and validated, and the Cronbach's alpha for the sample was slightly lower than would be desired. However, given that we could not find an existing scale that captured levels of cultural incongruence with social work values and the culture of social work graduate programs, we decided to construct a multiple-indicator scale rather than rely on a single-item measure, given the inherent disadvantages of using single-item measures.

Finally, other measures of social psychological constructs that might also relate to cultural incongruence, including other forms of prejudicial attitudes—whether old-fashioned or modern—were not included. Possibilities for more general constructs include those from system justification theory, just-world theory, and social identity theory, all of which may shed

more light on cultural incongruence among incoming social work graduate students.

Although this study provides additional evidence that person-organization congruence theory can help differentiate among a set of social psychological attitudes among incoming social work graduate students, the question remains: How might schools of social work use this information? For students who are experiencing a clash with social work values and what they perceive as the culture of the graduate school, our findings suggest that attitudes about stratification in general or more specifically about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people may be correlated with this incongruence. Educational resources addressing power, oppression, and privilege, as well as information about and experiences with the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community, may address the source of these issues if they spring from lack of knowledge and exposure. Providing mentoring by social workers who have successfully negotiated these value conflicts may additionally be helpful. Keeping students engaged who are in the process of discernment is critical to ensure that the sources of dissonance do not go "underground," where they are not examined, problematized, and challenged (see Gross, 2000).

Although the data available do not allow us to discern whether the experience of incongruence emerged for students because their personally held values were in direct conflict with social work values, because of the way in which the social work program responded to their expression of those values, or both, the existence of incongruence among a segment of

incoming students can be seen as an opportunity for schools of social work to engage in critical self-reflection on the culture of our educational programs. As part of our ongoing commitment to improvement, we might want to assess whether we have built and support cultures in social work programs—intentionally or unintentionally—where hegemony rules. Do we encourage critical thinking across the spectrum of ideas, always challenging ourselves to assess how those ideas support and build on social work values or how they conflict with the discipline's values? For example, do we fail to challenge comments that are inappropriate when those comments target privileged rather than marginalized groups? As researchers and educators, the authors are very clear that faculty also frequently fail to interrupt and challenge inappropriate comments that target marginalized groups (Goodman, 2000) and that these comments—in our experience—happen much more frequently. However, our question is: Are jokes or off-hand comments that target privileged groups, such as men, evangelical Christians, or Republicans, not viewed as problematic and therefore are not examined or challenged?

We are not suggesting that privilege statuses and political ideologies not be critiqued and examined—we think they absolutely must be if we, as a profession, are committed to the values of social justice, because these ideologies can play a major role in maintaining the oppression of different social groups. Nor are we ignoring that, even if inappropriate, male-bashing comments are qualitatively different from female-bashing comments because of power and social location. We are, rather, sug-

gesting that the failure to interrupt such comments can contribute to perceptions that being a social worker requires compliance to a certain ideology that allows denigration of certain privileged identities—identities that are potentially important to some social work students and clients. Grappling with the complexity of these types of comments can be an important part of the educational experience for social work graduate students and should be a central part of the ongoing dialogue regarding power, privilege, and oppression.

It should also be remembered that this project examined students shortly after they started their 2-year journey toward getting an MSW. We anticipate, and the literature suggests (Dambrun, Guimond, & Duarte, 2002; Guimond & Palmer, 1996), that students at the end of their educational journey will (and should) look very differently in terms of the attitudes that we examined in this study. Future research needs to examine whether such a shift occurs among social work graduate students and, if so, what undergirds these shifts across the educational experience. For example, do we find a decrease in social dominance attitudes that might explain how graduate social work education fosters increased congruence with social work values? Do we find an increase in knowledge about structural and macrolevel influences that impact how students come to understand the world around them? Does field education decrease fear and anxiety about populations that experience social problems, or does it make the reality of the lived experience of poverty or homelessness or domestic violence more complex, thereby challenging simplistic and prejudicial explanations?

Much work needs to be done to explore how schools of social work can best produce practitioners who are proficient and who practice in a manner that aligns with the ethics and values of social work. Given that most of the client systems with whom social workers engage experience vulnerability and oppression, it is critical that practitioners live up to the call to challenge both that marginalization and the role that our profession plays in supporting systems of stratification. The better that schools of social work understand how the process of change occurs and what undergirds that change, the better prepared we will be to meet our ethical obligations to produce culturally competent practitioners.

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Kristie L. Seelman is a doctoral student at the University of Denver. **N. Eugene Walls** is assistant professor at the University of Denver.

Address correspondence to Kristie L. Seelman, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver, 2148 S. High St., Denver, CO 80208; e-mail: kristie.seelman@du.edu.

Appendix

Cultural Incongruence Scale

1. I sometimes struggle to accommodate both my personal beliefs and the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. My opinions and values often conflict with the "mainstream" culture of [name of graduate social work program].
3. The majority of students I have met at [graduate social work program] have attitudes and beliefs that are similar to my own.
4. I agree with the statement that "Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability."
5. The majority of students I have met at [graduate social work program] are intolerant of beliefs with which they disagree.
6. It is better to keep my opinion to myself when I know that most others at [graduate social work program] will disagree with me.
7. There is a lot of support for differences in opinions and beliefs at [graduate social work program].
8. The majority of professors I have met at [graduate social work program] are intolerant of beliefs with which they disagree.
9. Disagreement is encouraged in [graduate social work program] classrooms.

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