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Chapter 3

Religion and Gay Rights Activism Among Social Work Students

Eric Swank, PhD, and Breanne Fahs, PhD

Eliminating heterosexist discrimination is an explicit goal of professional social work organizations. For example, the 2008 revised Code of Ethics for the National Association of Social Workers states, "Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any… sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression" (NASW, 2008, section 6.04d). Although ending discrimination has many aspects, a crucial part is the promotion of "social justice and social change with and on the behalf of clients… [through] direct practice, community organizing, social and political activism" (NASW, Code of Ethics preamble).

The empirical literature of how often and why social workers engage in community and political activism for lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) rights is sparse and underdeveloped (see Swank & Fahs, 2013). Instead, studies of social workers have focused mostly on how sexual prejudice is formed (Andrews, 1998; Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Snively, Krueger, Stretch, Watt, & Chandha, 2004) or how sexual prejudice impedes competent and affirmative practice with sexual minorities (Crisp, 2007; Liddle, 1999; Mullins, 2012; Ryan, 2000). Chapters in the book, and a plethora of other studies, have outlined the links between religiosity and greater homophobia among individuals (Dessel, Woodford, & Gutiérrez, 2012; Swank & Raiz, 2007). Although it seems logical to assume these patterns will spill over into the political behaviors of citizens, studies on LGB activism have mostly overlooked the role of religion in predicting LGB activism in individuals (e.g., Fingerhut, 2011; Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Montgomery & Stewart, 2012; Swank &

Fahs, 2012; Waldner, 2001). Ignoring possible links between religion and LGB activism seems shortsighted and unwise. Some religious traditions lessen the general political participation of their adherents as they tell their followers to abstain from the tainted world of secular politics (Smidt, 1999). Moreover, when religious groups enter the world of sexual and gender politics, they almost always align with the conservative side of the debate (Layman, 1997; Maxwell, 2002; Peterson, 1992; Wald & Calhoun-Brown, 2007). In the realm of LGB politics, religious leaders often proselytize against homosexuality before granting large donations to advocacy groups that oppose "same-sex marriages" or "gays in the military" (Fetner, 2008; Fisher & Tarmakin, 2011; Stone, 2011).

In thinking that religious factors should sway political activism, this quantitative study asks the following question: How do religious factors influence the likelihood of a social work student joining the gay and lesbian rights movement?

Literature Review

Social movements are collective efforts that use both insider and outsider tactics to force change in reluctant opponents. Insider tactics focus on the electoral approaches of voting, campaign contributions, or petition drives, whereas outsider tactics include the direct action means of protesting and various kinds of civil disobedience. New social movements, such as the LGB movement, use both types of tactics when they focus on the "politics of recognition" and "politics of redistribution" (Bernstein, 1997; Fraser, 1995). By prioritizing the politics of recognition, segments of the LGB rights movement want to challenge and eliminate detrimental social customs. When confronting heteronormative thoughts and actions, segments of the LGB rights movement want to break the veil of silence, normalize same-sex relationships, and deconstruct the justifications of heterosexism and compulsory heterosexuality, among other things. The instrumental and redistribution wings of the LGB rights movement center on improving laws, policies, and regulations. This "state-centered" approach emphasizes the expansion of rights, statuary protections, and proper government spending through the use of insider and outsider political tactics.

Political Framing, Individual Consciousness, and LGB activism

Most social customs create and reinforce heterosexual privilege. The superiority of heterosexuals is often deemed normal, natural, or divinely inspired, whereas sexual minorities are routinely dismissed as being weird, perverted, and immoral. This degradation of sexual diversity reifies heterosexual advantages and demeans the efforts of gender rebels. Accordingly, studies have concluded that sexual minorities who hid their sexual identities and criticized homosexuality were less inclined to join political protests (Swank & Fahs, 2011; Taylor, Kimport, Van Dyke, & Andersen, 2009).

Although traditional ideologies often condone heterosexual privilege, other worldviews challenge the fairness of conventional practices. Certain social justice frames motivate liberal activism as they condemn heterosexist biases as being mean or unjust. Previous studies have linked these injustice frames to LGB activism. Heterosexuals who protest for LBT rights often recognize heterosexist discrimination (Goldstein & Davis, 2010; Swank & Fahs, 2012), worry about heterosexual privileges (Montgomery & Stewart, 2012), and have positive attitudes toward sexual minorities (Fingerhut, 2011). Likewise, graduate social work students who doubt the justness of society are more likely to advocate on the behalf of sexual minorities (Morrison Van Voorhis & Hoestetter, 2006; Van Soest, 1996). Political activism also increases when gays and lesbians consider current laws as being heterosexist (Russell & Richards, 2003) or they have personally experienced heterosexist discrimination (Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Hyers, 2007; Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Waldner, 2001).

Religion, Political Framing, and LGBT Activism

Most religious beliefs characterize heteronormativity as righteous, natural, and godly (Layman, 1997; Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). In religious sermons homosexuality is often called a sin or crime against God, the moral standards of homosexuals are questioned, and the Book of Leviticus calls homosexual acts between men an abomination. On top of spreading such messages to their own followers, many religious organizations enter political realms as they support advocacy groups that fight against a so-called gay agenda that threatens

the moral fabric of schools, families, the media, the minds of children, and so on (Miceli, 2004; Soule, 2004).

Religiosity, or the degree to which people are involved in religions, is routinely associated with higher levels of sexual prejudice against gays and lesbians (Haider-Markel & Joselyn, 2008). Studies of the general public connect religious fundamentalism to homonegativity (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Wood & Bartkowski, 2004) and belonging to a conservative religious denomination (Herek & Glunt, 1993). Studies of employed social workers, as well as social work faculty and students, have also linked many religious factors to negative attitudes toward sexual minorities (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Cluse-Tolar, Lambert, Ventura, & Pasupuleti, 2004; Dessel et al., 2012; Newman, Dannenflesr, & Benishek, 2002; Ryan, 2000). Moreover, a recent meta-analysis of 61 studies concluded that opposition to homosexuality is associated with "greater attendance at religious events and the acceptance of fundamentalist or 'orthodox' religious identities" (Whitely, 2009, p. 26).

Religious beliefs can also guide everyday interactions with sexual minorities. Studies of young adults suggest that heterosexual teenagers are more likely to physically assault gays and lesbians when they think their religion condones such actions (Franklin, 2000), and fundamentalist college students are more likely than seculars to make antigay jokes, derisively call someone a fag, and threaten someone because of their sexual orientation (Schope & Eliason, 2000).

Religiosity can also influence the political actions of groups and individuals (Layman, 1997). Aggregated studies on social policies suggest that states with larger percentages of megachurches or religious-based advocacy groups pass antigay referendums more often than states that lack these organizations (Fleischmann & Moyer, 2009; Soule, 2004; Wald, Button, & Rienzo, 1996). Likewise, cities with high percentages of self-identified Mormons and fundamentalist and evangelical Christians are more likely to pass laws that prohibit same-sex marriage (Camp, 2008; Fleischmann & Moyer, 2009) and civil right protections for sexual minorities (McCann, 2011; Wald, Button, & Rienzo, 1996). Studies on individual voting practices echo the same patterns. For example, people who routinely attend religious services and consider themselves fundamentalist or born again are more likely to vote for referendums

against same-sex marriage (Barth, Overby, & Huffmon, 2009; Brewer, 2003; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; Olson, Cadge, & Harrison, 2006).

The absence of strong religious ties seems to increase LGB activism. Two studies noted that AIDS activists in the 1980s rarely attended religious services (Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003), and LGBT ally groups seem to have a high level of agnostics and atheists among their heterosexual members (Goldstein & Davis, 2010). Likewise the act of leaving the religion of one's parents seems to inspire greater LGB activism among teenagers and adults (Lewis, Rogers, & Sherrill, 2011; Russell & Richards, 2003).

Other Predictors of LGB Activism

Based on prior work, we include a number of potentially important controls. The resource model assumes that class and gender hierarchies are fundamental to political inclinations and activism (Brady, Verba, & Scholzman, 1995). In the simplest terms, a person's class and gender locations grant or impede access to financial resources that make political participation easier. In support of these claims, some studies concluded that educational attainment increases activism among sexual minorities (Elbaz, 1996; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003; Swank & Fahs, 2011) and the tendency to become heterosexual LGBT allies (Fingerhut, 2011). Matters of income and occupational status show inconsistent results for LGB activism, but some studies suggest that higher-income gays and lesbians attended more demonstrations for gay rights (Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Lombardi, 1999; Taylor et al., 2009). The relationship between gender identities and LGB activism is far from settled. Lesbians and gays often report similar levels of political participation (Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003; Swank & Fahs, 2011; Taylor et al., 2009; Waldner, 2001), but one study argued that gay men attend more protests than lesbians (Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010). Finally, gender could have an inverse relationship for heterosexuals because heterosexual women more often joined an LGBT support group than did heterosexual men (Fingerhut, 2011).

These previous studies lead to the main hypothesis of this chapter: Greater religiosity lessens LGB activism among social work students. Although we

assume that religion inherently suppresses LGB activism, we also investigate the issue of spurious variables. That is, we investigate whether apparent links between religiosity and LGB activism are actually driven by some crucial third factor (the recognition of heterosexism or the student's income, gender, or educational attainment).

Methods

Sample

This study drew on the impressions of 159 BSW students in the United States. To establish a stratified sample, this study selected respondents through two channels. By seeking a pool of fully engaged student activists, the lead researcher distributed surveys at several college-based protests throughout the Midwest and South (Indiana University, Ohio State University, University of Kentucky). These protests occurred from winter 2001 through spring 2002, and 37 participants suggested that they were undergraduate social work students.

To create a comparison group with fewer activists, this study also distributed surveys to students who attended 12 colleges throughout the United States in the fall of 2000. In doing so, we initially separated all public campuses into research, doctoral, master's, or baccalaureate clusters (using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education). This creation of four clusters enabled access to students from many sorts of colleges, including large research campuses and smaller, state-run commuter colleges. Next, three schools were randomly selected from each of the four clusters.[1]

After selecting these 12 colleges, we contacted faculty from each institution (via e-mail). Professors in the natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and business were asked to administer surveys in their classrooms, because student attitudes have previously differed between such majors (Astin, 1993). Four of these professors taught in BSW programs, and these four provided surveys of 122 social work students.[2]

In total, 159 BSW students provided fully completed surveys. As expected, this sample had a higher proportion of women (89.3%). The racial breakdown seemed to mirror that of many public institutions, with 85% European

American, 7% African American, 5% Latino(a), and less than 1% Native or Asian American participants. Likewise, the age pyramid conformed to familiar trends, with a mean age of 26.4 years, and 48% of the students were between 18 and 22 years old (standard deviation was 9.5 years, and the mode was 22 years). Finally, the social class composition of the sample was slightly skewed toward lower-middle incomes. Twenty-seven percent of the students reported a family income of less than $20,000 a year, another 28% had incomes between $21,000 and $40,000, 40% had incomes of $41,000 to $80,000, and 15% had family incomes above $81,000.

Measures

LGB ACTIVISM

Measurement of LGB activism was based on a political activities approach. Respondents were given a checklist of many different ways to be politically active (Barnes & Kaase, 1979). Five of the behaviors in this study addressed electoral means of influencing government policies (e.g., making financial contributions to elected officials, writing a letter to a politician, signing a petition, handing out political fliers, and volunteering for a political group), and four items dealt with more unconventional and confrontational tactics (going to a legal demonstration, engaging in civil disobedience, picketing a building, and protesting another group). Students were also asked about the political causes that motivated such actions. If the student indicated engagement in any of these political actions for gay or lesbian rights or AIDS issues, he or she was deemed an LGB rights activist (coded as activist = 1, not activist = 0). In total, 25 of the 159 students indicated that they had engaged in either electoral or protest activities on the behalf of LGB rights or AIDS issues (20 of these 25 LGB activist students came from the sample of political demonstrations, and 5 belonged to the sample of students who were selected through the classroom settings).

RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Different aspects of religiosity were addressed by three independent variables. To test routine involvement in religious ceremonies and religious attendance, we asked, "How often do you attend religious services?" using

a four-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*almost weekly*). Approval of Christian orthodoxy was addressed through biblical literalism. In tracing the notion that the Bible was written by God and contains inerrant truths, we asked, "What is your opinion about the Bible?" (Sherkat & Ellison, 1997). Participants who checked the answer "The Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally word for word" were coded as literalists, and other answers were coded as nonliteralists (other answers were "The Bible was inspired by God, but must be interpreted by humans," "The Bible has some wise ideas, but it was written by humans," or "The Bible was written by humans and does not have important ideas"). Because religious right groups such as Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, and the Christian Coalition are central to antigay social movements (Camp, 2008; Fisher & Tamarkin, 2011), we crafted a 5-point Likert scale item that claimed, "The actions of the Christian Coalition improve our society." Circling 5 (*strongly agree*) indicated a high degree of liking the Christian Coalition.

CONTROL VARIABLES

The injustice frame dealt with issues of "modern heterosexism" (Morrison & Morrison, 2002), the form of sexual prejudice that fails to recognize discrimination and denies heterosexism: "Too often heterosexuals are unfairly accused of being homophobic" (5=*strongly agree*). For gender, respondents were asked, "What is your sex?" (1=*female*, 0=*male*). Social class was determined through a family income scale (there were 10 categories that started at *under $10,000* and ended with *above $151,000*). For educational attainment, students were asked, "Please indicate your highest level of education." Undergraduates who said they were first-year students received a 1, and seniors were given a 4.

Analytical Plan

To assess the relative strength of the three religious factors, Table 1 displays the results of six logistic regressions. In using a hierarchical approach to hypothesis testing, Models 1, 3, and 5 limit themselves to only one of the religious independent variables (religious attendance, biblical literalism, or liking the

Table 1. Binary Logistic Regressions for Religious Variables, Controls, and Participation in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Rights Activism Among Social Work Students (*N* = 159)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	B	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*
Religious attendance	−.08	(.02)	−.25***	−.06	(.02)	−.17**						
Biblical literalism							−.11	(.03)	−.24***	−.08	(.03)	−.16*
Like Christian Coalition										−.11	(.02)	−.31***
Coalition controls												
Education			−.16	(.04)	−.27***		.16	(.04)	.27***	.15	(.04)	.26***
Income			−.02	(.01)	−.11		−.02	(.01)	−.12	−.02	(.01)	−.12
Female			.02	(.06)	.02		.01	(.06)	.01	.01	(.06)	.02
Deny heterosexism			−.08	(.05)	−.20**		−.07	(.05)	−.19*	−.06	(.05)	−.14*

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

Christian Coalition). These three calculations give insights into the bivariate associations between LGB activism and different characteristics of religiosity. Models 2, 4, and 6 test the role of each religious factor after four control variables are held constant (education, income, gender, and perception of heterosexist discrimination). These controls are used to determine whether links between religious predictors and LGB activism remain strong after possible spurious variables are entered into the formulas. As expected, the sample met all the assumptions to run these statistics (a dichotomous outcome variable, constant variance, independence, and normal distributions). With a pairwise treatment of missing data, any person who failed to answer an item was automatically removed from the regressions in this study.

Religious factors worked as expected, as they significantly reduced LGB activism in each regression (see Table 1). In bivariate conditions religious attendance, biblical literalism, and liking the Christian Coalition each displayed significant negative coefficients (β ranged from –.31 to –.25). Moreover, every religious factor remained significant even after the control factors were integrated. Net the effects of the other factors, liking the Christian Coalition provided the strongest multivariate association (β=–.25, $p < .01$), but religious attendance and biblical literalism offered almost identical scores (β=–.16 or –.17, $p < .05$).

The control variables themselves had mixed results. Regardless of religiosity factors, greater educational attainment was related to increased LGB activism (β=.27 or .26, $p<.001$), and the denial of homophobia was related to decreased activism (β=.08 to .06, $p<.05$). Issues of income and gender did not add any significant associations to the regressions.

Discussion

This study offers a unique look into LGB activism among social work students. By exploring possible antecedents to gay rights activism, our analysis focused on religious predictors of LGB activism. In taking a comprehensive approach to religiosity, we explored the relative importance of three religious beliefs and practices (religious attendance, biblical literalism, and respecting the Christian Coalition). After exploring bivariate associations of religious

factors with LGB activism, we tried to determine whether the restrictive role of religion resulted from other extraneous variables. To address this issue, we introduced four control variables into a hierarchical regression.

Every facet of religion predicted lesser progay activism. Respecting the Christian Coalitions displayed the strongest inverse relationship with LGB activism, but religious attendance and biblical literalism were also related to lessened LGB activism. Moreover, the adverse effects of each religious variable remained constant after other predictors of LGB activism were accounted for. These findings suggest several key points. First, conservative religious beliefs seem antithetical to LGB activism among social work students (be it embracing fundamentalist religious tenets or respecting the political groups of far-right religious leaders). Second, regular attendance in religion events predicted lesser LGB activism. This suggests that LGB activism may be discouraged when students join many strands of America's major religions. Unfortunately without measures of religious affiliations it is impossible to know which sorts of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam are most antithetical to LGB activism. Third, these findings suggest that religious beliefs and practices are entrenched values that cannot be easily undone by a general social work education. In fact, these religious factors are so potent that they remain significant even after students have completed several social work classes and recognize the existence of heterosexual privilege.

Two of the control variables also showed significant associations. With greater educational attainment being the strongest variable in the regressions, activism was more common among secular and religious students who have completed more classes. Although this bodes well for the general social work curriculum, it is unclear whether the liberalizing effects of education are caused by effective classroom interventions or issues of self-selection and retention (conservative and less politically active students may leave social work at higher rates during their junior or senior years in college). This study also suggests that classes must try to give a reason to do activism. Because the denial of heterosexism was significant, social work classes must help students recognize the sexuality biases that are built into the institutional practices of the United States and elsewhere.

Strengths and Limitations

This study offers some theoretical and methodological contributions to the existing literature. Most research on sexuality issues among social workers has been at the attitudinal level of sexual prejudice, but this study offers unique insights into challenging heterosexism through political behaviors. By having three measures of religiosity, we increased the content validity of the study (e.g., it addresses many domains of the religiosity construct). Moreover, this research design reveals that religion in general stifles LGB activism (rather than simply conservative religious beliefs). Our implementation of a stratified sample allowed us to compare students who did and did not join the LGB rights movement. This juxtaposition of activist and bystander qualities allowed greater specification of the motivations behind LGB rights activism. Finally, our sample of students from different colleges throughout the nation is more representative than the typical choice of studying a single campus.

Research designs can also play havoc with the accuracy and generalizability of research findings. Cross sectional studies lack the necessary conditions of causation, and it is possible that students may leave a religious organization after they become LGBT activists. Several research decisions could have undermined this study's external validity. First, the addition of different control variables could have altered the effect of the religious variables. It is possible that these religious factors could have lost their direct significance if we added different controls into the study, such as a sense of political efficacy (Ritter, 2008; Swank & Fahs, 2011), feeling emotionally closer to sexual minorities (Sturmer & Simon, 2004), being committed to social justice (Fingerhut, 2011; Hyers, 2007), or having greater contact with LGB activists (Lombardi, 1999; Swank & Fahs, 2011; Waldner, 2001). Second, omission of a sexual identity variable can be problematic. It is possible that religious factors could have different effects for heterosexual and sexual minority populations. Third, the small sample size can lead to Type II errors in hypothesis testing. However, even with a small sample every religious factor maintained its statistical significance. Fourth, the small number of men in the sample could have led us to underestimate the importance of gender in LGB activism. Fifth, measurement errors regularly haunt survey items. It is possible that we could have overlooked

a dimension of religiosity that does not hinder LGB activism among social work students (perhaps prayer rituals, denominational differences, belonging to gay-affirming congregations, or having a quest or intrinsic orientation). Lastly, the role of education could have been larger if we measured for the type of content and assignments in each college classroom.

Implications for Social Work Education

This chapter can inform social work education in several ways. Faculty must rid themselves of their own homophobia (Dessel et al., 2012) before they recognize that LGB rights activism can lead to less discriminatory laws and ordinances (Kane, 2003; Soule, 2004). After achieving this goal, social work educators should try to motivate activism by revealing the discriminatory and exploitive nature of many U.S. institutions (e.g., systematic sexism, racism, classism, heteronormativity, ageism). This content is important because students are generally more politically active after they are exposed to a class on heterosexism (Stake & Hoffman, 2001), homophobia (van Soest, 1996), intergroup dialogue (Dessel, Woodford, & Warren, 2011), or any form of oppression (Beaumont, Colby, Ehrlich, & Torney-Purta, 2006; Morrison Van Voorhis & Hoestetter, 2006; Rocha, 2000). Moreover, educators should develop assignments and exercises that offer opportunities in advocacy practice. Some of these assignments can be classroom experiences of speaking at a mock congressional hearing, developing an imaginary media campaign, or planning a community meeting (Keller, Whittaker, & Burke, 2001). Equally important, students should be given an opportunity to have firsthand experiences in meeting government officials, attending political meetings, talking with seasoned activists, knocking on doors, chanting at protests, or doing some grassroots fundraising (Haynes & Mickelson, 1997). In fact, some studies argue that political activism among students increases after colleges offer policy practice experiences outside of the classroom (Anderson & Harris, 2005; Rocha, 2000).

Social work educators should also be involved with the LGB rights movement. In their personal and professional lives faculty members should attend gay pride events, write op-eds to newspapers, and make financial contributions

to LGB advocacy groups. On campus they should publicize and offer support to student ally groups and try to improve the campus climate for students, faculty, and staff. Social work programs can also augment their policy classes by providing more classes on social action, connecting students to issue-based advocacy groups, and offering greater access to political field practicum placements (Wolk, Pray, Weismiller, & Dempsey, 1996, estimated that less than 20% of BSW programs offer field practice in electoral politics and policy advocacy). Although these suggestions will not convert every student into a full-fledged activist, such efforts will probably lessen the widespread complaint that social work programs inadequately prepare students for policy practice (Ritter, 2008; Wolk et al., 1996).

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Notes

1 Research schools: University of Delaware, University of Oregon, University of Texas; Doctoral: University of North Carolina–Greensboro, University of Massachusetts–Lowell, Rutgers; Master's: Longwood College, University of Southern Maine, University of Wisconsin–Green Bay; Baccalaureate: Evergreen State College, Mesa State College, Southeast Arkansas College.

2 Clearly this response rate was neither high nor random. Professors who never read e-mail automatically removed themselves from the sample, and the willingness to distribute the surveys was not consistent between schools and disciplines. Of the sample of all professors, about 2% of the research professors distributed surveys, whereas 13% of professors at master's-granting universities did so. Likewise, less than 1% of chemistry, biology, and physics professors assisted in this project, whereas professors in political science, sociology, and social work were most receptive to our requests (11%). Of the social work professors who distributed surveys, all of them taught research or policy classes.

Chapter 4

Incongruence With Social Work Values and Culture Among Evangelical Students: The Mediating Role of Group-Based Dominance

N. Eugene Walls, MSSW, PhD, and Kristie Seelman, MSW, PhD

The role of religion is paradoxical. It makes prejudice and it unmakes prejudice. (Allport, 1954, p. 444)

Teaching about religion in social work programs is viewed as a difficult topic fraught with tension and anxiety (Coholic, 2003), but when content about religion is not integrated into the curriculum, social work practitioners have little guidance on how to manage their own personal religious beliefs in the context of social work values in practice (Canda, Nakashima, & Furman, 2004). Given that religious values may influence how one perceives gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and even mental health (Duriez & Hutsebaut, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004) and play a role in the social worker's ability to be authentic with a client and provide positive regard (Laythe, Finkel, Bringle, & Kirkpatrick, 2002), this oversight is problematic.

In this study we examine a number of social psychological constructs related to attitudes about social stratification to determine whether these constructs are associated with higher levels of cultural incongruence, that is, conflict between one's personal values and the perceived culture and values of a profession, in this case social work (Seelman & Walls, 2010). We then test whether, among these same constructs, the ones that are significant actually mediate the relationship between religious identity (evangelical Christian) and cultural incongruence with social work values and the perceived culture of a social work program.