



All Theses and Dissertations

2017-07-01

Multiculturalism and Social Work: A Content Analysis of the Past 25 Years of Research

Lauren Christine Smithee
Brigham Young University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Smithee, Lauren Christine, "Multiculturalism and Social Work: A Content Analysis of the Past 25 Years of Research" (2017). *All Theses and Dissertations*. 6807.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/6807>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Multiculturalism and Social Work:

A Content Analysis of the Past

25 Years of Research

Lauren Christine Smithee

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Science

Roy Bean, Chair
Gordon Limb
Erin Holmes

School of Family Life
Brigham Young University

Copyright © 2017 Lauren Christine Smithee

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism and Social Work: A Content Analysis of the Past 25 Years of Research

Lauren Christine Smithee
School of Family Life, BYU
Master of Science

The purpose of this content analysis was to analyze the past 25 years of research in two major social work journals, *Social Work* and *Research on Social Work Practice*, to provide a status update on the amount of ethnic-focused research being published within the discipline. This analysis examined trends in ethnic-focused publications, the change across time in percent of focused articles, the top topics studied, per ethnic group, the top funded topics, most and least involved funding agencies, geographical groupings of focused samples, the setting of the samples, measures used, and the percentage of samples based in a clinical versus non-clinical setting. Results showed there has been continued growth and improvement in quality and quantity of minority-focused research in both journals, although there is still room for growth within the discipline towards increased multicultural competence. While the majority of focused research studied African American and Latinos, little attention was given to Asian and Native American populations. Furthermore, while almost twice as many focused articles were funded, compared to non-focused articles, the types of topics being funded are still not as representative of the needs of ethnic minority populations as they could be. While the increase in ethnic focused research over the past 25 years is promising, additional focus within the field is warranted. Suggestions are given to improve the quality and quantity of ethnic-focused research over time.

Keywords: multiculturalism, social work, content analysis, ethnic minority, ethnicity

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Roy Bean, for his assistance in guiding me on my thesis and helping me see my potential. I would also like to thank my committee members, Erin Holmes and Gordon Limb for their continued feedback. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, AJ for her loving support, sacrifices in helping me achieve my goals, and my daughter Stella for filling my life with joy and giving me a reason to push through the difficult times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
Multiculturalism and Social Work.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Definitions.....	2
Growing Ethnic Diversity.....	3
U.S. Ethnic Minority-Focused Research in the Social Sciences.....	4
Counseling psychology.....	5
Clinical psychology.....	6
Adolescence and specialty journals.....	6
A Concern for Diversity in Social Work.....	7
Ethnically-Focused Research in Social Work.....	8
Purpose of this Study.....	9
Method.....	10
Procedure.....	10
Coder training.....	11
Results.....	12
Minority-Focused Articles for Each Ethnic Group?.....	12
Change Across Time in Percent of Articles Focused on Ethnic Groups.....	14
Top Topics Studied for Each Ethnic Group.....	14
Top Topics Receiving Funding.....	16
Most Involved and Least Involved Funding Agencies.....	16
Geographical Groupings of Ethnically Focused Samples.....	18
Urban/Rural Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group).....	20
Measures of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation.....	21
Measures Found Previously to be Reliable and Valid for Specific Ethnic Groups.....	22

Clinical or Non-Clinical Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group)	22
Discussion	22
Minority-Focused Articles for Each Ethnic Group	22
Change Across Time in Percentage of Articles Focused on Ethnic Groups	24
Top Topics Studied for Each Ethnic Group	25
Top Topics Receiving Funding	26
Most Involved and Least Involved Funding Agencies.....	27
Geographical Groupings of Ethnically Focused Samples.....	27
Urban/Rural Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group).....	28
Measures of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation.....	29
Measures Found Previously to be Reliable and Valid for Specific Ethnic Groups	30
Clinical or Non-Clinical Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group)	31
Conclusion	31
References.....	34
Appendix A.....	41

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Minority Focused Articles by Year..... 41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Frequency of Article Type by Ethnic Group for Journals Combined: n (%).....	42
Table 2 Most Frequently Studied Topics by Ethnic Group: n (%).....	43
Table 3 Top Funded Subjects by Ethnic Group, Frequency: n (%).....	44
Table 4 Urban/Rural Setting by Ethnic Group: n (%).....	45

Multiculturalism and Social Work:

A Content Analysis of the Past

25 Years of Research

Research from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that by the year 2035, ethnically-diverse populations (groups currently labeled as African Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans) will outnumber European Americans (Esri, 2012). Accompanying the growth in diverse populations, researchers have begun to focus more attention on ethnic minorities for a variety of reasons (e.g., integrating minority perspectives into the national conversation, addressing unique cultural/ethnic minority challenges). As ethnic populations continue to grow, it is crucial to document the state of multicultural-focused research to develop a deeper knowledge of these diverse populations and to encourage research that will help meet their needs.

As time has progressed, most major disciplines in the social sciences have gradually increased the number of publications focusing on ethnically-diverse samples or dealing with multicultural topics (Hartmann et al., 2013). Evidence of this increase is found in numerous studies, including content analyses conducted in disciplines such as counseling and clinical psychology (e.g., Iwamasa, Socorro & Koonce, 2002; Perez, Constantine, & Gerard, 2000). Surprisingly, almost no content analyses have been conducted on ethnic/cultural topics in the social work field, leaving social workers, policy makers, and the populations they serve without a clear sense of the recent past and the current state of the field (Lum 2000; Ryan & Sheehan, 2009). In fact, the most recent content analysis on the state of multiculturalism in social work was conducted on articles published during the 1980s (McMahon & Allen-Mears, 1992). Without additional inspection of the field's literature, this twenty-five year span may conceal a

number of issues, including whether or not the social work field is falling behind (compared to other disciplines) in relation to research on multicultural and diversity-focused topics.

Considering the growing need, this could have disastrous consequences for understanding the needs and cultures of at-risk populations, hindering the ability of social workers to effectively work with diverse clients.

Recognizing the implications of this gap for researchers and clinicians, this 25-year review of journal article publications on multiculturalism and ethnicity is vital for the advancement of the social work discipline. As such, this study was designed as a careful content analysis of articles related to multiculturalism, ethnicity, and diversity within major social work journals. This content analysis will examine two major social work journals (*Social Work* and *Research on Social Work Practice*) in order to provide a status update on research trends over the past 25 years (1990-2015) and to analyze how far social work has progressed in their attention to multicultural topics as a whole.

Literature Review

Definitions

As a methodological approach, content analysis is a “technique that allows a researcher to identify or ‘code’ themes and patterns that emerge in qualitative data,” (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005, p. 69). Content analyses help analyze the state of a given body of literature to gauge how research may be influencing a particular field or discipline over time. While the purpose of content analyses vary across fields, this one will examine multiculturalism within the social work field’s professional literature.

Those of the majority ethnic culture (Caucasians/Whites) will be referred to as “majority-culture” or “European Americans” while those of other ethnic cultures will be collectively

referred to as “ethnic minorities.” Ethnic minorities include all ethnic groups that are not part of the ethnic majority group within the United States, including Native Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern, African Americans, Latinos, and multiracial Americans. For further clarity, the term “ethnic minorities” is not used to discount the fact that European Americans also have an ethnic origin nor is it used to connote that U.S. ethnic minorities are somehow less important or valuable. Instead, this term is used for clarity and convenience in addressing this topic, and is consistent with other studies within the social work field where the use of “ethnic minorities” refers simply to their status as a statistical, population-based minority (Casa, Negi, & Hong, 2012; Chang & Thoburn, 2009; Min, 2005; Schiele & Hopps, 2009; Urh, 2011).

Growing Ethnic Diversity

Over the past several decades, the increasing diversity in the United States has made the need for ethnically-focused research in the social sciences more apparent (Hall, 2001; López, 2002). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2010, Latinos grew by 43 percent, African Americans by 12.3 percent, Asians by 43.4 percent, and multiracial Americans by 2.9 percent (Esri, 2012). These trends are expected to project into the future with steadily increasing rates and, if national population trends continue, minorities will outnumber European Americans by 2035 (Esri, 2012).

While European Americans have been the most populous ethnic population, national demographics continue to change and diversify, highlighting the need for research-based resources that are more ethnically-/culturally-representative. These changing demographics are noted in a recent report that immigration rates in America have quadrupled from 9.6 million in 1970 to over 41.3 million in 2013 (U. S. Department of Homeland Security, 2014). Additionally, first-generation immigrants currently represent over 13 percent of the total U.S. population and

are expected to represent an increasingly large percentage of America's ethnic population as time passes (Department of Homeland Security, 2014).

Since the 1960s, researchers have slowly accepted the need for more ethnically-focused research and have gradually been incorporating and studying ethnic minorities within their publications. Although the social sciences have steadily progressed since this time, ethnic minorities are still underrepresented in research as a whole (Hussain-Gambles, Atkin, & Leese, 2004; Bean & Crane, 1996). This trend appears to be largely global and may transcend nationalities, as findings indicate a general shortage of studies focusing on ethnic minorities in both the United States and United Kingdom (Miranda, 1996; Sheikh, 2006).

Due to the overall growth in ethnic diversity within the United States and other countries, the implications for culturally competent interventions and clinical skills are dire. For example, it has been reported that while many factors contribute to positive treatment outcomes, some of the main components are clinicians having a strong therapeutic alliance, practical therapeutic skills, and a recognition of clients' culture and its impact on their ethnic identity (Chau, Yu, & Tran, 2011; Melendez & McDowell, 2008; Roysircar, 2009). Unfortunately, with the lack of available research and knowledge about client cultures and backgrounds, social workers (and other mental health providers) may be hampered in developing ethnically-sensitive practices and treatments.

U.S. Ethnic Minority-Focused Research in the Social Sciences

In general, social science journals have recognized the need for more attention to ethnically focused studies (e.g., Lau, Chang, & Okazaki, 2016; Santos & Umaña-Taylor, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2014); however, not all disciplines have been decidedly responsive to the calls for more ethnicity-focused research (in terms of quantity and quality).

Counseling psychology. For example, counseling psychology appears to be a field mixed in its sensitivity to the call for ethnically-focused research. In a content analysis conducted on counseling psychology journals (articles published between 1993-1999 and 2003-2009), research focused on ethnic diversity was minimal (Hartmann et al., 2013). Although certain specialty journals had relatively high rates of articles focusing on ethnic minorities and cross-cultural issues, very little U.S. ethnic minority (6 percent) and cross-cultural (2 percent) research was published in American Psychological Association and Association for Psychological Science journals (Hartmann et al., 2013). Unfortunately, this was especially the case among higher impact journals. These results are concerning, considering how wide the audience for APA and APS journals are versus smaller, specialized journals.

However, the field has also demonstrated increases in the amount of ethnically diverse topics that are being published (Perez et al., 2000). In fact, Perez et al. (2000) found, in their content analysis of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (1988-1997), that 12 percent of articles focused on ethnic and racial issues/populations. Similarly, in a content analysis of 138 counseling psychology studies from 1988-2009, Yoon, Langrehr and Ong (2011) found that acculturation and ethnic minority research was one of the top themes in publication. Even more promising, in a content analysis spanning *Journal of Counseling Psychology* article between 1954 and 2009, researchers found that 32 percent of articles contained multicultural content, with an escalating trend over the years (Lee, Rosen, & Burns, 2013). As an important qualifier, it should be noted that Lee, Rosen and Burns used a broader definition of multicultural content, including articles dealing with the topics of race/ethnicity, religion/spirituality, gender/sex, social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, and intersections between these issues. Although great strides could still be made in the amount of multicultural focused research, these findings suggest

that many counseling psychology journals have worked to increase the number of publications related to ethnic and racial issues in the past decade.

Clinical psychology. In contrast to counseling psychology, other professions still show relatively little coverage of ethnically diverse articles. For example, in their review of clinical psychology journal articles (1980-1997), Iwamasa et al. (2002) found that only 5.4 percent of the articles focused specifically on ethnic populations (with “focused” being defined as articles that used a sample that was comprised of 50% or more ethnic minority participants. Similarly, in their content analysis of 16 leading psychology journals from 1990-1999 (6,258 articles), Imada and Schiavo (2005) found that only 4.7 percent of APA journal articles contained ethnic minority-focused research compared to a still meager 8.1 percent in non-APA journals articles. They concluded that ethnically-focused research had not increased for the clinical psychology discipline, based on fewer articles being published in APA journals, compared to non-APA journals.

Adolescence and specialty journals. In a content analysis of the six leading adolescence journals, Levesque (2007) found that 93 percent of articles published between 2000 and 2006 reported sample ethnicity data, and 19 percent of empirical articles specifically studied outcomes related to particular ethnic minority groups (Levesque, 2007). While the majority of research was not primarily focused on ethnic minority outcomes, the study of adolescence appears to be making progress in their acknowledgement of the need for diversity, at least as far as utilizing ethnically-diverse research samples.

Not surprisingly, specialty journals focusing on ethnic diversity have made gains in their focus on diversity. In a 12-year content analysis of the *Journal of Black Psychology* (2000-2011), 57 percent of articles published focused on ethnic or racial topics, meaning articles that involved

racial/ ethnic minority comparisons and analysis of ethnic identity culture (Cokley, Awosogba, & Taylor, 2014). The other 43 percent of articles were classified into 16 separate content categories with the predominant focus being on mental health and well-being (Cokley, Awosogba, & Taylor, 2014). Unfortunately, while some specialty journals are focusing on minority samples in greater numbers, their audiences are not as large as those of profession-wide journals (i.e., APA and APS journals) which limits exposure to findings for the research and clinical communities.

A Concern for Diversity in Social Work

Similar to clinicians and researchers in other social science disciplines, social workers are also encouraged to conduct research to expand the field's knowledge base and evaluate the effectiveness of the profession (Soydan, 2015). In fact, given the role that ethnicity, race, and culture have had in shaping the genesis of social work practice, it is not surprising that the field has promoted access to careers for ethnic minorities (Berger, 1989). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has defined the field through its attempts to delineate standards for culturally appropriate practice. According to the NASW, social workers must develop an understanding of ethnic backgrounds and how they shape their own and their clients' worldviews to provide effective services (National Association of Social Workers, 2011). More specifically, the NASW "supports and encourages the development of standards for culturally competent social work practice" and professional documents indicate that social workers must engage diversity in practice with an understanding of how it shapes the human experience and forms identity, in relation to factors such as race, color, ethnicity, and immigration status (National Association of Social Workers, 2000, p. 61, Competency two).

In the last two decades, there is a growing body of literature that characterizes social work practice with ethnic minorities as being in transition, while also reaffirming the need for

developing models of ethnically-competent practice (Lum, 2000). In a critique of the state of social work practice, Bø (2015) concluded that: (a) social work was paying increasing attention to ideological, theoretical, and practical issues relating to ethnic sensitive practice; and (b) that there has been an increased focus on client's diverse background, nationalities, and cultures, and how they shape the needs of ethnic minorities. Encouragingly, Bradshaw and Graham (2007) also found that 43 percent of articles expressed the need for cultural sensitivity and adaptation within social work practice with ethnic minorities. Overall, there appears to be an increasing pressure within social work for culturally competent practice, so that interventions and methods are adjusted to meet the needs and values of ethnic minorities. While it is evident that racial and ethnic understanding are critical components of the diversity-focused social work lens, it remains unclear whether or not this philosophy is reflected in current (and recent past) social work research publications.

Ethnically-Focused Research in Social Work

As an effective way to catalog the types of research that are important to a professional discipline, several content analyses have been carried out in the social work literature (albeit all with some limitations). Lum (2000) in a review of 20 social work practice texts published between 1970 and 1990, found minimal attention to ethnic minority content by leading social work practice theorists (Lum, 2000). While this study has a number of strengths including the breadth and depth of 20 years of coding over three journals, its primary limitation is that similar content analyses within the field have not been replicated. At this point, the findings are not applicable to the current social work literature, so a more recent status update is needed.

In a more recent content analysis, Ruth, Velásquez, Marshall, and Ziperstein (2015) found that “cultural responsiveness” was a minor theme (450/3,745 articles, 12%) in major social

work journals between 2000 and 2010. While this finding indicates some attention has been given to ethnic minority-focused research, the exact nature of this attention is unclear as the authors' definition of "cultural responsiveness" was not presented. Additionally, there was no discussion of the research topics examined across the 450 articles nor the articles' level of focus on ethnicity and diversity (Ruth et al., 2015).

As noted above, the most detailed content analysis of multiculturalism in social work is very dated, focusing on articles published between 1980 and 1989 (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992). Furthermore, McMahon & Allen-Meares' analysis found that most of the literature on social work practice with minorities was "naïve and superficial and fail[ed] to address their social context." (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992, p. 533). They found that only 5.95 percent of the 1,965 articles published during the decade proposed some type of social work intervention with minorities, "convey[ing] the impression of a noncritical, inward-looking, even narcissistic professional literature." (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992, p.536). As with Lum's content analysis, a more recent status update is warranted.

Purpose of this Study

While it is evident that social work is becoming more diverse in practice (Berger, 1989; National Association of Social Workers, 2000, 2011; Soydan, 2015), it is unclear whether this trend also exists in discipline-specific scholarship. Therefore, this article seeks to advance the study of the progress in social work by conducting a content analysis on trends in the publication of articles related to multiculturalism, ethnicity, and diversity within two of the most relevant social work journals (i.e., *Social Work*, *Research on Social Work Practice*). These journals were selected as representative of the overall U. S. social work field (*Social Work* is one of the journals published by the National Association of Social Workers) and because of their high

impact factors (both have a five-year impact factor above 1.3). This content analysis seeks to fill the gap within research by providing a status update on trends within publication over the past 25 years (1990-2015). As such, this article represents a status update for the field, as well as, providing further direction for where attention is needed within social work research.

To organize this content analysis, a number of journal article variables (or factors) were assessed based on their inclusion in previous content analysis studies (e.g., number of ethnic-focused articles published and types of articles published), while other variables were unique to this study (e.g., geographic location of the sample, top funding sources). The collective list of factors examined are included below - in the results section.

Method

Procedure

In order to be included in this content analysis, journals had to qualify as being one of the most prominent journals in social work. Qualifying criteria was inclusion in previous discipline-specific review and/or top ranking in the Journal Citation Report (JCR, based on five-year impact factors). Journals also had to have been published primarily in U.S.-based studies, since the focus of this content analysis was on ethnic diversity within United States research samples. Thus, journals in social work were selected for inclusion in this content analysis based on: (a) overall impact factor score (five-year), (b) status as a U.S.-based publication (given the focus on U.S. ethnic minorities), and (c) their broad focus on the social work field, rather than on a specific, narrow specialization (e.g., child abuse, health). These broad-focused or non-specialized social work journals were ranked based on JCR five-year impact factor scores and two of the top journals were selected for content analysis, namely *Social Work* (impact factor=1.326) and *Research on Social Work Practice* (impact factor=1.729).

Articles were coded only if they represented a conceptual or empirical work; thereby, excluding book reviews, feedback pieces and editor's notes and introductions. Two separate and distinct categories were used to classify the articles: (a) focused – ethnic/cultural groups were examined as a principal part of the study's design or conceptual discussion (articles qualified if their title, PsycINFO Subject (topic designation), or abstract indicated an emphasis on ethnicity or a specific ethnic minority group); and (b) not focused - ethnic minorities were not a primary part of the research population or any conceptual discussion. This category includes a primary focus on white, majority culture (referred to here as Anglos). In order to maintain the focus on ethnic diversity within the United States, articles examining international populations were not reviewed in this study. Also, it should be noted that the first year of publication was 1991 for *Research on Social Work Practice*, so the journal has one less year of publications included in the analysis, compared to *Social Work*.

Coder training. Each journal article was coded by two undergraduate students trained using the following protocol: (a) enrollment in an upper-division research practicum (after fulfilling a research methods course and other pre-requisites); (b) weekly instruction and supervision of coding procedures; (c) tests of coding procedure knowledge based on a detailed coding manual; (d) successful completion of twenty practice articles; (e) individual meetings with coding supervisors; and (e) regular attendance at quality control meetings. Undergraduate students were supervised by a team of expert coders, who qualified as such by completing a two-month training program, including practice articles, quizzes and weekly training meetings. The expert coders were, in turn, supervised by a faculty member and graduate student (first and second authors).

Each article was coded by a pair of coders, working independently from one another and their coding responses were compared to determine inter-rater reliability. Any incongruities in coding were flagged and negotiated to congruence by expert-level coders. The average inter-rater reliability (IRR) for *Social Work* was 96.3%, while the average IRR for *Research on Social Work Practice* was 93.5%. Thus, the overall average IRR was 94.9%.

Results

Minority-Focused Articles for Each Ethnic Group?

As noted above, articles were coded as “focused” if their corresponding title, abstract, or PsycINFO Subjects included a specific ethnic group or a more general multicultural term (e.g., diversity, inter-racial adoption, cultural competence). Failure to meet these inclusion criteria resulted in the article being coded as “not focused.” In the course of the coding process, it became apparent that this strict criteria excluded numerous studies categorized as “not focused” even though their samples were composed of primarily ethnic populations. In light of this observation, we expanded our definition of “ethnically focused” to include studies with samples of at least 38% ethnic minorities (based on the estimated percentage of ethnic minorities in the U. S., per U. S. Census findings, Colby & Ortman, 2015). This process qualified an additional 165 articles as “focused,” an increase of 9.87%.

A total of 915 articles from *Social Work* and 896 from *Research on Social Work Practice* were included in the analysis, for a total of 1811 articles. The majority of articles in both journals were categorized as “not ethnically focused” (745 articles (81.4%) in *Social Work* and 721 article (80.5%) in *Research on Social Work Practice*) because no mention of ethnicity, diversity or any specific ethnic group was found in the title, abstract or keywords of these articles; nor did the population percentages in their samples indicate an ethnic focus. The remaining articles (170,

18.6% in *Social Work* and 175, 19.5% in *Research on Social Work Practice*) were defined as “focused,” with articles categorized as conceptual, quantitative, and qualitative (see Table 1).

African Americans were the focus for 121 articles (32.1% of total 377 focused articles), Latinos were the focus of 62 articles (16.4%), 22 articles focused on Asian Americans (5.8%), and Native Americans were the focus of 14 articles (3.7%). Additionally, 142 articles (37.7%) were focused on three or more multiple ethnic groups in the same sample (most commonly African Americans, Latinos, and another ethnic group studied in one sample), and 16 articles (4.2%) focused on “other” ethnic groups (e.g., multiracial subjects). Articles focused on African Americans, Latinos, Asian American, and multiple ethnic groups were mostly quantitative, while articles focused on Native Americans and multiracial and other ethnic groups were predominantly conceptual or theoretical.

As presented in Table 1, most “not focused” articles were conceptual/theoretical (869, 59.5%), while the majority of focused articles were quantitative (240, 69.6%). The significant difference in article counts/percentages for conceptual/theoretical articles, with 59.5% (869) being non-focused and 19.6% (74) being focused on an ethnic group, may be attributable to several factors. It is theorized that a number of conceptual articles related their topic to ethnic minority populations, but this focus was not prominent enough for the PsycINFO subjects or abstract to reflect it. It is also possible that like other fields, social work scholars have difficulty writing to the needs of ethnic minorities without the benefit of additional empirical knowledge. A third possibility for this discrepancy is that there is a divide between scholars and practitioners where many social work clinicians are working with minorities, but this knowledge and experience is not being translated into scholarly writing. Regardless, this divide warrants further attention.

Change Across Time in Percent of Articles Focused on Ethnic Groups

Social Work and *Research on Social Work Practice* were evenly matched on total minority-focused publications over the past 25 years with *Social Work* publishing 170 articles and *Research on Social Work Practice* publishing 175 articles (see Figure 2). However, *Social Work* appears to have published less focused articles over time, while *Research on Social Work Practice* has published more. The percentage of focused articles published in *Research on Social Work Practice* seemed to gradually increase up until 2011, after which focused articles decreased and gradually rose again in frequency of publication. In contrast, *Social Work* reached a peak in focused article publication in 1999, at which point focused publication gradually fell. The most significant one-year increase in ethnically focused articles in *Social Work* occurred from 1995 to 1996, with an increase from 8 articles to 18 articles (125% increase). The most significant one-year increase in ethnically focused articles in *Research on Social Work Practice* occurred from 2014 to 2015, with an increase from 2 articles to 11 articles with a 450% increase in focused articles. There appears to be a trend in which *Research on Social Work Practice* is gradually publishing more focused articles over time, suggesting that if the same trend continues, *Research on Social Work Practice* could exceed the amount of focused articles published in *Social Work* over time.

Top Topics Studied for Each Ethnic Group

When assigning and organizing article topics, coders utilized the subject terms (topics) as found in the PsycINFO database categorizations excluding terms related to sample demographic identifiers (e.g., Human Female, School Age (6-12 years)). Given some inconsistencies in PsycINFO's categorizations across the 1811 articles and the 25-year period, it was necessary to recode subjects for some articles. This was carried out to standardize the database categories

and/or to provide more exact topic descriptors. For example, “racial and ethnic differences” and “multiculturalism” were both recoded as “diversity and culture topics.” This recoding was done by the faculty advisor and checked for applicability and accuracy by the student author and other advanced coders.

The topic of interest in these focused articles varied per ethnic population (see Table 3 for full details). The “multiple ethnic group” category received the most research attention with the top studied topics being research methods (including psychometrics) (77 articles, 13.8%), abuse, neglect, and trauma (44, 7.9%), program interventions (via social, government, community, and school institutions) (34, 6.1%), and aspects of clinical practice (including professional identity and ethics) (33, 5.9%). Within articles focused on Latinos, the top studied topics were research methods (19, 7.9%), abuse, neglect, and trauma (17, 7.1%), aspects of clinical practice (16, 6.6%), and program interventions (16, 6.6%). The most frequently top studied topics for Asians were immigration and acculturation (10, 8.1%), aspects of clinical practice, research methods (7, 8.6%), and program interventions (3, 3.7%).

For Native American-focused articles, the top studied topics were aspects of clinical practice (11, 22.9%), research methods (6, 12.5%), religion and spirituality (5, 10.4%), and diversity and culture topics (2, 4.2%). For articles examining African Americans, the most frequently studied topics were aspects of clinical practice (29, 6.5%), research methods (26, 5.8%), abuse, neglect, and trauma (23, 5.2%), and program interventions (20, 4.5%). Among articles studying multi-ethnic groups or other ethnic groups not previously mentioned, the top studied topics were aspects of clinical practice (8, 16%), research methods (8, 16%), and immigration and acculturation (7, 14%). Among non-focused articles, the top studied topics were

aspects of clinical practice (1045, 19.4%), research methods (442, 8.2%), and program interventions (335, 6.2%).

Top Topics Receiving Funding

Coders searched each article for the acknowledgement of funding contributions. They then recorded each specific agency that contributed support, including federal, state, university, and private funding organizations. There were very similar themes identified among the top topics funded, with almost identical results to the top topics studied list (see research question #3 above), with the most commonly-funded topics being: (a) professional identity, ethics, and/or aspects of clinical practice, (b) research methods and psychometrics, and (c) social, government, community, and school program interventions (see Table 4). Out of the Anglo-focused studies, 323 (22%) were funded, while 149 (43.2%) of minority-focused studies were funded. Since Anglo-focused studies received the most funding, these were also the top funded subjects among Anglos. The most frequently funded ethnic minority group were African Americans, with the most funded topics being aspects of clinical practice (14, 15.1%), research methods (12, 12.9%), and abuse, neglect, and trauma (10, 10.8%). For additional details regarding funded topics for each ethnic group, please consult Table 4.

Most Involved and Least Involved Funding Agencies

Of the focused *and* funded studies, 62 (41.6%) received federal funding only, 13 (8.7%) received state funding, 17 (11.4%) received funding from private agencies, 21 (14.1%) from universities, 20 (13.4%) from a combination of federal and other sources, and 16 (10.7%) from other combinations of funding agencies. Of the not focused (Anglo), funded studies, 114 (35.3%) received only federal funding, 23 (7.1%) received state funding, 52 (16.1%) received funding from private agencies, 37 (11.4%) received funding from universities, 47 (14.6%) from a

combination of federal and other sources, 41 (12.7%) from other combinations of funding agencies, and 9 (2.8%) from an “other” funding source. Of the 1466 studies on Anglos, 323 were funded.

The top agencies funding Anglo-focused research were NIMH (62, 19.2%), Department of Health and Human Services (21, 6.5%), NIDA (20, 6.2%), and NIH (20, 6.2%). Of the 149 studies focused on ethnically diverse samples, 89 (59.7%) were funded by NIMH, 39 (26.2%) by NIDA, 27 (18.1%) by Department of Health and Human Services, and 24 (16.1%) by NIH. The agencies contributing the least funding to research on Anglos were the Department of Health and Human Services (9 studies, 1.4% of ethnically-focused studies receiving funding), the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (3 studies, 0.4%), and the National Institute on Aging (3 studies, 0.4%).

The same three agencies were the lowest contributors to research on ethnically diverse samples (with each agency funding one ethnically focused study each [0.1%]). One possible explanation for the lower rates of funding from these agencies is that they could be contributing to articles published in journals with a more specific focus on their populations of interest (e.g., *Child Development* and *Journal of Aging and Health*). Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services encompasses several of the more specific funding agencies listed above (including NIH and CDC), and thus may have been listed as a funding agency less frequently than its operating sub-divisions.

Out of the 121 articles focused on African Americans, 61 were funded. The top agencies funding African American-focused research were NIMH (8, 8.2%), NIDA (5, 10%), NIH (4, 6.6%), and the University of Michigan (4, 6.6%). The top funding agencies among the 34 funded, Latino-focused research were NIMH (8, 23.5%), NIDA (3, 8.8%), Columbia University (2, 5.9%), National Cancer Institute (2, 5.9%), and NIAA (2, 5.9%). Out of the 4 funded, Asian-

focused articles, the top funding agencies were equally divided among Columbia University, Council on Social Work Education Minority Fellowship Program, Sogang University, and UCLA (1, 25%), while the only two agencies funding Native American-focused research were National Cancer Institute (1, 50%) and West Chester University (1, 50%). Among the articles focused on multiple ethnic groups, the top funding agencies out of 64 total agencies were NIMH (13, 20.3%), NIDA (12, 18.8%), NIH (4, 6.3%), and Department of Health and Human Services (3, 4.7%). The four studies focused on other ethnic groups and multi-ethnic groups were funded equally by Maui AIDS Foundation, National Cancer Institute, NIMH, and University of Hawaii at Manoa (1, 25%).

Summarizing these findings, it should be noted that almost twice as many ethnically-focused articles were funded, compared to non-focused articles, demonstrating increased attention and funding towards ethnic minority populations.

Geographical Groupings of Ethnically Focused Samples

Empirical studies (quantitative and qualitative, n=990) were also coded according to the sample's stated geographic location. Unfortunately, a large percentage of studies failed to include information about the geographic location of their sample (281 non-focused articles (47.5%) and 62 focused articles (15.5%) for minorities). Out of all the empirical articles (n=990), 340 did not specify the state their samples were drawn from. This trend was similar by region, with the majority of empirical articles (343, 34.6%) not even reporting the regional location of their samples. Reported in more detail (by ethnic group), this included 23.5% for African Americans, 18% for Latinos, 21.4% for Asian Americans, 16.7% for Native Americans, 19% for studies analyzing other racial and multiracial groups, and 25% for studies analyzing multiple ethnic groups.

Among the articles not focused on ethnicity, the majority were based in East South Central (comprised by Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi; 106, 17.9%), followed by national studies (60, 10.2%), and South Atlantic (comprised by Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware; 49, 8.3%). By state, the largest number of studies were based in New York (29, 4.9%). Within the African American focused articles, the majority were based in the South Atlantic (16, 15.7%), followed by the Middle Atlantic (comprised by Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey; 14, 13.7%) and East North Central (comprised by Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana; 13, 12.7%). By state, most African Americans studies were based in New York (7, 10%), followed by Illinois and Pennsylvania (6, 8.6%). For Latinos, the Middle Atlantic region was the most frequently studied (10, 20%), followed by the Pacific (comprised by California, Oregon, and Washington), West South Central (comprised by Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas), and East North Central (5, 10%). The most frequently studied states were California, New York, Texas, and Pennsylvania (5, 27.8%). For Asian Americans, the Middle Atlantic and West South Central regions were equally studied (3, 21.4%), followed by the Southwest and Northeast (2, 14.3%). Most Native American-focused articles were sampled nationally (4, 66.7%), with no specifics given for the most studied state. For multiple ethnic groups, the South Atlantic region was the most frequently studied (23, 18.3%), followed by the Middle Atlantic (15, 11.9%), with most studies originating in New York (12, 9.4%), followed by California (10, 7.9%). Other and multiracial groups were also most frequently studied in the Pacific region, specifically in Hawaii (3, 75%).

These findings are noteworthy and potentially problematic, as geographic regions in the United States vary based on culture, quality of life, and socio-economic status. Thus, the lack of

sufficient detail given to geographic groupings of ethnic minorities is potentially problematic, as it limits the potential for understanding variation in challenges and circumstances based on sample location.

Urban/Rural Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group)

Articles were coded for the setting for the study's sample (i.e., urban, rural, suburban, mixed) based on the sample description. In instances where no details about the sample's setting were provided (i.e., how urban or rural or mixed the sample was) but the sample was described as having been collected over a large geographic area (e.g., national, regional, or state sample), then a mixed setting was assumed. Summarizing the locations of research, African American (48 articles, 47.1%), Asian (6, 42.9%), and Latino-focused articles (23, 46%) were primarily based in urban settings. Urban settings allow for access to a diverse population located in a dense area, increasing generalizability (Lau, Chang, Okazaki, 2010). In contrast, Native American (4, 66.7%), multiple ethnic groups (37, 29.1%) and other and multi-ethnic groups (1, 25%) were all primarily based in mixed settings. Similar to the lack of reporting of geographical location of samples, 55.2% of Anglo-focused studies (326 articles) and 39.9% of ethnic minority-focused studies (108) did not report the type of setting the sample was collected in. For non-minority focused articles, the most common setting was a mixed setting (167, 28.3%). See Table 5 for additional details.

There were 58 studies (for Anglo- and ethnically-focused articles combined) that used national data sets, presumably collecting data from individuals and families in mixed (urban/rural/suburban) settings. Of this total, only 15 articles were focused on specific ethnic groups. In further examination of these national dataset-driven studies, no one data set was used

more than once besides the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (3 times), and the National Association of Social Workers (twice).

Measures of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Among all the ethnically-focused empirical articles, only 9 articles contained a measure of ethnic identity, with the majority of these studies utilizing multiple ethnic groups within the sample. Ethnic identity refers to the conceptualization of one's sense of self in ethnic terms (Phinney, 2000). One (1.9%) of the empirical articles focused on African Americans contained a measure of ethnic identity. Of the empirical studies dealing with Latinos, two studies (15.4%) contained a measure of ethnic identity. For Asian Americans, two studies (15.4%) contained a measure of ethnic identity. No studies contained a measure of ethnic identity for Native Americans or other and multiracial groups. Four studies (3.3%) on participants from multiple ethnic groups contained a measure of ethnic identity. As a probable indication of increased sensitivity to the importance of ethnicity and culture, all of the articles measuring ethnic identity were published in the last 14 years of the time period studied (2001-2015), with 55.5% of the articles being published since 2004.

In examining the ethnic minority focused studies in terms of their attention to sample acculturation level, relatively few articles were found to measure this important contextual variable. Of the studies of Latino, Asian American, multi-ethnic group and multiracial samples, 12 contained a measure of acculturation. All of the articles measuring ethnic identity were published in the last 14 years of the time period studied (2001-2015), with half of the articles being published since 2010, indicating increased sensitivity to the importance of ethnicity and culture.

Measures Found Previously to be Reliable and Valid for Specific Ethnic Groups

Of the 508 ethnic identity and acculturation measures used in the ethnically-focused articles, 72 (14.2%) were reported as having been found previously to be reliable for the ethnic group to which they were administered. Seventy-one articles (14%) were reported to have been found to be valid for the ethnic group for which they were used.

Clinical or Non-Clinical Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group)

Of the empirical articles not focused on an ethnic group, 81 (13.7%) used a sample from a clinical setting. Of the empirical articles focused on a particular ethnic group, 41 (15.7%) used a sample from a clinical setting. More specifically, 12 (11.8%) of the articles focused on African Americans had clinical samples and 12 (24%) studies focused on Latinos also had samples from a clinical setting. Out of all studies focused on Native Americans or “other” ethnic groups, none contained a sample from a clinical setting. Two (14.3%) studies focused on Asian Americans has samples from clinical settings, while 23 (18.1%) studies focused on multiple ethnic groups has clinical samples.

Discussion

Minority-Focused Articles for Each Ethnic Group

The bulk of research attention was given to Latino and African American groups with a combined 53% of the minority focused articles. Consequently, one of the most significant findings in this analysis was the comparative lack of attention given to Native American (.8% of articles versus 1.2% of the U.S population) and Asian American populations (1.2% of articles versus 5.4% of the U.S population). It has been suggested by some that Native American populations are consistently overlooked by government agencies (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2003), while they are at an increased risk of social and economic challenges, including

trauma, violence, substance abuse, unemployment, poverty, and a lack of access to education (Sarche & Spicer, 2008). These stressors contribute to high rates of mental health difficulties among Native Americans, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, and conduct disorder (Sarche & Spicer, 2008). Thus, these findings are problematic, as underserving this population poses a risk of perpetuating their chance of emotional, social, and economic difficulties.

Similarly, little attention was given to Asian Americans within social work research, although they typically experience various behavioral and emotional difficulties as a result of, for instance, discrimination and/or immigration-related stressors. However, they tend to underuse existing mental health services, besides those that are linguistically and culturally compatible (Lin & Cheung, 1999). As a result, Asian Americans are less likely to solicit help compared to other ethnic minority groups, decreasing the likelihood of their inclusion within minority-focused research publications (Le Meyer, Zane, Cho, & Takeuchi, 2009). This may also in part be due to difficulties associated with immigration, including a language barrier and a cultural norm of recent immigrant individuals and families typically being wary of mental health services (Le Meyer et al., 2009).

Furthermore, there is room for improvement on the amount of qualitative research on all ethnic minority groups, as well as the larger Anglo majority. While quantitative and conceptual research is valuable, qualitative research designs allow for in depth, comprehensive details on the experiences of ethnic groups. Such research is valued and needed to better develop topics such as culturally-sensitive clinical practice (Danso, 2015; Rogers-Sirin et al., 2015; Suh et al., 2009).

Change Across Time in Percentage of Articles Focused on Ethnic Groups

While both journals were closely matched on total minority-focused publications over the past 25 years with *Social Work* publishing 170 articles and *Research on Social Work Practice* publishing 175 articles, *Social Work* appears to have published less focused articles over time, while *Research on Social Work Practice* has published more. Encouragingly, the trend indicates that *Research on Social Work Practice* will likely continue to increase its focus on minorities over time. While these findings are encouraging for *Research on Social Work Practice*, it is a concern that *Social Work* could potentially fall behind in its representation of ethnic minorities in research. This is problematic, given that as ethnic minority populations in the U.S. continue to grow, these groups warrant increased attention for their needs to be met both within social work clinical settings and other disciplines. However, considering *Social Work* doubled its focused research in 2015 compared to the previous year, this is encouraging evidence that *Social Work* has to the potential to increase its attention to ethnic minorities over time. It is recommended that both journals continue to increase their focus on publishing ethnic minority-focused research in order to meet the need of growing minority populations, and to increase the ability of social workers to become more culturally competent with working with these populations.

It should also be noted that this increased focus is most noticeable in the case of studies in which multiple ethnic groups (41.2% of all focused groups) or African American populations (35.1%) were studied. These findings are certainly promising, however, it will be especially important for the field to research U. S. Latinos and their particular cultural needs, given their status now as the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States (Colby & Ortman, 2015).

Top Topics Studied for Each Ethnic Group

The most common subjects (regardless of ethnic category) were: (a) professional identity, ethics, and/or aspects of clinical practice, (b) research methods and psychometrics, and (c) social, government, community, and school program interventions. These findings support the respective missions of both social work journals including publishing empirically-supported research, methods, and interventions focusing on social work practice (National Association of Social Workers, 2011). Professional identity, ethics, and/or aspects of clinical practice was the most frequently studied topic among samples focused on African Americans, Native Americans, and multiracial or other unspecified ethnic groups, the second most studied topic among Asian-focused studies, and third most studied topic among Latino groups and multiple ethnic groups studied collectively. These findings indicate promising attention to building competency in clinical practice and attention to the therapist's sense of identity and self when working with these ethnic minority groups. This indicates that the field is moving in a very positive direction regarding research focused on clinically-appropriate interventions and attention to ethnic minorities.

While such attention to social work practice with ethnic minorities is promising, one significant gap in the research is the lack of attention to immigration and acculturation and diversity and culture topics among all ethnic minority groups. In a 25-year time span, only 1.8% of all minority-focused articles studied immigration and acculturation, while only 1.4% of all minority-focused articles studied diversity issues. These findings were interesting, considering the discipline's growing attention to cultural sensitivity in practice with ethnic minorities as well as the abundant research focused on clinical practice with ethnic minorities (Bø, 2015; Bradshaw & Graham, 2007). This gap seems to indicate that while the discipline is making significant

progress in its attention to practice with ethnic minorities as a whole, specific attention to processes that affect minority experiences such as immigration and diversity issues needs more attention. The lack of articles focused specifically on both immigration, acculturation, and diversity topics indicates a need for further prioritization on topics pertaining specifically to ethnic minorities.

However, there seems to be a significant gap between topics that are being researched and the most important needs among ethnic minority populations. The most salient needs for African Americans are racism and discrimination, poverty, and unemployment (Sue & Sue, 2013). Hispanics are reported to struggle the most with stigmas associated with mental illness (despite high rates of depressive symptoms), alcoholism, acculturation conflicts, racism and discrimination, and poverty (Sue & Sue, 2013). Asian Americans are reported to be struggling with racial identity issues, assimilation and acculturation, racism and discrimination, and psychological stress resulting from cultural conflict (Sue & Sue, 2013). Native Americans are struggling with poverty, historical oppression resulting in unresolved generational grief, discrimination, alcoholism and substance abuse, suicide, and domestic violence (Sue & Sue, 2013). Finally, those from multiple ethnic backgrounds are reported to struggle the most with racial ambiguity and implications for identity formation, racism, and discrimination (Sue & Sue, 2013). Given the needs of these ethnic populations, it is vital that social scientists continue to research these topics to better serve these populations.

Top Topics Receiving Funding

As Bean, Crane, & Lewis highlighted over a decade ago (2002), research funding within the social sciences still seems to be most heavily directed toward studying African Americans and Latinos. While studying these ethnic minority groups is important, often there is a lack of

attention to other ethnic groups. For example, only .8% of all ethnic-minority focused, funded studies were funding Native Americans, while only 1.7% of all minority-focused and funded studies were studying Asian Americans. As the percentage of ethnic minorities continue to increase in the United States, diversity among these groups will also continue to increase. It is recommended that funding, particularly federal funding be more evenly distributed among all ethnic minority groups, rather than being allocated most towards African American and Latino-focused research. While ethnically-focused articles have received more funding in general over the past 25 years, there is still room for improvement with specific ethnic groups that are receiving less attention in the research.

Most Involved and Least Involved Funding Agencies

While it is difficult to determine the level of funding support for ethnic minority research in dollar amounts, it is possible to calculate the number of studies that were funded. It is encouraging to note that of the 345 focused studies, 43.2% received funding. Of the focused, funded studies, 41.6% received federal funding. The top funding agencies among ethnic minorities were NIMH, NIDA, and NIH. Encouragingly, this monetary support from these organizations indicates increased attention to ethnic minorities on a federal level.

The fact that twice as many focused articles were funded (compared to non-focused articles) shows promising evidence that researchers and funding agencies are seeing ethnically-focused research as more important, and are giving more attention to these populations through the allocation of research funds.

Geographical Groupings of Ethnically Focused Samples

While the majority of both focused and non-focused studies reported their geographic location, approximately 22.6% of focused articles and 47.2% of non-focused empirical articles

did not specify the state their samples were drawn from. This trend was similar by region, with the majority of not focused articles (281, 47.5%) and focused articles (62, 23%) also not reporting the location of their samples. This lack of information about sample location is problematic, given the possibility of differences in culture, socio-economic status and other quality of life differences, based on geographic regions in the United States (Kitayama, Conway, & Pietromonaco, 2010). However, insufficient detail regarding this variable is particularly distressing in the case of ethnic samples, because there can be dramatic differences in experiences with discrimination and other challenges based on sample location. Additionally, when studying a given topic (e.g., social casework across ethnicities), it can be helpful to know if there are geographic-based differences in risk factors for samples from different parts of the United States (Guerrero & Kao, 2013). Reporting the geographical groupings of the sample is a simple inclusion within studies, yet this has the potential to increase the discipline's potential for cultural competence, by increasing knowledge on differences between and within ethnic groups.

Urban/Rural Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group)

The lack of national data sets used was also problematic. Of the 58 studies (for Anglo- and ethnically-focused articles combined) that used national data sets (an already low number as it represents only 3.15% of studies), only 15 articles were focused on specific ethnic groups (0.81% of studies). Due to the heterogeneous and varied nature of ethnic minority groups across the U.S., national, regional, and state-based studies are important to providing more information on the experiences of these groups. Using national studies is valuable, because it provides a broader, more comprehensive view of the experiences of ethnic minority groups across the U.S., compared to smaller, more localized studies. Furthermore, national studies allow for comparative analyses on subgroups of minority populations; for example, Asian Americans living on the west

coast versus the east coast, and how their experiences may differ. The low rate of national data utilization focused on ethnic minority groups may be attributed to several factors, all of which merit exploration and problem-solving by social work scholars. These factors include: (a) limited national datasets with sufficient numbers of minority participants (a problem that can be corrected through advocacy and petitions to agencies to fund relevant data collection efforts); (b) profession-wide unawareness of available national datasets or the methodologies that are used to analyze the data; and/or (c) discomfort or lack of familiarity with topics related to ethnic minorities.

Summarizing the data collection locations of research participants, the majority of samples were very generalizable, with most being collected from urban locations. Urban settings allow for a diverse population located in a dense area, increasing generalizability (Lau, Chang, Okazaki, 2010). However, another gap identified was the lack of reporting of geographical location in most studies. The type of setting the sample was collected in was not reported in 55.2% of non-focused studies and in 39.9% of focused studies. Due to the impact that geographic location has on the experiences of ethnic groups, this gap warrants further attention.

Measures of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Identified as an important contextual variable to consider in research (Phinney, 2000), ethnic identity is particularly critical within social work research, because the profession is built on a commitment to obtain education and cultural competence. According to Standard 1.05 (c) in the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics, social workers have a duty to be culturally competent and to seek to understand diversity (NASW, 2000). As one key element of diversity, ethnic identity is a construct that can be measured in the majority of ethnic

minority-focused studies, and the increase in its scholarly use in recent years is encouraging evidence that researchers are recognizing its importance.

Acculturation is defined as a process of learning and adopting the mainstream culture (Choi, Tan, & Hahm, 2016), and has been linked to positive individual psychosocial and systemic effects, including improved family functioning, higher self-esteem and self-efficacy, lower symptoms of depression, and lower aggressive and rule-breaking behavior in youth (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Titzmann & Jugert, 2015). While relatively few studies examined this important measure (only 10 articles from among Latino and Asian American populations – the two groups most likely to be engaged in the acculturation process), findings also indicated a significant improvement in the use of measures of acculturation over the last five years of the articles included in the analysis (2010-2015). As with ethnic identity, the inclusion of increased attention to the effects of acculturation is another way that researchers and practitioners within social work can take steps toward cultural sensitivity and competence in understanding minority populations (Bean, Crane, & Lewis, 2002).

Measures Found Previously to be Reliable and Valid for Specific Ethnic Groups

While improvements in the use of measures of acculturation and ethnic identity have been made in the past decade, there is still a lack of cultural sensitivity in the field's research with ethnic minority populations. This is most apparent in the fact that the majority of articles (85-85.8%) did not use measures that were verified as being reliable or valid for the ethnic groups they studied (alternatively, they are not correctly reporting this information in their respective measures section). While there are similarities between ethnic minority groups, certain measures may not translate appropriately in terms of cultural relevancy. Therefore, using measures that have been previously found to be reliable, valid, and translated accurately for the

particular group being studied is crucial to producing representative research. Improvement in the field's attention to cultural competency when examining ethnic minority populations through using reliable and valid measures is pivotal to producing culturally competent research.

Clinical or Non-Clinical Setting of the Sample (by Ethnic Group)

Of both journals, only 13.7% of non-focused articles and 15.7% of articles focused on a particular ethnic group used a clinical sample. The findings were surprising, given that social work is a predominantly clinical field. It is possible that the discipline is therapeutically serving ethnic minority populations, but is giving less attention to studying them in clinical settings. This brings to question the matter of whether this pattern exists because there is simply less access to minority populations in clinical settings, or if researchers have less of a minority-focused mindset overall.

Conclusion

Several limitations of this study are worth considering. While the journals selected have high impact factors and are representative of the social work field in a broad sense, these journals were not exhaustive of the entire field's scope of professional literature. Social work is a comprehensive field, so there are numerous topics relevant to social work practice that are more specifically addressed in other, specialty journals (e.g., trauma, child maltreatment). Second, this analysis excluded letters to the editor and book reviews, which may have contained additional content on multicultural topics. Third, this study did not attempt to determine the article submission rates for minority-focused research. Such an analysis may reveal whether little minority research is conducted or whether such research is often rejected. If the latter is a major obstacle, further attention to this matter is warranted. Lastly, the classification system may reflect the coders' biases. Considering that the majority of coders were Anglos, the present study may

reflect some cultural biases. Thus, the findings of the current study should be understood with these limitations in mind.

In summary, there has been continued growth and improvement in quality and amount of ethnic minority-focused research in both *Social Work* and *Research on Social Work Practice*, although there is still room for growth within the discipline towards increased multicultural competence. Perhaps most importantly, researchers can respond to the call to produce more research on ethnic minority groups. Journals within the social work discipline such as *Social Work* and *Research on Social Work Practice* tend to show an increase in the amount of ethnic-minority-focused research. However, African American and Latino populations tend to be the focus of research, while Native American and Asian American populations tend to be understudied. If disciplines within the social sciences as a whole are to create more ethnically-sensitive practices and interventions, an increase in the amount of ethnic-focused research being submitted for publication is vital. Continued growth in the discipline's attentiveness to topics pertaining to ethnic minorities will only occur if researchers prioritize research on ethnic minorities, especially native Americans and Asian American groups.

While the increase in ethnic focused research over the past two decades is promising, additional focus within the field is warranted. In order to effectively meet the unique needs of these populations, policy makers, researchers, and mental health professionals are urged to increase their attention to minority groups. Policy makers can consider available research regarding ethnic minorities and consider how policies may intersect with the unique social, emotional, and economic needs of these groups. Policy makers can also allocate additional funding for ethnic-focused research to better meet the needs of minority groups. Researchers can respond to the call for additional focused research by studying ethnic minority populations

within their samples, and educators can foster an environment of cultural exploration and self-reflection for students. Mental health professionals can focus on becoming more culturally competent to strengthen their therapeutic alliances and clinical effectiveness with under-studied clients (especially Native Americans and Asian Americans). Both researchers and mental health professionals can also focus on making therapeutic services more culturally inclusive by focusing on valid translations to make assessments and services more accessible, and increasing cultural trust towards the ethnic majority by fostering an environment of inclusion and greater respect for diversity.

The projection of ethnic minority population growth within the U.S. is a powerful indicator for the increased need for sensitivity and attention towards ethnic minority populations. While the social work discipline as a whole has recognized the need to include minority groups as a larger focus within research, it is urged that ethnic minority groups continue to be made a priority within social science research as a whole.

References

- Bean, R., & Crane, R.D. (1996). Marriage and family therapy research with ethnic minorities: Current status. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 24(1), 38.
- Bean, R. A., Crane, D. R., & Lewis, T. L. (2002). Basic research and implications for practice in family science: A content analysis and status report for U.S. ethnic groups. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, 51(1), 15-21.
- Berger, R. (1989). Promoting minority access to the profession. *Social Work*, 34(4), 346-349.
- Bradshaw, C., & Graham, J.R. (2007). Localization of social work practice, education, and research: A content analysis. *Social Development Issues: Alternative Approaches to Global Human Needs*, 29(2), 92-111.
- Bø, B.P. (2015). Social work in a multicultural society: New challenges and needs for competence. *International Social Work*, 58(4), 562-574.
- Casa, B.L., Negi, N.J., & Hong, M. (2012). Culturally competent social work research: Methodological considerations for research with language minorities. *Social Work*, 57(1), 1-10.
- Chang, A., & Thoburn, J. (2005). Research review: Child and family support services with minority ethnic families: What can we learn from research? *Child & Family Social Work*, 10(2), 169-178.
- Chau, R.C.M., Yu, S.WK., & Tran, C.T.L. (2011). The diversity based approach to culturally sensitive practices. *International Social Work*, 54(1), 21-33.
- Choi, Y., Tan, K. H., Yasui, M., & Hahm, H. C. (2016). Advancing understanding of acculturation for adolescents of Asian immigrants: Person-oriented analysis of

- acculturation strategy among Korean American youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(7), 1380-1395.
- Cokley, K., Awosogba, O., & Taylor, D. (2014). A 12-year content analysis of the *Journal of Black Psychology* (2000-2011): Implications for the field of Black psychology. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 40(3), 215-238.
- Colby, S.L., & Ortman, J.M. (2015). Projections of the size and composition of the U.S. population: 2014 to 2060. *United States Census Bureau*, 25-143.
- Danso, R. (2015). An integrated framework of critical cultural competence and anti-oppressive practice for social justice social work research. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, 14(4), 572-588.
- Department of Homeland Security. (2014). *2013 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Retrieved from https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_yb_2013_0.pdf
- Esri, (2012). *Minority population growth. The new boom*. Retrieved from <http://www.esri.com/library/brochures/pdfs/minoritypopulationgrowth.pdf>
- Guerrero, E. G., & Kao, D. (2013). Racial/ethnic minority and low-income hotspots and their geographic proximity to integrated care providers. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 8(34), 8-34.
- Hall, G. C. N. (2001). Psychotherapy research with ethnic minorities: Empirical, ethical, and conceptual issues. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 69(3), 502-510.
- Hartmann, W. E., Kim, E. S., Kim, J. H. J., Nguyen, T. U., Wendt, D. C., Nagata, D. K., & Gone, J. P. (2013). In search of cultural diversity, revisited: Recent publication trends in cross-cultural and ethnic minority psychology. *Review of General Psychology*, 17(3), 243-254.

- Hussain-Gambles, M., Atkin, K., & Leese, B. (2004). Why ethnic minority groups are under-represented in clinical trials: A review of the literature. *Health & Social Care in the Community, 12*(5), 382-388.
- Imada, T., & Schiavo, R.S. (2005). The use of ethnic minority populations in published psychological research, 1990-1999. *The Journal of Psychology, 139*(5), 389-400.
- Iwamasa, G. Y., Socorro, K. H., & Koonce, D. A. (2002). Ethnicity and clinical psychology: A content analysis of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review, 22*(6), 931-944.
- Kitayama, S., Conway, L. I., Pietromonaco, P. R., Park, H., & Plaut, V. C. (2010). Ethos of independence across regions in the United States: The production-adoption model of cultural change. *American Psychologist, 65*(6), 559-574.
- Lau, A.S., Chang, D.F., & Okazaki, S. (2016). Methodological challenges in treatment outcome research with ethnic minorities. In A.E. Kazdin (Ed.), *Methodological issues and strategies in clinical research* (pp. 403-413). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lee, D.L., Rosen, A.D., & Burns, V. (2013). Over a half-century encapsulated: A multicultural content analysis of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1954-2009*. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 60*(1), 154-161.
- Le Meyer, O., Zane, N., Cho, Y. I., & Takeuchi, D. T. (2009). Use of specialty mental health services by Asian Americans with psychiatric disorders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 77*(5), 1000–1005.
- Lin, K-M., & Cheung, F. (1999). Mental health issues for Asian Americans. *Psychiatric Services, 50*(6), 774-780.

- Lum, D. (2000). *Social work practice and people of color: A process stage approach* (2nd ed.). Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.
- Levesque, R.J.R. (2007). The ethnicity of adolescent research. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36(4), 375-389.
- López, S. R. (2002). A research agenda to improve the accessibility and quality of mental health care for Latinos. *Psychiatric Services*, 53(12), 1569-73.
- Lorenzo-Blanco, E.I., Meca, A., Unger, J.B., Romero, A., Gonzales-Backen, M., Piña-Watson, B., . . . Schwartz, S.J. (2016). Latino parent acculturation stress: Longitudinal effects on family functioning and youth emotional and behavioral health. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(8), 966-976.
- McMahon, A., & Allen-Meares, P. (1992). Is social work racist? A content analysis of recent literature. *Social Work*, 37(6), 533-539.
- Melendez, T., & McDowell, T. (2008). Race, class, gender, and migration: Family therapy with a Peruvian couple. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 27(1), 30-43.
- Min, J.W. (2005). Cultural competency: A key to effective future social work with racially and ethnically diverse elders. *Families in Society*, 86(3), 347-358.
- Miranda, J. (1996). Introduction to the special section on recruiting and retaining minorities in psychotherapy research. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 64(5), 848-850.
- National Association of Social Workers. (2000). Cultural competence in the social work profession. In *Social work speaks: NASW policy statements* (pp. 59-62). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

- National Association of Social Workers. (2011). *Racial and ethnic competency are key social work components*. Retrieved from <https://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/2011/080211.asp>
- Perez, R. M., Constantine, M. G., & Gerard, P. A. (2000). Individual and institutional productivity of racial and ethnic minority research in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 47(2), 223-228.
- Rogers-Sirin, L., Melendez, F., Refano, C., & Zegarra, Y. (2015). Immigrant perceptions of therapists' cultural competence: A qualitative investigation. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 46(4), 258-269.
- Roysircar, G. (2009). Evidence-based practice and its implications for culturally sensitive treatment. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 37(2), 66-82.
- Ruth, B., Velásquez, E.E., Marshall, J.W., & Ziperstein, D. (2015). Shaping the future of prevention in social work: An analysis of the professional literature from 2000 through 2010. *Social Work*, 60(2), 126-134
- Ryan, M., & Sheehan, R. (2009). Research articles in *Australian Social Work* from 1998-2007: A content analysis. *Australian Social Work*, 62(4), 525-542.
- Santos, C.E., & Umaña-Taylor, A.J. (2015). Introduction: Ethnic identity research across diverse perspectives. In C.E. Santos & A.J. Umaña-Taylor (Eds.), *Studying ethnic identity: Methodological and conceptual approaches across disciplines* (pp. 3-9). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Sarche, M., & Spicer, P. (2008). Poverty and health disparities for American Indian and Alaska Native children: Current knowledge and future prospects. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1136, 126-136.

- Schiele, J.H., & Hopps, J.G. (2009). Racial minorities then and now: The continuing significance of race. *Social Work, 54*(3), 195-199.
- Schwartz, S. J., Syed, M., Yip, T., Knight, G. P., Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Lee, R.M. (2014). Methodological issues in ethnic and racial identity research with ethnic minority populations: Theoretical precision, measurement issues, and research designs. *Child Development, 85*(1), 58–76
- Sheikh, A. (2006). Why are ethnic minorities underrepresented in U.S. research studies? *PLoS Medicine, 3*(2), 166-167.
- Soydan, H. (2015). Intervention research in social work. *Australian Social Work, 68*(3), 324-337.
- Sprenkle, D., & Piercy, F.P. (2005). *Research methods in family therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Sue, D.W., & Due, D. (2013). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Suh, E.E., Kagan, S., & Strumpf, N. (2009). Cultural competence in qualitative interview methods with Asian immigrants. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 20*(2), 194-201.
- Titzmann, P.F., & Jugert, P. (2015). Acculturation in context: The moderating effects of immigrant and native peer orientations on the acculturation experiences of immigrants. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 44*(11), 2079-2094.
- Urh, S. (2011). Ethnic sensitivity: A challenge for social work. *International Social Work, 54*(4), 471-484.
- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2003). *A quiet crisis: Federal funding and unmet needs in Indian Country*. Retrieved from <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/na0703/na0731.pdf>

Yoon, E., Langrehr, K., & Ong, L.Z. (2011). Content analysis of acculturation research in counseling and counseling psychology: A 22 year review. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*(1), 83-96.

Appendix A

Figure 1

Minority Focused Articles by Year

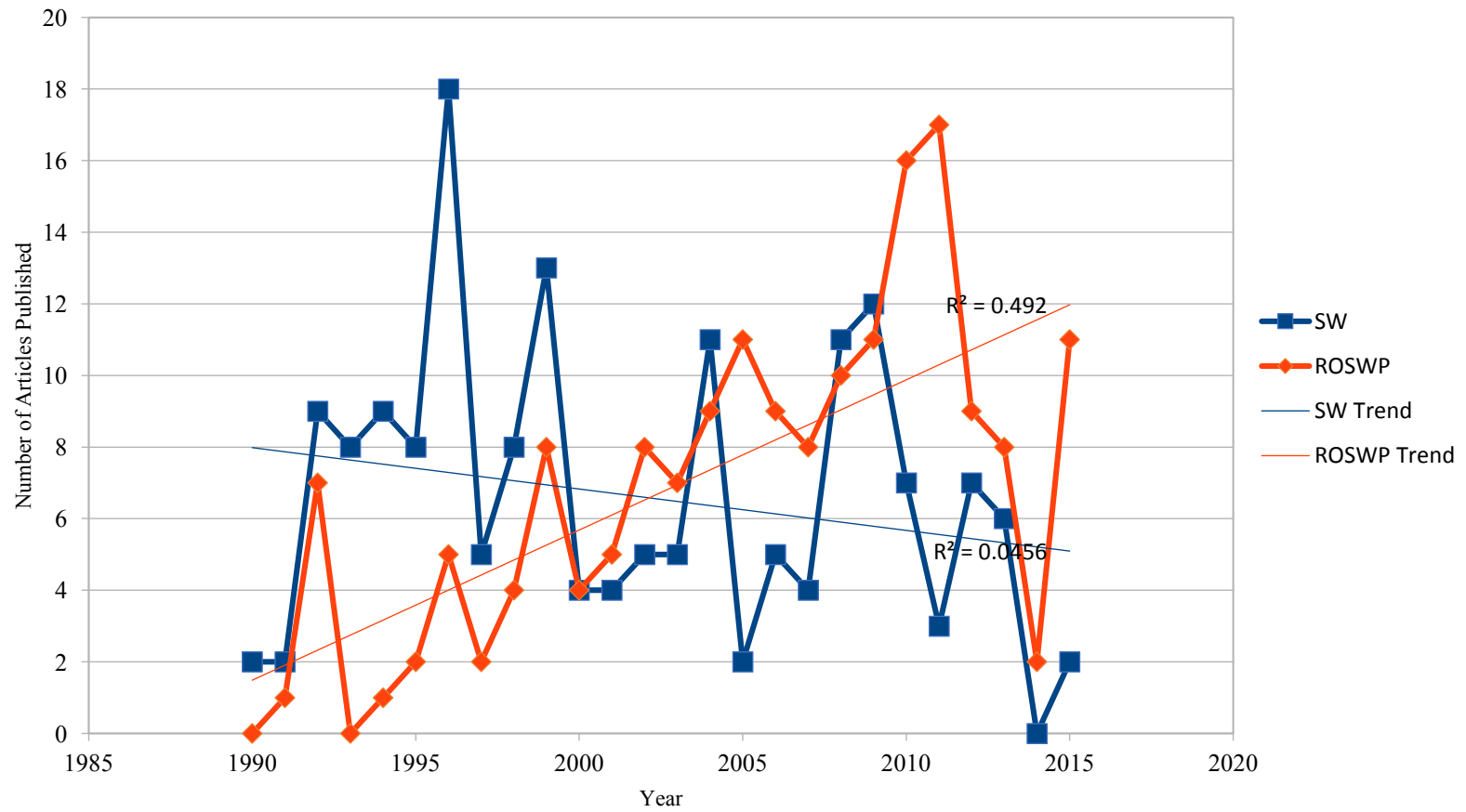


Table 1

Frequency of Article Type by Ethnic Group for Journals Combined: n (%)

<u>Article Type</u>	<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Focused^a</u>	<u>AA^a</u>	<u>L^a</u>	<u>AsA^a</u>	<u>NA^a</u>	<u>Multiple</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Conceptual/Theoretical	869 (59.3)	74 (19.6)	19 (15.7)	12 (19.4)	8 (36.4)	8 (57.1)	15 (10.6)	12 (75)	943
Quantitative	466 (31.8)	240 (63.7)	76 (62.8)	38 (61.3)	13 (59.1)	4 (28.6)	106 (74.6)	3 (18.6)	706
Qualitative	125 (8.6)	63 (16.7)	26 (21.5)	12 (19.4)	1 (4.5)	2 (14.3)	21 (14.8)	1 (6.3)	188
Total	1460	377	121	62	22	14	142	16	1837

^a*Focused=all ethnic minority groups combined, AA=African American, L=Latino(a), AsA=Asian American, NA= Native American*

Note: Articles focused on both African Americans and Latinos were included in the count for both ethnic group categories.

Table 2

Most Frequently Studied Topics by Ethnic Group: n (%)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Anglo</u>	<u>AA^a</u>	<u>L^a</u>	<u>AsA^a</u>	<u>NA^a</u>	<u>Multiple</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Professional Identity/Clinical Practice	1045 (19.4)	29 (6.5)	16 (6.6)	7 (8.6)	11 (22.9)	33 (5.9)	8 (16)	1149
Research Methods	442 (8.2)	26 (5.8)	19 (7.9)	7 (8.6)	6 (12.5)	77 (13.8)	8 (16)	585
Program Intervention	335 (6.2)	20 (4.5)	16 (6.6)	3 (3.7)	1 (2.1)	34 (6.1)	3 (6)	412
Abuse, Neglect and Trauma	218 (4)	23 (5.2)	17 (7.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	44 (7.9)	3 (6)	305
Healthcare	178 (3.3)	19 (4.3)	14 (5.8)	4 (4.9)	0 (0)	14 (2.5)	2 (4)	231
Psychopathology	160 (3)	17 (3.8)	11 (4.6)	5 (6.2)	1 (2.1)	17 (3)	0 (0)	211
Family Relations	73 (1.4)	7 (1.6)	4 (1.7)	5 (6.2)	0 (0)	12 (2.1)	0 (0)	101
Religion and Spirituality	60 (1.1)	8 (1.8)	0 (0)	1 (1.2)	5 (10.4)	3 (.5)	0 (0)	77
Diversity and Culture Topics	56 (1)	2 (.45)	2 (.8)	3 (3.7)	2 (4.2)	7 (1.3)	4 (8)	76
Immigration and Acculturation	10 (.2)	0 (0)	4 (1.7)	10 (8.1)	1 (2.1)	4 (.7)	7 (14)	36
Totals (for all topics studied)	5385	446	241	81	48	559	50	.

^aAA=African American. L=Latino(a), AsA=Asian American, NA= Native Americans

Note: Articles focused on both African Americans and Latinos were included in the count for both ethnic group categories.

Table 3

Top Funded Subjects by Ethnic Group, Frequency: n (%)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Anglo</u>	<u>AA^a</u>	<u>L^a</u>	<u>AsA^a</u>	<u>NA^a</u>	<u>Multiple</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Professional Identity/Clinical Practice	103 (22.7)	14 (15.1)	11 (27.5)	1 (25)	1 (50)	17 (18.7)	2 (28.6)	149
Research Methods	91 (20.1)	12 (12.9)	6 (15)	1 (25)	0 (0)	16 (17.6)	1 (14.3)	127
Program Intervention	74 (5.1)	9 (9.7)	4 (10)	0 (0)	1 (50)	14 (15.4)	2 (28.6)	105
Abuse, Neglect and Trauma	49 (16.3)	10 (10.8)	4 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (13.2)	0 (0)	75
Healthcare or Medical Care	39 (8.6)	8 (8.6)	3 (7.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (9.9)	0 (0)	59
Psychopathology	37 (8.2)	4 (4.3)	2 (5)	1 (50)	0 (0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0)	45
Therapy Outcomes and Effectiveness	24 (5.3)	4 (4.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (6.6)	0 (0)	34
Therapy Techniques	10 (2.2)	4 (4.3)	2 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (6.6)	0 (0)	22
Community Mental Health Services	8 (1.8)	6 (6.5)	3 (7.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	17
Diversity and Culture Topics	0 (0)	5 (5.4)	2 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (5.5)	1 (14.3)	13
Immigration and Acculturation	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (7.5)	1 (25)	0 (0)	4 (4.4)	1 (14.3)	8
Totals (all funded topics)	453	93	40	4	2	91	7	.

^aAA=African American. L=Latino(a), AsA=Asian American, NA= Native Americans.

Note: Articles focused on both African Americans and Latinos were included in the count for both ethnic group categories.

Table 4

Urban/Rural Setting by Ethnic Group: n (%)

<u>Setting</u>	<u>Anglos</u>	<u>Focused^a</u>	<u>AA^a</u>	<u>L^a</u>	<u>AsA^a</u>	<u>NA^a</u>	<u>Multiple Groups</u>	<u>Other</u>
No	326 (55.2)	108 (36.6)	34 (33.3)	15 (30)	4 (28.6)	2 (33.3)	50 (39.4)	3 (75)
information								
Urban	87 (14.7)	113 (38.3)	48 (47.1)	23 (46)	6 (42.9)	0 (0)	36 (28.3)	0 (0)
Mixed	167 (28.3)	66 (22.4)	18 (17.6)	10 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)	37 (29.1)	1 (25)
Rural	3 (.5)	7 (2.4)	2 (2)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (3.1)	0 (0)
Suburban	8 (1.4)	1 (.3)	0 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Totals	591	295	102	50	14	6	127	4

^a*Focused=all ethnic minority groups combined, AA=African American, L=Latino(a), AsA=Asian American, NA= Native American*

Note: Articles that were focused on both African Americans and Latino(a)s were double-counted for both ethnic group categories.