

SSHRC Standard Research Grants 2010-2011 Awards

Negotiating Citizenship and Social Rights from the Margins: A Study of Migrant Women seeking Violence Against Women Services in Canada

Principal Investigator: Rupaleem Bhuyan, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-Investigator: Judith Bernhard, School of Early Childhood Education, Ryerson University

Community-Based Collaborator: Mercedes Umana, Women's Health in Women's Hands

This research project involves a collaboration between researchers at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (University of Toronto), Early Childhood Education (Ryerson University) and Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre. This project builds upon the Principal Investigator's previous CERIS grant (2009-2010) which examined how violence against women service delivery is shaped by immigration policies. This study will explore how women who are in different places in the immigration process, seek safety and support from abuse for themselves and their children.

The three main objectives of this proposed research are: 1) To examine how women with precarious immigration status negotiate rights for themselves and their children when seeking services and support related to domestic violence; 2) To identify the ways in which immigration status shapes women's responses to domestic violence and their ability to find safety and security for themselves and their children; 3) To work with service providers in urban centres across Canada—Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver—to contextualize findings from the study into the broader socio-political context of immigration in Canada.

We will conduct conversational interviews with Spanish and English speaking women who are recruited through community health centres and violence against women support services in Toronto. A research advisory committee with representatives from partner organizations and service recipients will provide guidance throughout the research. Through the broad dissemination of research findings, we aim to inform the policy debate regarding mixed status families, immigration policy and the related social inclusion of immigrants in Canada.

An Analysis of Public and Private Discourses of Education Migration in Canadian Schools: A Case Study of South Korean Families

Principal Investigator: Eunjung Lee, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-Investigators: Ann Kim, Department of Sociology, York University; Samuel Noh, CAMH & Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto; Wansoo Park, School of Social Work, University of Windsor; Sung-Hyun Yun School of Social Work, University of Windsor; Minjung Kwak Department of Social Sciences, University of Toronto at Scarborough

Education migration to Canada has been increasing significantly during the last four decades. However, systematic inquiry into education migrants within the school system has been surprisingly rare, despite the fact that schools are one of the first services that newcomers connect with in the community. Also, existing studies mainly address issues of foreign students in higher levels of education (i.e., college or university levels)—less focus has been given to primary- and secondary-school-aged students, despite a strong increase in the numbers of younger foreign students in Canada and other English-speaking countries. To address these gaps in the literature, this project proposes to examine discourses of education migration at personal and institutional levels among elementary- and secondary-school students, their parents, and school personnel (i.e., teachers and administrators) in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It focuses on students from South Korea because it has been the top source country of foreign students in Canada for the past ten years.

This project involves a multidisciplinary team of investigators that for years has shared common interests in the Korean immigrant community in Canada and has been working together on another SSHRC project on the Toronto Korean Families Study (TKFS: 2009-2012, PI: Ann Kim). The proposed study will make a significant contribution to the field of Canadian education and immigration by making explicit the underlying context and discourses of social policy and practice in education migration. This, in turn, will help re-examine and improve current social policy and practice for educational migrants and relevant school and social services.

Motivations for Cyber Bullying: A Longitudinal and Multi-Perspective Inquiry

Principal Investigator: Faye Mishna, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-Investigators: Wendy Craig, Psychology, Queen's University; Tanya Beran, Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary; Deb Pepler, Psychology, York University; Judy Wiener, OISE/UT - Human Development and Applied Psychology, University of Toronto; David Johnston, Toronto District School Board

The majority of Canadian youth have access to the Internet and related communication technologies, which give young people unprecedented opportunities to communicate with others both in and out of their existing face-to-face social networks. Despite enormous benefits that result from electronic based communications, there are risks as children and youth spend more time online than ever before, in particular the risk of cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is recognized as a serious societal concern and is a priority for which teachers and parents seek guidance. In partnership with the Toronto District School Board, this research is a longitudinal multi-informant mixed methods study using grounded theory and a longitudinal quantitative design.

The objectives are to: 1) explore how youth in grades 4, 7 and 10 experience and understand cyber bullying; 2) explore how parents and teachers conceptualize cyber bullying; 3) explore how children and youth think about the motivations for cyber bullying; 4) document how cyber bullying develops, how often it occurs and how a child's role may shift over time; and 5) identify factors that protect or increase a child's likelihood to be involved in cyber bullying. Since younger children are rapidly increasing their engagement with electronic communication, including grade 4 students will allow us to track how cyber bullying develops and to track factors that protect and increase cyber bullying involvement. We will administer standardized questionnaires to measure youth's experiences with cyber bullying over time and to measure behaviours; self-esteem; and peer, family and school support. Interviews with selected students who identify as victims and/or perpetrators of cyber bullying and their parents and teachers, will complement the quantitative information. We will explore the participants' experiences, understanding and views of cyber bullying and its underlying motivations.

The Relative Influence of Training and Experience on Social Workers' Professional Judgement

Principal Investigator: Cheryl Regehr, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-Investigators: Jane Paterson, CAMH, Nursing Practice and Professional Services; Deborah Goodman, Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Child Welfare Institute; Marion Bogo, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto; Vicki LeBlanc, Wilson Centre for Research in Education, University of Toronto

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Social workers exercise professional judgment in complex situations that have high stakes outcomes, often involving life and death. The expertise required to address these situations includes a multifaceted intellectual understanding of client and environmental risk and protective factors, technical proficiency, and emotional awareness. One area of social work practice requiring a high level of expertise and sound judgment is suicide risk assessment. This study seeks to understand and model the influences of training, experience, psychological and physiological arousal, and client variables on social workers' professional judgment regarding suicide risk. An experimental design will be utilized in which 30 social work students specially trained in suicide risk assessment, 30 experienced social workers, and 30 experienced social workers provided with updated training in suicide risk, conduct assessments of standardized clients performing in risk scenarios.

This proposed study will build on five areas of previous research of the investigators: 1) professional competence and judgment; 2) stress and trauma response in social workers; 3) the influence of stress on judgment and decision-making; 4) reliability and validity of risk assessment measures; and 5) social work practice with suicidal clients in order to develop a comprehensive theoretical model for understanding professional judgment in suicide risk assessment. The proposed research has implications for the conceptualization of professional judgment, for the development of future suicide risk assessment models and for training social workers to use these models.

Understanding positive parenting after separation

Principal Investigator: Michael Saini, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-investigators: Rachel Birnbaum, School of Social Work, King's University College; Nicholas Bala, Faculty of Law, Queen's University; Francine Cyr, Psychologie, Université de Montréal

Children in separated families, compared to children in intact families, are at higher risk of experiencing a range of negative outcomes, including externalizing behaviours, difficulties in school and with peers, depression and

anxiety. Higher levels of interparental conflict have been found to be strong predictors of child maladjustment after separation. Differences in parental functioning are a result of highly complex interactions, particularly at times of stress such as occur during separation. The construct of "positive parenting" incorporates a variety of concepts that reflect a number of theories and research traditions. Some of these are: schemas of parenting practices and styles, dimensions that capture the quality of parenting, parents' feelings of efficacy/competency and the dynamics of parent-child interactions. The goal of this project is to ascertain the constructs of parenting for various levels of interparental conflict, explore parents' perceptions of parenting in the midst of conflict, and understand which mental health and/or legal remedies are perceived by parents as helpful in adjusting to the separation process and strengthening their focus on the needs of the children.

The research involves two interrelated components: 1. A survey of parents, using standardized measures, intended to capture parenting practices and levels of inter-parental conflict. Demographic data will be collected in order to examine their possible effects in explaining differences among and between parents, children and the social institutions, such as service and legal agencies, with which they interact. 2. Interviews will be conducted with parents to understand both their experiences of parenting in the midst of conflict, and their assessment of services that may or may not facilitate positive parenting. The research will compare results from Ontario with those from Quebec. This mixed-method study will provide data that will help us to develop a framework to better illuminate the mediating effects of positive parenting; develop guidelines on parenting strategies and recommend the kinds of services that may facilitate this process.

SSHRC Public Outreach Grants 2010-2011 Awards

Increasing Research Capacity in Ontario Child Welfare Authorities

Principal Investigator: Barbara Fallon, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-Applicant: Nico Trocmé, Centre for Research on Children and Families, McGill University

Partners: Children's Aid Society of Algoma, Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

Building on knowledge mobilization models the proposed initiative will implement a focused research mobilization strategy that brings together clinicians, managers and researchers from Ontario child welfare authorities to utilize an existing dataset to answer relevant policy and practice questions. The initiative is based on the assumption that there can be effective linkages made between researchers and child welfare practitioners through timely and relevant knowledge exchange. The results are mutual learning through the process of planning, producing, disseminating, and applying existing or new research in decision-making. The initiative uses an evidence-based position that uses an approach appropriate and warranted in the a field that has a lack of decisive evidence and addresses research gaps in an incremental fashion, building on the analysis of readily available data. The specific objectives for the proposed project include:

1. improve service providers' capacity to access and analyze service information data to inform service and policy decisions;
2. integrate clinical expertise in service and policy decision;
3. develop a joint research agenda that addresses high-priority knowledge gaps.

Do skilled immigrants need "Canadian (work) experience"?: Public engagement and conversations through new media and reader's theatre

Principal Investigator: Izumi Sakamoto, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Co-Applicant: Lin Fang, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto

Collaborator: Natalie Wood, Faculty of Community Services and Health Sciences, George Brown College

Partners: Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, Mennonite New Life Centre Toronto

Canada relies on immigrants to sustain its economy and to counterbalance the aging population and "brain drain" (emigration of Canadians) to the US. Canadian immigration policy currently favours and encourages foreign nationals who have high skills and prior work experience to immigrate to Canada as permanent residents. It is widely reported, however, that once in Canada, these immigrants face serious employment challenges despite a number of government-sponsored services focusing on immigrant settlement, including employment services

Building on the insights gained from the Principal Investigators previous funded research, the objectives of this project are to: (1) "Translate" our theoretical research findings into more user-friendly languages through collaboration with community partners and consultation sessions with potential knowledge users for effective dissemination; (2) Use digital media and art as creative strategies to engage stakeholder groups and the general public as a way to collectively generate strategies and solutions to address the issues identified; and (3) Highlight the strength and effectiveness of arts-informed research methods and dissemination strategies using digital technologies and arts as techniques of public engagement. These objectives will be achieved through the following creative dissemination activities: 1. Develop and maintain an integrated, interactive website with dynamic interplay with social media; 2. Develop short videos on drama scripts ("reader's theatre") which highlight the excerpts of research participants' narratives and other main findings; 3. Create accessible factsheets for target audiences; 4. Send out a media release for various media outlets; 5. Publish a special issue of the "New Voices" magazine (published by Mennonite New Life Centre) from the knowledge generated; and 6. host a disseminating event (Launch) highlighting the website, reader's theatre videos, Tweet station, accessible factsheets, and "New Voices" magazine special issue.