FEATURING:

IMR Scholars’ research in the communities...
ne of the UW–Milwaukee publications that caught my eye before I officially started back in July 2004 was Myriad. After reading the spring issue, I wrote a short note to Department of Multicultural Affairs Director Gary Williams thanking him for the issue and for providing me with insight into how our university serves the wonderfully diverse Milwaukee community.

Not one to let an opportunity go by, Gary replied with a request that I write a commentary for the upcoming issue of Myriad that talked about my vision for multicultural affairs and diversity at our University.

To respond to that request, I needed to look no further than our mission statement. Within that document are very pertinent statements that speak to my vision for multicultural affairs and diversity at our University. Our mission statement states that we must:

- Serve the needs of women, minority, disadvantaged, disabled and non-traditional students and seek racial and ethnic diversification of the student body and the professional faculty and staff.
- Further academic and professional opportunities at all levels for women, minority, part-time, and financially or educationally disadvantaged students.
- Develop and maintain high quality undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs appropriate to a major urban doctoral university.

Please note, this is not an either/or proposition. Among many other responsibilities, we must do all of the above. In sum, we must remain an inclusive institution.

In the days since I began at UWM, I have called upon our University to review the many aspects of our academic support services across campus. This review is under way as I write. The reason for this review is simple. We must guarantee, before students enroll at UWM, that they have the necessary educational skills to succeed. We must guarantee, after students enroll, that they have access to all the tools they need to succeed.

Every student who steps on our campus should believe that they can succeed here, and we must raise our expectations about how successful students can be at UWM.

We must also continue to diversify the student body of this campus, for it is in this diversity that we distinguish ourselves as a campus. I am extremely proud to say that UWM currently has enrolled more underrepresented minorities than any other campus in the UW System. I tell people this very often. Their response is sometimes one of surprise, but always one of appreciation.

I believe that students, no matter what their socio-economic background, deserve the highest quality education. We must ensure that UWM will be the institution that will make available the unique experience that only a research institution can provide.

Access and opportunity are qualities that define UWM, so enrollment is very important, but so is retention of students and timely graduation. If we are to really improve our retention and graduation rates and ensure that all students have a fulfilling experience here at UWM, we need to continue to promote a number of important initiatives:

- We must expand the opportunities for an on-campus residential life experience for all students, including those students whose families live in Milwaukee. Currently, only about 10% of our students reside in university housing;
- We must explore the creation of living-learning communities; in fact, the Kenilworth project is our first true opportunity to create a living-learning community centered around the Peck School of the Arts;
- We must provide a seamless transition from advising to mentoring;
- We must promote our transition to college programs and make sure that the first-year experience is a positive one;
- We must develop early warning systems to ensure the timely referral of academic and other support to students in need;
- We must demonstrate a real concern for the future of our students and assist them as they go through their processes of discovery and transformation; and
- We must ensure a campus climate that is inviting and welcoming. I am working directly with Anthony Hightower, Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity Services, to raise the profile on matters of campus climate and on our progress to further diversify our student body, faculty, and staff. Working together, we will make additional progress toward unity in diversity.

There is much to be done at UWM, and I believe we can accomplish it without forgetting our special commitment as a public research university to access and opportunity. I appreciate the opportunity to share these perspectives with you and hope that you, too, will work toward these important goals for UWM.

— Carlos E. Santiago
Chancellor
occupied! Busy! Committed to! Involved!

For those of us who still possess a desk copy of Webster’s Dictionary, these terms can be found to define the word—“engaged!” The authors of the articles that you will review on the following pages reflect that definition as they highlight their scholarly activity of engagement within our community and abroad.

The advantages of being a research university, residing in an urban community, are numerous. Our faculty, instructional staff, students and other supporters of civic engagement have forged partnerships that enhance opportunities for research, teaching, learning, and public service.

How does our locale influence our research base? Teaching is enhanced by the diversity of scholars that bring their life and academic knowledge to the community classroom. Whether the research question pertains to health disparities in communities of color, innovative models to enhance recruitment and retention of students of color, or the gathering of oral history from long term residents of the City, the opportunity to partner is there. In a reciprocal fashion, the community identifies opportunities for collaboration that are priorities for enhancing their quality of life—opportunities that our faculty, teaching staff, and students act as co-investors to embrace.

How does our locale influence student learning potential? Our Institute of Service Learning, as well as our Center for Volunteerism and Student Leadership, provide organized pathways for students to interact with community in an engaged, respectful, and thought provoking manner. These influences have a major impact on their professional choices and decision making patterns.

How does our locale influence community perception? We are seen as partners, collaborators, allies, and associates in good standing as we move towards a goal of excellence in citizenship and life potential for our City. Our Community Scholars in Residence program, supported by the Knowledge-fest initiative, has allowed community members to partner over a long-term period with a specific university scholar around a mutually agreed upon area of interest. Our Community Roundtable, as well as the inclusion of non-university allies on advisory councils and other internal committees, has also provided a fertile exchange for ideas regarding the next collaborative opportunity.

A myriad of scholars equals a myriad of learners! A myriad of interests equals a myriad of opportunities!

Community will continue to observe!

— Joan M. Prince, Vice Chancellor
Partnerships and Innovation
Thank you to the many readers who provided comments on the last issue of Myriad. We were so excited about the positive and enthusiastic remarks that we decided to share a few with you. The comments from Ricardo Fernández were especially gratifying and affirming as President Fernández was the publisher of the first Myriad in 1990.

Keep those comments coming. Your continued support and feedback are critical to reflecting what you will be reading in future issues of Myriad. Enjoy this issue.

— Gary L. Williams
Publisher

Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton:

Thank you so much for sending the 2004 Myriad. What an impressive publication! You were quite right—I found the articles informative and helpful as I think about various areas of public policy. I also found them to be provocative examples of solid scholarship.

I hope you will keep me on your mailing list. My congratulations to all whom contributed to this success.

President of the UW System Board of Regents Toby E. Marcovich:

Thank you very much for forwarding me a copy of Myriad and I did in fact read the publication. You asked me to let you know what I think; that would probably fill several volumes. However, the short version is that I think our 2008 Diversity Plan is probably addressing the right problems, whether or not it is going to be effective or needs more fine tuning, is another question.

I read with the greatest interest the article on page 24 “Creating Effective Schools in Failed Urban Districts.” When we created the 2008 Plan, I was of the very strong opinion that this is the area where we could be the most effective in bringing our diversity numbers up to where they belong. If we didn’t get intervening in the public school system in the early grades, we were never going to be successful in having a well qualified, diverse population in the higher education field. I think this article pretty well highlights that point.

Again, thank you for forwarding the publication to me. I believe you know that I am firmly dedicated and committed to having a well qualified, diverse population in the University of Wisconsin System.

President of Lehman College Ricardo R. Fernández:

Thanks so much for sharing with me a copy of the 2004 Myriad. I recognize several old friends, including William Vélez and Marty Haberman, among the contributors. Reviewing the list of Institute Scholars, the names of former colleagues brought back fond memories, such as Diane Pollard and Harold Rose, Joan Moore, José Torres and Adrian Chan.

I note also that Linda Huang, whom I hired as my assistant in 1988-1989, is still there and now serves as the editor. Myriad was an interesting concept and it is gratifying to see that it is still being published after a decade and a half after its first edition. Keep it up! UWM needs it as another vehicle to tell its stories, particularly those coming from faculty, staff and students of color.

Please convey my best wishes to all my former colleagues, with many of whom I still communicate from time to time. Thanks for helping stir up so many pleasant memories of my 20 years at UWM.
We begin this essay with a quotation from W. E. B. Du Bois, who wrote, in 1936, the following: “Theoretically the Negro needs neither segregated nor mixed schools. What he needs is education. But he must remember that there is no magic either in mixed schools or in segregated schools. A mixed school with poor and unsympathetic teachers with hostile public opinion and no teaching concerning Black folk is bad.” (Quoted in Woodson, 1977.) Unfortunately, the experiences of African-American families and their children with public school desegregation have often been very bad.

The first section of this essay provides a brief overview of the Brown case and its aftermath. This is followed by an examination of the desegregation process in Milwaukee. We argue that in spite of its good intentions, the implementation of the decision by the U. S. Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education (1954), which ordered the dismantling of the legal system supporting segregation of schools, did not lead to sustained integration of most school systems, and ultimately, much of its early impact has been negated by white resistance and white flight from the central cities of large urban metropolitan areas.

Thanks largely to the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in a series of court cases (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954, 1955; Swan v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, 1971; Keyes v. School District No. 1, 1973), the legal foundation of both de jure (legally mandated segregation) and de facto (segregation based on residential patterns and pupil assignment practices) had been set aside. However, white resistance to school desegregation, followed by white flight to the suburbs, resulted in the majority of African-American and Hispanic students attending racially isolated (predominantly Black or Brown) public schools. As Orfield and Eaton (1996) noted, by the end of the twentieth century, schools were rapidly resegregating at a pace that leaves urban public schools more segregated today than they were 25 to 30 years ago. Since the decision by the U. S. Supreme Court in Milliken v. Bradley (1974, 1977) limited desegregation remedies, in most school districts, to the legal boundaries of the central cities, many urban districts rapidly became “majority minority” school systems. This was the situation at the time that Milwaukee began to deal seriously with the issue of segregated schools.

BACKGROUND OF MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOL’S DESEGREGATION

Since the Brown Decision of 1954, African-Americans in Milwaukee, Wisconsin have moved from seeking access to an integrated education to efforts to control their children’s education via segregated [neighborhood] schools. In the early 1960s, blacks in Milwaukee fought to desegregate the Milwaukee Public Schools System (MPS). Then African-American students attended overcrowded and highly segregated neighborhood schools. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Milwaukee United for School Integration Committee (MUSIC) organized a series of protests, sit-ins and demonstrations; and blocked school buses and school construction projects in an effort to end MPS’ segregated schools.

Opponents of MPS cited three key components that showed evidence of MPS’ segregated schools. First, MPS used a neighborhood attendance policy to maintain segregated schools, whereby students were assigned to schools closest to their homes, which reinforced the city’s housing segregation patterns. Second, MPS used the practice of “intact busing” to maintain segregation within schools. Entire classrooms of black students were bused to different schools in majority white areas because of overcrowding at their neighborhood schools, but the bused students could not interact with the other students at the receiving schools. They stayed together with their staff, returned to their own school to eat lunch and then were bused back.
to the other schools. Black students had separate recess from the students at the receiving schools. Intact busing lasted from 1957-71. A third component was MPS’ segregation of its faculty. Black teachers were employed to teach only black students, while white teachers taught both black and white students (Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1985).

In June, 1965, Attorney Lloyd Barbee, president of Wisconsin NAACP and a civil rights activist, filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court against MPS, charging it with intentionally segregating the school system via the three factors cited above. The suit charged that MPS allowed white students to transfer to other schools, while denying black students the same opportunities. It also charged MPS with planning to build several schools within the black community to keep black students segregated (Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1985). The lawsuit was titled Amos et al. v. Board of School Directors et al. (1976). It was later re-named Armstrong (Kevin) et al. v. O’Connell. Federal Judge John Reynolds ruled on January 19, 1976 that MPS Board had intentionally created a segregated school system that was unconstitutional (Stolee, 1985).

In 1979, a Federal Court Consent Decree settled the MPS lawsuit. It required that at least 75 percent of all students within the MPS district would be enrolled in racially balanced schools (defined as between 25 percent and 60 percent black enrollment at the elementary, middle, and high school levels). The settlement left 22 schools virtually all Black, while other black schools closed (Lincoln, Parkman). It resulted in pupil reassignments, voluntary pupil transfers, and the creation of magnet schools (Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1985).

When Federal Judge John Reynolds issued his ruling on January 19, 1976, white students comprised 57.1 percent of MPS’ total student population. Three years later when the 1979 decree order was issued, whites constituted only 47.7 percent of MPS students. By the school year 2003-04, white students constituted only 18 percent of MPS student population. The percentage of black students in MPS increased from 36.8 percent in 1976 to 59.4 in 2003-04. See Table 1. Black students still attend segregated schools in MPS, but they now constitute the majority of MPS students.

The school desegregation order resulted in busing within the MPS district. However, blacks shared the burden of busing for desegregation purposes (Cullinan, 1980; Dougherty, 2004). In 1978, the first year of busing in Milwaukee, 72 percent of the students bused for desegregation purposes were African-American students. By 1980, 90 percent of the students bused in Milwaukee for school desegregation purposes were African-Americans. White students were allowed to remain at their neighborhood schools or attend majority black schools that offered specialty programs (Cullinan, 1980).

**STUDENT POVERTY**

The number of MPS students listed as being in poverty increased significantly in recent years. The number of students from MPS’ total student enrollment that receive free or reduced lunch represents those students who are considered to be in poverty (Milwaukee Public Schools, 2004). The number of MPS students in poverty increased from 48,792 (55.8%) in 1982 to 69,795 (67.5%) in 2002. See Table 2. In 2003, according to MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos, “Some 80% of district’s 100,000 students are eligible for reduced lunch, which means they are poor” (Pabst, 2003). As Levine and Zipp (1985:59) noted, “A growing poverty in the community has meant an increasingly impoverished MPS clientele.” In some predominately black schools, over 80 percent of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Student homelessness has been a major challenge facing MPS. According to MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos, 7,000 to 8,000 MPS students were considered homeless in the school year 2003-04 (Pabst, 2003). “The federal definition of homeless children is any child or youth who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This now includes children...
and youths sharing housing; living in
hotels, motels, trailer homes or
campgrounds; or awaiting foster care”
students constitute the majority of
homeless students in MPS. “An
overwhelming majority of Milwaukee’s
homeless children — about 95% —
are children of color according to
Milwaukee Public Schools records”
(Kissinger, 2004). Homeless students
encounter such problems as constantly
sharing living space with strangers,
lacking a study place, moving from
one location to another, and moving
in and out of relatives and friends’
homes. Other student homelessness
problems include withdrawn behavior,
anger, poor grooming and personal
hygiene; sleeping in class and
inadequate clothing (Kissinger, 2004).
While current data is not available on
the academic performance of homeless
students in MPS, one national study
found that homeless students are
more likely to repeat grade levels.
They are four times more likely to
drop out of school and twice as likely
to score lower on standardized tests
than non-homeless students (Kissinger,
2004). These problems have impacted
MPS’ academic performance.
Less than half of African-American
students graduated from MPS between
1996 and 2003. From 1996 to 2001,
44-49 percent of African-American
students graduated from MPS.
Although the percentage of blacks
graduating from MPS increased to 56
percent in 2003, this is still the lowest
graduation percent of any racial
group in Wisconsin (Borsuk, 2004).
Another indication of MPS
students not reaching their academic
goals is that nearly one-third of MPS
students failed to achieve academic
standards outlined in the federal No
Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. In
the school year 2003-04, a total of 67
MPS schools were identified as schools
in need of improvement under the
NCLB law. This was an increase of 10
MPS schools from the 2002-03 school
year (Abdul-Alim, 2004; Wisconsin
Department of Public Instructions,
2004).
CHAPTER 220 PROGRAM

In 1975, the Wisconsin State Legislature voluntarily created the Chapter 220 Program that seeks to promote cultural and racial integration in education. It provides state aid for the transfer of minority and non-minority students between school districts and between schools within a district if the transfer helps improve a school’s racial balance. The Chapter 220 Program went into effect on May 4, 1976. It reimburses MPS & suburban Milwaukee schools based on the number of interdistrict transfers they accept and the average expenditure per pupil in the district. In the school year 2003-04, the state projected it would cost $90 million for the Chapter 220 Program (Carr, 2004).

1984 MPS LAWSUIT AGAINST SUBURBS

In 1984, MPS filed a suit in federal court against the suburbs, the state superintendent (Herbert Grover) and the governor (Tommy Thompson) because it could not be desegregated without greater involvement by suburban school districts in the Milwaukee metropolitan area. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) joined MPS in this lawsuit. (One of the authors of this article, Michael Bonds, was a plaintiff in this suit for the NAACP.)

1987 FEDERAL DECRREE SETTLEMENT OF MPS’ 1984 LAWSUIT

Some major highlights of the 1987 settlement of the 1984 lawsuit included the following. It increased from 12 to 25 the number of suburban school districts participating in the Chapter 220 Program. Also, suburban school districts agreed to increase the number of voluntary student transfers accepted into the program, and it required MPS to reserve seats equal to 10 percent of seats in its specialty schools for suburban students to attend the MPS. Furthermore, the settlement created a coordinating council to oversee the Chapter 220 Program. In addition, it provided for the hiring of minority personnel in the suburbs, funding for minority families to purchase homes in the suburbs, and for staff training in human relations. Finally, more state aid was provided to MPS for programs to improve the academic deficiencies of its educationally and economically disadvantaged students (Stolee, 1985; Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, 1997).

The number of minority students enrolled in the Chapter 220 Program has decreased significantly in recent years. It dropped from a high of 5,918 students in 1993 to 3,784 in 2003. See Table 3.

Since suburban schools are not required to report the academic performance of minority students in the Chapter 220 Program, minority students’ academic performance at those schools is not known. However, we do know that the number of minority students in the Chapter 220 Program continues to decline annually in suburban school districts that are better financed than MPS and offer more educational opportunities.

OPTIONS PROGRAMS

Educational reform efforts designed to provide African-Americans more options and control over their children’s education have resulted in the re-segregation of schools, while not improving the educational attainments of black students. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), sponsored by State Representative Annette “Polly” Williams, was enacted in March 1990 by the Wisconsin Legislature, and it went into effect beginning in the 1990-91 school year. The Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction (DPI) pays to the parents of each student in the MPCP an amount that is equal to the lesser of MPS’ equalization aid per student or the private school’s operating and debt service per pupil that is related to educational programming. DPI then reduces MPS’ school aid by that amount multiplied by the number of choice students. When the MPCP first went into effect, Wisconsin paid $2,379 per pupil state aid. In addition, when this program was first created, religious schools were not allowed to participate. Moreover, only one percent of MPS’ total student population was eligible for participation in the MPCP. Likewise, for a family of four, income could not exceed 175 percent of the federal poverty level. (This was about $24,412 in 1992.)

In the 1990s, the MPCP survived several legal challenges. In March 1992, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court ruled that the MPCP was constitutional. In 1995, the Wisconsin State Legislature passed legislation as part of the 1995-97 Biennial Budget Act that allowed the MPCP to expand to 15 percent of MPS’ total enrollment, and to allow religious schools to

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MPS minority students to suburbs schools</th>
<th>Suburbs students to MPS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>645</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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Source: Milwaukee Public Schools Chapter 220 Office 2004

Table 3: Number of Chapter 220 students per school year
participate in the MPCP (Percy & Maier, 1996). In June 1998, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court ruled that the 1995 changes to the MPCP were constitutional (Dunk & Dickman, 2003).

The number of students in the MPCP has increased dramatically from 341 in 1990-91 to 13,419 in 2003-04. Also, the number of schools participating in the MPCP has increased from seven in 1990-91 to 106 in 2003-04. In 2003-04, the state paid schools up to $5,880 per student in the MPCP. It cost the state $76.2 million in 2003-04 for the MPCP (Borsuk, 2003).

Since schools participating in the MPCP are not required to either administer standardized academic exams or report their scores, it is difficult to know how black students in those schools are performing (Dunk & Dickman, 2003; Public Policy Forum, 2004). Although some MPCP schools administer standardized exams, they did not report how their students performed on them (Public Policy Forum, 2004). MPCP schools are also highly racially segregated. As of 2003-04, for the 91 percent of the 106 schools that provided data on student racial composition, the student body was 44 percent African-American, 35 percent white, 15 percent Hispanic, and five percent from other groups. Yet, 34 percent of the schools that reported data have 100 percent minority enrollment and 23 schools have student minority population ranging from 90 percent to 100 percent (Public Policy Forum, 2004).

**CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

In 1993, Wisconsin passed legislation establishing charter schools as part of the 1993-95 state budget. Charter schools are exempted from most state laws and rules governing traditional public schools, except those relating to qualification of instructional staff, third grade reading tests and examinations, and other provisions related to student performance. Charter schools are operated under a limited-term contract or charter, which the sponsoring agency can revoke or renew upon expiration. Under Wisconsin’s charter school law, a school board may create a charter school either upon its own initiative or upon receipt of a written petition from teachers employed by the school district. In 2003-04, MPS had 25 charter schools. In 1997, the Wisconsin State Legislature passed a law that allowed three separate entities: the City of Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM), and the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) authority to charter public schools. In 2003-04, there were a total of 12,731 students in the charter schools in Milwaukee operated by MPS, the City and UWM (Public Policy Forum, 2003). Charter schools received $7,050 per student in 2003-04. The Charter School Program cost Wisconsin $23 million in 2003-04 (Borsuk, 2003).

The majority of the students attending charter schools are African-Americans. In 2003-04, 59.4 percent of the 12,731 students in the Charter School Program were African-Americans. Of the 35 charter schools in Milwaukee during the school year 2003-04, 22 had enrollments of black students that exceeded 65 percent, including 19 schools that had black student populations exceeding 80 percent. See Table 4. Charter schools are just as racially segregated as MPS. Also, black students at charter schools in Milwaukee do not perform any better than black students in MPS. For example, “for white students in charter schools, 77 percent were proficient or advanced in reading compared to 55 percent for Black/Hispanic students. In math, 74 percent of white students were advanced or proficient compared to 42 percent of Black/Hispanic students” (Public Policy Forum, 2003:1). Other studies have made similar findings. In 2002, one study of academic data from the 2001-02 school year of some Milwaukee charter schools’ academic test scores and comparing them to MPS concluded, “Overall charter schools have not shown test scores so far that are much different than other schools in Milwaukee” (Borsuk, 2002: 12A). Even students in MPS charter schools have failed to meet the academic standards established under the NCLB Act. Deb Lindsey of MPS Research Department stated that, “Of the 35 schools (MPS) that missed the mark (No Child Left Behind Law) for the first year, 17 are potential approval for the district. Many of them are small alternative schools and charter schools, which have relatively few students taking the state’s standardized test” (Abdul-Alim,
2004). The UWM Office of Charter Schools noted in its charter schools performance reports that some of its charter schools were performing less well than expected academically (University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Office of Charter School, 2004).

**NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL INITIATIVE (NSI)**

In October 1999, the Wisconsin State Legislature voted to allow MPS to borrow up to $170 million for creating neighborhood school facilities as part of the 1999-2001 budget. The NSI is designed to enroll more students in neighborhood schools and to reduce the number of students bused in MPS on a daily basis from 70,000 students to 50,000 students.

In August 2000, MPS Board of Directors approved the NSI by a vote of 8-0. It will allow MPS to borrow

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<td>0.6</td>
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| Total % Charter | 2.7 | 60.3 | 19.1 | 0.9 | 17.1 | 12,731 |
| MPS             | 4.4 | 59.4 | 18.0 | 0.9 | 17.3 | 97,359 |

Source: Public Policy Forum 2003
$98.4 million for the NSI. This amount represents approximately 60 percent of the amount allowed by the State of Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin will provide $81 million of the $98.4 million via state-backed long-term bonds. MPS will provide the remaining $17.4 million. This plan is expected to save $15 million a year in transportation costs for MPS, and provide new space for 7,500 students located in areas of the City where there are currently fewer seats than students. The NSI will be implemented over a six-year period beginning in the school year 2001-02, and is to be completely in place by the 2004-05 school year. The plan will focus on 28 school areas that have more children than seats available for them in their own neighborhoods (Borsuk, 2004; Public Policy Forum, 2002, 2003).

Some key components of the NSI are as follows. Six new schools will be built. Also, some schools will be expanded physically to accommodate more students, and some citywide schools will be converted into neighborhood schools. Moreover, the NSI will provide for more daylong programs for children before and after school, or in community centers that could be run by non-profit groups that contract with MPS. Finally, the NSI will result in the switching of more than 30 schools to kindergarten through eighth grade (Borsuk, 2004; Milwaukee Public Schools, 2000; Public Policy Forum 2002, 2003). The Public Policy Forum (2003) noted that some increase in racial segregation of MPS under the NSI is anticipated. It noted that, “The percent of elementary and K-8 schools enrolling a majority of white students has increased since 1998-99 from 13 percent to 16 percent, while the number of schools enrolling a majority of Latino students has decreased from 11 percent to 7 percent. Yet, the portion of schools with majority African-American enrollments remained at 53 percent” (Public Policy Forum, 2003:8). In addition, many schools affected by the NSI have failed to meet academic performance goals under the NCLB law and they are included on DPI’s list of schools in need of improvement (Wisconsin Department of Public Instructions, 2004).

CONCLUSION

While critics of the Brown Decision make much of its failures (e.g., African-American and Latino students are still segregated today and attending schools that have few resources), they have failed to consider that some of the challenges in MPS are directly linked to depressed social and economic conditions (truancy, poverty, homelessness, funding caps, white flight, and so forth). In 1993, Wisconsin passed a property tax funding cap that restricted school districts from raising property taxes beyond the level established in 1993, thus limiting them to 1993 spending levels. Such spending caps have caused multimillion dollar budget deficits for MPS, which have resulted in cuts in staff and academic programs (Chapman, 2001). Moreover, a new way of looking at how schools perform should be examined. Too often, emphasis is placed on the progression of students from one grade level to another. This approach overlooks the fact that a student may be several years or grade levels behind. Instead, the focus should be on how students improved in school subject areas instead of grade levels. Also, this study has documented that students in schools viewed as part of educational reforms (charter schools, choice) have not fared any better academically than MPS students. (Data on minority students’ academic progress in the Chapter 220 Program is not available.)

What was the promise of Brown? It promised to eliminate de jure segregation based on the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896. That part of the promise has been realized. However, supporters of the decision expected much more; many expected Brown to initiate changes in all aspects of racial stratification in American society. The most optimistic advocates anticipated equal educational opportunity at all levels from kindergarten to graduate and professional programs. Some even hoped that improved educational opportunities would result in equal access to jobs, housing, and political power. The optimistic vision did not take into account the entrenched structural barriers that would make it nearly impossible to reduce the extent of de facto segregation in large urban school districts. Nor did they understand the hostility and resistance from whites that would accompany the perceived attacks on their privileges (segregated schools and neighborhoods, as well as access to selective colleges and prestigious occupations). As this study has demonstrated, the schools cannot solve all of the problems of the central city. A more realistic approach must include efforts to provide economic development that will make jobs available for parents, as well as decent housing and health care for families.
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Traditional Child-Rearing Practices and Folk Remedies in Southeast Asian Communities

Gwat-Yong Lie

There is scant published literature on child-rearing practices in Southeast Asian1 groups. This article represents a beginning attempt at addressing that gap. It describes select practices applied at different developmental stages of the child. The developmental timeline framing this narrative begins with the period when the child is developing in utero and extends to late adolescence. While the child-rearing perspective adopted is that of a female caretaker, this is not to imply that fathers and other male figures in the child’s life are not involved in child rearing or caretaking.

IN UTERO

First time mothers-to-be are counseled by other experienced mothers and older women in the family on what to eat and what to avoid. In some families, expectant mothers are directed to conscientiously avoid eating mutton, and to a lesser extent, this injunction applies to beef as well and for the same reason. The taboo is fueled by the belief that consumption of mutton renders the unborn, particularly if the fetus is an unborn male child, vulnerable to seizures. Expectant mothers are encouraged to generously include soy products (e.g., soy milk, tofu, tempeh) for strong bones and fair skin; “skin as white and as unblemished as soy milk.” Included in the expectant mother’s diet are soups and stews brewed with herbs and rice wine, most of which may have been imported from the home countries and unfamiliar to most Americans. Cambodian women are known to regularly drink a traditional mixture of wine, sesame seeds, and herbs in an attempt to control the size and weight of the unborn child. The goal is to have a small-sized infant to ensure an easy delivery (Kelley, 1996).

Some ethnic groups (e.g., Malays from Malaysia and indigenous Indonesians) believe in the potency of regular belly massages with, for example, coconut oil to help the skin around the protruding stomach to remain supple and retractable after birth. However, massages are an entrusted set of skills developed by village midwives, who have been trained by custom and tradition on the intricacies of massage and the birthing of babies. Thus, if the baby is in breech position by the time of birth, skillful massage and manipulation can help to reposition the baby into the correct position for eventual birth.

A few expectant mothers may be leery of taking prenatal vitamins or keeping regular prenatal visits; the women in their families may have done well without such assistance, and their own expectations are that they would fare just as well, if not better, by being here in the U.S. with the availability of better birthing facilities. Mothers-to-be tend to be reliant on the experiences and acquired wisdom of a network of older female relatives and friends. Even if the expectant mom is receptive to prenatal care, she may postpone seeking such consultations until the fifth or sixth month in order not to tempt fate, or more specifically, the evil spirits. Evil spirits are always on the lookout for new acquisitions, and expectant moms cannot be careful enough. To protect herself and the unborn child, she needs to be circumspect about announcing the presence of an unborn, until it is a condition impossible to hide. These beliefs are, however, not beyond challenge. Education and consciousness-raising about the importance of prenatal health checks preferably by native language speakers should be

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1 The term “Southeast Asian” is intended to refer to immigrants and refugees to the U.S. from home countries such as Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.
used to inform mothers-to-be of the utility of prenatal health checks.

**INFANCY**

Many newborns are tightly swaddled after birth. Those who swaddle their babies refer to the attempt to replicate the snugness and the lack of space in the womb, in an effort to ease the infant’s transition to the world at large. It is also not uncommon for babies to bed down with moms; this arrangement makes for easier handling of the baby during the frequent around the clock feeding times. Alternatively, babies may be placed on their backs in homemade cloth hammocks suspended from ceilings or doorways with the aid of a spring. These hammocks were thought to be relatively safe for infants since there is no way to exit the sleeper without physical assistance. However, recent concern with the use of these contraptions has been reported in babies developing curved spines. As a result, use of these hammocks has been discouraged.

Most mothers breast feed their babies, and they do so on demand. Some choose to, or are unable to nurse their infants and thus resort to formula milk. In the home country, remote rural locations make the availability of infant formula difficult and expensive. Impoverished mothers who have to bottle feed have been known to turn to **rice water** (removing the water used for boiling rice and feeding it to the baby) or diluting sweetened condensed milk with water and feeding their babies with the watered-down milk equivalent. Some mothers may attempt to appease fussy and colicky infants with **rice water** or in more affluent families, a teaspoonful of glucose mixed in a pint of water. Many Singaporeans and Malaysians remember **Gripe Water** as a common remedy for colicky babies. This **Made in England** product was available over the counter at most drugstores until social censure of the small alcoholic content of **Gripe Water** sent its sales plummeting, and its discontinued use by mothers. Affluent families who are invested in the superior quality of the breast milk, and who would entertain no other alternative, have been known to hire **wet nurses** to suckle their offspring. New mothers are advised not to bathe but to clean themselves by sponging down. Bathing within the 40 days after the birth of a child will only result in lifelong affliction of aches and pains. Along with not bathing, mothers are encouraged not to wash their hair until after the 40 days of post-partum recovery. Many modern moms have been known to ignore this folk wisdom, and to pay the price by having to endure aches and pains which, interestingly, many sufferers attribute to having ignored the injunction about bathing and washing their hair during the 40-day window.

Post-partum mothers are encouraged to drink the broth of chicken cooked with ginger, vinegar, and herbs, ingredients believed to have the capacity to “shrink” distended innards, cleanse the blood circulatory system, and induce the prolific production of breast milk. The consumption of ginger by nursing mothers may be a source of concern to western medical health practitioners. Depending on the amount consumed by the mom, the nursing infant may be rendered susceptible to jaundice, or if they were already born with jaundice, to impede recovery and recuperation from the condition. Moms should be informed of the health risk to the infants. It is likely that armed with this understanding, they could be talked into eliminating ginger from their diet.

Many households are composed of extended family members. This means that, in terms of child care-taking resources, there are always relatives around to help care for the child. For many mothers, such familial resources are likely to be welcomed, especially when they have an infant who is colicky or fussy. For the infant, there is no lack of attention from young persons to older adults in the family. It is not uncommon to entrust the care of an infant to someone as young as six or seven years old and female because there are adults around who are available for consultation and emergencies, and to supervise the care given to the infant.
One should not be surprised if one comes across families where female children are being breastfed for shorter periods of time than male children. Most Southeast Asian communities are patriarchal in structure and patrilocal in organization. In such contexts, female children tend to be seen as the prospective member of the family she will marry into, and thus eventual gain of that family. If the birth family is impoverished, then female children are likely to be perceived as economic liabilities, and as such are accorded few, if any, privileges.

Until the umbilical cord dries up and disconnects itself naturally from the navel, the baby is likely to be sponge cleaned and not bathed. Some families keep the shriveled up cord in a specially sewn cloth bag about as large around as a nickel. The bag is worn hung from around the neck like a necklace. The bag and its content serve as a talisman to ward off evil spirits, which are believed to be constantly conniving to steal away the baby’s spirit. Certain families add the cord to a brew of herbs and local potions, and then serve the concoction to members of the immediate family. Sipping and ingestion of the brew is construed as an integral part of custom and tradition, an act of welcoming and bonding with the newest member of the family.

Some communities believe that urine of male babies who have not been weaned off of breast milk have curative qualities (the urine of female babies are considered less potent, but still useful in the absence of the alternative). When an individual has been severely psycho-emotionally traumatized, a tablespoonful of urine from a still nursing baby may be collected and prescribed as a remedy. Still others believe that regular nightcaps of baby’s urine contribute to longevity and good health.

For many communities, naming ceremonies are officially held on the first month’s anniversary of the baby’s birth date. Such communities regard names as critical selections, believing that the name of the child influences her/his character and ultimately her/his fortunes and fate. Consultations are held with community elders and religious/spiritual experts (e.g., shamans), and the selection is made taking into account astrological as well as salient family information. For example, if father is born in the year of the tiger, and the child is born in the year of the pig, the recommendation may be to “give” the child to a relative with a different family/last name. Otherwise, the concern is that the tiger will devour the pig, and the family runs the risk of losing the child to death if the warning and the prescribed remedy are not heeded. The birth family could still choose to raise the child, but the child should never address or acknowledge the birth parents as such; instead, the child must refer to the birth parents as “uncle” and “aunt,” and the birth siblings as cousins.

Even with expert consultation, the choice of a name is sometimes not perfect. If the child is sickly, and a shaman or indigenous healer diagnoses the source of the problem as the child’s name, it is not unheard of for families to go through elaborate arrangements for the name of the child to be changed. The prescription could also still call for the child to be given away to a relative, even though the child may no longer be an infant. Kelley (1996) records the practice of placing a pair of scissors or knife just above the sleeping baby’s head and out of harm’s way as a means to protect that child from being snatched away by evil spirits while asleep. Children under the age of one year are thought to be especially vulnerable to such acts.

THE PRE-PUBERTAL CHILD

Generally, parents tend to be indulgent and loving. Babies are picked up and cuddled and attended to when they cry. In some communities, babies are strapped to moms’ (or older caretakers’) bodies and carried around with them as they attend to their daily chores. Children as old as five or six years of age may still be carried around, typically on the hips of female adults. Independent functioning is not a developmental goal aggressively pursued by parents until the child is six or seven years of age. For their main meals of the day, children may be spoon-fed by an older sibling or an adult. The same older person may bathe and change them too. At around six or seven years old, parents and other elders seem to become more prescriptive and demanding in terms of socially appropriate behaviors. Adults become less tolerant of behaviors they would have dismissed if displayed by a younger child, e.g., not answering when called, greeting an elder spontaneously without having to be instructed to do so.

Patting children on the head is frowned upon in some communities. The head is perceived as the receptacle of knowledge and wisdom, and concerns about patting away what wisdom already exists, or inflicting harm to the cerebral area has resulted in what has been interpreted as superstitious taboos against head patting.

Discipline is affected through a slap on the hands or the swatting of the bottom of the child. Implements, e.g., canes, are not likely to be used at this age in the belief that physical harm is more likely to be inflicted than if the slapped is done by hand. It is generally thought that children under the age of six years do not have the capacity to be reasoned with, and redirection of children to more appropriate play activities is likely to occur.

Folk religious practices may prescribe the wearing of protective badges carrying a talisman that wield magical powers sufficient to ward off evil. Referred to as katha in the Cambodian community (Keo, 2001), known katha objects include Buddha figurines, chips of boar tusk, bits of ivory, and the tooth of a parent. In the Hmong community, a bracelet made of string and blessed by the shaman may be worn with the similar purpose of protecting the child against evil forces.

When a child falls ill and runs a high fever, Hmong parents have been known to treat the fever by breaking an egg over the child’s head or chest. Practitioners of this remedy claim that the yolk, in particular, will work to extract the fever. Successful extraction of the malady is reportedly effected within 24 hours after application. It is evidenced by a reddish residue in the
yolk itself, and the dissipation of the fever.

Coin rubbing is another folk remedy for fever, and bodily aches and pains. The intent is to drive out wind that has accumulated in the system through improper diet and nutrition. Or, it may simply be a condition resulting from spirit inhabitation of the body. Generally, coin rubbing is done on the back of the child (even adults subject themselves to this practice, attesting to the widespread belief in the healing efficacy of this method) and is preceded by preparing the area to be rubbed with *tiger balm*. Made from oil distilled from fatty tissues of dead tigers, *tiger balm* is believed by those who use it to have potent curative qualities. This ointment, with the consistency and bracing effect of Vick’s Vapor Rub, is applied to the back of the child in preparation for the coining or spooning action that is to follow. *Tiger balm* has a strong distinctive odor that has been described by the uninhibited as disgusting, and could result in disdainful proclamations about the primitiveness of the remedies to which the child has been subjected, or that hygienic standards for the child have been seriously compromised.

Some families use a copper coin the size of the U.S. quarter to coin rub. This copper coin was a medium of exchange during colonial rule in ex-European colonies like Singapore and Malaysia; others may use any available coin of a size that would be easy to grip. The goal is to hold the coin vertical to the skin surface of the child’s body, and with some pressure, drag it diagonally across the back. The action leaves a red bruise in its wake. The end result is a back full of several angry looking red linear bruises stretching diagonally across the back. To the unknowing, a “coined” back looks as if someone had taken a strap several times to the back of the child. The end result is no different than if a spoon had been used for the rubbing instead of the coin.

Cupping is a folk remedy based on the same notion of attempting to rid the body of wind which has upset the natural rhythms resulting in aches, pain, and illness. The rim of the cup is warmed, and applied to the problem area (e.g., an aching back, an upset tummy). Within the “cupped” area, a vacuum is created and, supposedly, wind is being “sucked” from the area into the cup. Red ringed marks are the tell tale signs that this folk remedy has been attempted to effect healing for some health-related complaint.

If a child is suffering from a bad cold and is experiencing congested nasal and bronchial passages, *tiger balm* may be applied under the nose, on the temple around the sinus passages, and on the chest. As with Vick’s Vapor Rub, the ointment may leave a reddish mark akin to a mild sting/burn on the skin because of the menthol-like potency of the potion. These markings may appear unsightly and painful, and could lead someone to erroneously conclude that some form of physical maltreatment had taken place.

Dietary restrictions may be observed for the duration of any illness. If the child is coughing incessantly, “cooling” foods such as oranges may be avoided, and chicken steamed with herbs—“heaty” food to generate energy and prompt the restoration of good health—may be

the food of choice. A rice porridge (watery rice gruel) is fed to convalescing individuals to “build up one’s strength.” Persons raised on a staple diet of rice and hospitalized in the U.S. are indignant about the absence of rice in the food served; how could patients be expected to recover from medical procedures without rice for sustenance? In some families, recuperating children and adults are encouraged to drink water in which barley or red beans has been cooked. “Barley or red bean water,” sweetened with rock sugar, is an example of “cooling” drinks.

An ailing child with a high fever may be treated to a brew in which the snake’s (preferably python’s) bile *impedu* has been added. Those who resort to this remedy attest to its efficacy in restoring the body temperature to near normal in matter of hours. Others, believing that ailments are caused by “dirty” stomachs, feel that ridding it of its unhealthy contents would restore the child to good health. Some resort to a tablespoon of castor oil, or rely on *black draught*, another potent laxative, to do the job. One response that is counter-intuitive to many families is to strip the child naked and to sponge down with cold water. Families may even vigorously resist such treatment. The chills and the shakes that is brought on by the high fever may prompt caretakers to heap more clothing on the child; some do so to help the child break out into a sweat in order to purge the fever from the body.

Gentian violet (a purple-colored antiseptic lotion that is available over the counter in drugstores), vinegar, and a sizeable feather plucked from a
grown chicken are the primary ingredients of the remedy prescribed in certain Southeast Asian communities for the treatment of mumps. A teaspoonful of the pharmaceutical and a cup of vinegar are mixed, and applied using a feather to spread it over affected areas. The target areas are on either side of the head: between the cheek bones and the ears, and extending from below eye level to beyond the jaw line, and down to the top of the neck that is right behind the ears. Twice a day for a whole week, this potion is applied until the swelling completely disappears.

Children who are subjected to this treatment complain of being objects of derision by their peers: “demons” with two fat purple-colored cheeks. And, because mumps is seen as one of the many childhood illnesses that children contract, and because in general it is not a life-threatening condition, no effort is being made to isolate affected children from others.

Parents and caretakers tend to be less indulgent with adolescents. They are also more likely to be protective and prescriptive when it comes to social roles and normative behaviors for girls than they are for boys. This is also the stage of life when tensions with parents are high, and interactions prickly at best and full of conflict at worst. Many adolescents are likely to be U.S. born; parents and other elders in the family are likely to be foreign-born. Different rates of acculturation and adjustment across generations result in misinterpretations and misunderstandings. Adolescents accuse parents of being too strict, of being out of touch with American normative standards for teens, and of being so preoccupied with survival that they sacrifice their children’s psycho-emotional needs. Teens complain that their parents do not care about them.

On the other hand, parents and other elders have become increasingly concerned at being unable to “control” their teens and adolescents’ apparent disdain of values, customs, and traditions which parents uphold. With all the sacrifices—the long hours of hard labor and no respite to make ends meet in order to make life comfortable for themselves and their family—they have made, they feel totally unappreciated by their children. In addition, parents reportedly feel helpless and inept when faced with the wayward behavior of their teens. See Case Study 1.

CASE STUDY 1

The new school year had just begun and Mrs. T was taking the time to get to know the eighth graders in her homeroom. She had just assigned an activity and was going around the room talking to each individual student. When she came upon Mai Le, she noticed bruises around both Mai Le’s wrists. They did not appear to be recent, and out of curiosity, Mrs. T asked Mai Le about them.

To Mrs. T’s horror, Mai Le told of having been bound hand and foot to her bed in the basement of her home. She was allowed bathroom and meal breaks, but only under her mom’s supervision. When questioned, Mai Le said that she was bound and confined to the basement because her parents did not approve of “hanging out,” especially with the friends she usually kept company with. Her parents had repeatedly berated her for her “wild” behavior. She also mentioned that they had, prior to keeping her bound in the basement, locked the doors and windows to keep her from meeting with her friends; but, she would still steal away and not come home until late at night. She had no idea why her parents disliked the teens she hung out with; after all, they were such “cool kids.” Mrs. T immediately informed her principal of all that she had learned from Mai Le, and he, in turn, reported the case to the child welfare authorities.

A Child Protective Service (CPS) worker interviewed Mai Le at school. The story she told them was consistent with what she had told Mrs. T. They checked her for other bruises/markings and found none. As they were leaving with Mai Le to make arrangements to place her in temporary custody while they interviewed her parents, she casually remarked that her mother had, on a number of occasions, forced her to drink urine.

The interview with Mai Le’s parents took place later that day. Mom readily admitted to having bound Mai Le to her bed in the basement, and allowing her free for bathroom and meal breaks. She was quick to point out that she had done this after repeated admonishments, beatings with a cane, and locking of doors and windows; she simply could not change Mai’s recalcitrant behavior. Mrs. Le strongly complained of these teens overturning garbage containers and strewn garbage all over the sidewalks; taunting pets into barking incessantly; and playing loud music on the “boom boxes” that they carry around with them. The group did not do anything constructive, was rude to her and her neighbors, and was unkempt in appearance.

When asked about the allegation that she had forced Mai to drink urine, Mrs. Le initially denied doing so. She said that, on more than one occasion, Mai had asked for and was given some Mountain Dew in a glass to drink. Pressed further, Mrs. Le later admitted that she did force Mai to drink urine of an infant child of a close friend. She said that she had been at her wit’s end and that she hoped the urine would cleanse Mai of the malady, the “bad wind,” that was causing her to be so defiant and obstinate. She had never had any problems with Mai until her daughter met up with this group of friends.
When elders, including parents, attempt to administer folk remedies that have been relied on unquestioningly by family members, the adolescent may refuse folk treatment, much to the consternation of the family. Older family members may resort to forcing the adolescent to subject her- or himself to the treatment. A teen, well informed about child protective regulations, may allege and report maltreatment. For example, to avoid the cramming that sometimes accompany menstruation, girls are made to drink, on the last day of their period, an herbal remedy that reportedly looks, smells, and tastes like tar. Women, who have used the remedy on a monthly basis, readily agree that the taste and smell of the yoke wan imported from China is loathsome, and that swallowing the potion is in itself a mighty feat. But, they will also strenuously attest to its efficacy in relieving painful cramping and water retention symptoms.

Because many parents see education as a means for improving their children’s and, in turn, their own socioeconomic standing, they pressure their children to do well academically. In some households, homework and studying for a test or exam take precedence over household chores. Some parents avoid assigning household chores hoping that the time that is freed up would be spent on academic pursuits. Some parents may curtail socializing and “hanging out” with friends in an attempt to minimize the possibility that their child would be detracted from the goal they had set for the family. The consumption of pig’s brains is thought to enhance intellectual capacities, and hopeful parents feed this delicacy to their more than likely, unappreciative children.

Many parents are reluctant to publicly praise their children. Reasons given ranged from avoiding “swollen heads,” where the child becomes arrogant and conceited, to drawing attention to self and the family or “grandstanding,” which is not a socially acceptable behavior. Since modesty is a badge to be worn proudly, compliments about their child(ren)’s behavior may be received with “reflecting” responses. For example, a parent may be complimented on “how smart your daughter is,” to which a mom may respond, “Oh, you have no idea what we have to go through at home. We have to yell and scream at her to get her to study. How can you study and watch TV at the same time?” Such responses could easily be misunderstood as coming from uncaring and bullying parents, when the contrary is in fact the case.

Discipline is often meted out verbally, and the social license to do so is not limited to immediate family members only. If an elder in the community witnesses a social infraction, he or she, by virtue of seniority and, in turn, wisdom, has earned the social privilege to correct errant behaviors; admonishments and reprimands are most likely to follow. On the other hand, physical punishment tends to be the prerogative of the parent or an elder family member.

Verbal recriminations include shaming. Errant children are reminded that when they misbehave, the social consequences of their misbehavior are heaped not only on them but their families as well. The good name and reputation of the family may be impugned, and that the loss of “face” suffered may be irreparable. Children are constantly reminded that “people” pass judgment about families based on how well-behaved, or not, the offsprings are. Those from families who have done a good job of raising them do not misbehave or bring shame on their family.

It is not uncommon for parents to resort to physical punishment in an attempt to discipline their children and, ironically, to keep them out of harm’s way. Ima and Hohm (1991) looked at patterns of child maltreatment among Asian and Pacific Islander refugee and immigrant families living in San Diego, California. They found greater proportions of female victims and younger child victims among their study sample than the general population of child victims, and that the primary forms of maltreatment was physical abuse. Pinching, slapping, twisting the outer folds of the ear, and caning are the examples of the more common forms of physical punishment. An example of a behavior that is likely to warrant a slap across the mouth is “talking back” or “mouthing off” at a parent.

Implments used to cane a child may range from a ruler to a broom handle. Many immigrant parents are aghast when informed that physical punishment is outlawed in the U.S. For various reasons, it continues to be primary means of disciplining errant children. Parents hold themselves up as good examples of why the myth that physical punishment causes irreparable intra-psychic harm should be debunked. Further, they remain skeptical of the efficacy of reasoning with adolescents, or of time-outs or groundings.

Several parents see child protective laws as stripping parents of the ability to be good parents. They attribute the growing numbers of delinquent youth in their communities to parents being emasculated by these laws. And worse, their children are aware of the power of these laws and the helplessness of parents, further compounding their humiliation. Some parents allege that youth hold them hostage to threats of calls to child protective authorities when any attempt to discipline them is made. Ignorant about their rights as parents, they in turn complain they are at their wits end about what they can or cannot do. And they do not know where to turn for help.

Youth gangs: According to Lo (2001), children in the Hmong community in Laos are trained at a very young age to take on adult responsibilities. Young boys are taught to help on the family farm, be good providers and strong protectors of womenfolk. Young girls are groomed to become good caretakers and helpmates. By allowing young people to marry at a young age, “some of the adolescent problems were avoided” (p. 147). In the U.S., many adolescents live in families where both parents work. They are left to fend for themselves unsupervised after school hours. Increasing numbers of these adolescents, especially males, are turning to youth gangs, in part to fulfill the need “to belong.” These youth gangs tend to be groups of
Several factors are likely to have contributed to making marriages of young adolescent females customary in the Hmong community. Infant mortality rates were high, and a longer child-bearing window would increase the likelihood that there would be children who would survive to at least adulthood, thereby contributing to the continued regeneration of the community. In impoverished communities, the early marriage of a young female relieves her family of the financial burden of caring for someone who will eventually belong to another family. Yet another reason for communities sanctioning early marriages of females is that the marriage after puberty serves as a means of ensuring against promiscuous behavior, and children born out-of-wedlock.

This practice of marrying off young female daughters soon after they reach puberty still continues in the U.S. Families who have become aware that this custom is outlawed in...
the U.S. may choose to circumvent the legal consequences by referring to the match not as a marriage but as a betrothal, even though for all intents and purposes, the arrangement is indeed intended to foster a marital union. This deception continues until both or the younger of the two reaches the age of 18 years.

Yet another marital tradition is that of tshoob zij (Lo, 2001). It is still practiced in some Hmong communities in the U.S. even though it is illegal. A young woman is abducted and brought to his family’s home. Her family is then informed of her whereabouts. The abduction is likely to be a planned event, with the young couple hoping to wear down her family’s disapproval of the marital union. Once ensconced at his family’s residence, negotiations with her family over an acceptable bride price to be paid to them will begin. Bowing to custom and tradition, her family may feel that they have little choice but to strike a deal. However, in the U.S., her family could file a police report and the abduction would likely be investigated and prosecuted as a criminal offense. Whether her family would press charges and bring public attention to their predicament is uncertain, and what the young couple is gambling on is that they will not.

CONCLUSION

Since folk remedies and traditional practices are seldom available in written texts, and mostly resident in the memories and recollections of the older members of ethnic communities, it is these elders who should be sought out and recruited as expert consultants. These few elders may need the assistance of an interpreter, and may prefer oral rather than written forms of communication.

Immigrant families attempt to recreate the old and the familiar in their new environments in order to ease their transition and adjustment in the latter context. The tendency to continue traditional and customary practices is strong because these have served them well in their previous environments, and unless there are inducements to change, no change is likely to take place. Inducements for change may come in the form familiarizing them with the efficacy of “new” practices in achieving desired outcomes quickly. For example, instead of chewing on tobacco leaves or nutmegs to numb the pain of a never ending toothache, the individual could be informed about seeing a dentist who might be able to put an end to the pain, and still save the tooth. In other words, education and consciousness-raising about other alternatives to existing practices, and about resources available to assist them in accessing needed services, should be offered. Likewise, parents should be educated about different ways to reconnect with their adolescent children that the investment of time and effort is worth striving for. The alternative is the long-term heartache and headache of dealing with alienated, angry, and destructive youth.

A cautionary note needs to be sounded at this juncture. The intent should never be to end a community’s reliance on traditional practices and folk remedies, unless these have been shown to have long-term deleterious effects, or worse, are life threatening. Instead, the thrust should be to work with (versus to resist) indigenous ways of doing and helping. And, in order to do this in a respectful way, the service provider needs to be knowledgeable about the specifics of the custom and practice.

In the final analysis, a mind set that looks for strengths (Saleeby, 1995), rather than problems or deficits in culturally different families who are relatively new to this country, will go a long way. Framing traditional responses and folk remedies as survival strategies de-stigmatizes what many Americans regard as primitive and sometimes harmful child-rearing and folk healing practices. Instead, it is likely to open up opportunities for teaching and learning for Southeast Asian families, as well as the larger community of which they are now an integral part.

REFERENCES


Milwaukee became a major center of the tanning industry in the early 1900s. However, labor strikes and labor shortages led the railroad and tannery industries to recruit labor elsewhere. In 1917, Mexicans arrived in Milwaukee when railroad companies and steel mills hired them as replacement workers; while a number of Mexican migrant farm workers in Wisconsin working in the sugar beet fields were enticed to relocate and work in Milwaukee (Vargas, 1993:89). In 1923, Pfister & Vogel contracted 750 Mexicans in San Antonio to work in the tannery industry and in the local railroad companies to fill the labor shortage caused by the railroad strike of 1922 (Vargas, 1993:90). Mexicans who took these railroad jobs were unaware “that they were hired as scabs,” nor were they aware that Pfister & Vogel hired them as replacement workers after many of the tannery workers of Polish descent went on strike. Mexicans lived in the South Side of Milwaukee, close to the railroads and tanneries in the area. However, many of them also lived in company-owned boarding houses such as the Atlas warehouse on Virginia Street, across from the Pfister & Vogel tannery (La Guardia, Feb. 1971).

Mexican migrant farm workers in Milwaukee came from Mexico, South Texas and Rio Grande Valley. The Spanish-speaking community on the South Side grew slowly until the 1930s. In the early 1920s, a group led by Federico Herrera, David Valdez Sr., and others organized a self-help organization called La Sociedad Mutualista Hispano-Azteca. Mutualista societies sprung up throughout the Midwest where Mexicans were a sizeable community. The purpose of these societies was to foster a sense of community through the celebration of Mexican patriotic holidays (fiestas patrias), social and welfare support, community advocacy and camaraderie. In the fall of 1933, Mexicans living on the South Side were repatriated from Milwaukee; and of the estimated 3,500 to 4,000 in Milwaukee, only 1,500 Mexicans were left behind (Vargas 1993:189-190). After the Depression, as unemployment reached all time highs, Mexicans throughout the Midwest were deported; many from Milwaukee returned either to Texas or Mexico. Those who remained were born in the U.S. and were more likely to be families rather than single individuals (“solteros”).

In the aftermath of World War II, the population began to grow, once again, as many returned to work in the tanneries, foundries, and meatpacking companies stimulated by war production. By 1950, there were about 12,500 Latinos in Milwaukee, with about 10,000 Mexicans and 2,500 Puerto Ricans. The Puerto Rican population increased during the 1950s. Many Puerto Ricans arrived as agricultural farm workers and later settled in Milwaukee to work in factories and foundries. Many were recruited directly from Puerto Rico to work in Wisconsin’s sugar beet fields; however, in the 1960s, as the Puerto Rican community grew, relatives and friends arrived in Milwaukee from eastern seaboard cities, and from the large Puerto Rican community in Chicago. Many settled in the immediate South Side known as the Walker’s Point neighborhood of Milwaukee and in the Yankee Hill area near downtown before being displaced by a proposed freeway project. Afterwards, they relocated to the Riverwest neighborhood area where many still reside today (Tolan, 2003).

Pre-World War II housing stock, urban renewal projects, the construction of the interstate highway system, and rising unemployment led to social problems in the 1950s and 1960s in the South Side. Puerto Ricans and Mexicans worked in low-skilled positions, particularly factories, foundries, and meat packing companies. Since most of these jobs were dirty and harsh, and working conditions sometimes impacted on the health and safety of the workers, many Anglos left these jobs as soon as better opportunities opened up in other labor segments. Moreover, aside from being unpleasant and dirty work, especially...
during the winter and summer months, Latino workers recruited to work in Milwaukee did not have job security since most were laid off during slack times and were offered few benefits or opportunities for promotion. As a result, Milwaukee Latinos often worked several jobs to support their families (Valdez, 1979).

The availability of affordable housing units became a major problem in the late 1950s and mid-1960s as residential housing in the South Side declined, and tenants were forced to live in dilapidated structures of old housing stocks built in the 1920s and 1930s. As the Mexican and Puerto Rican community grew in the immediate South Side, many of the Anglo property owners left the area and settled in the suburbs of Milwaukee. These absentee landlords rented their old stock housing flats to Latinos, and while collecting rents, they did minimal maintenance upkeep thus allowing these building to deteriorate. In 1958, urban renewal got underway as the City of Milwaukee’s redevelopment authority began to plan the razing of dilapidated residential sections to erect housing (mostly apartments) for moderate and high-income tenants near commercial areas. However, by 1964, the emphasis shifted, and only 300 units for needy families were built while over 2,100 units for senior citizens were constructed (Schmandt, Goldbach and Vogel, 1971:167). Also, in the mid-1960s, the construction of the interstate highway system, which cut straight through the residential area of the immediate South Side, displaced many families, thereby exacerbating the housing shortage. Finally, to capture the suburban shopper and accommodate workers who commuted from the suburbs, department stores and factories on the South Side expanded parking lots by razing adjacent housing.

The decrease in affordable housing units created tensions between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans and between Latinos, blacks, and Anglos as competition for housing in the immediate South Side and in the Riverwest area increased. In many cases, large families had no choice but to live in a one-bedroom dwelling. Others, who paid higher monthly rents, lived in a two-bedroom units. For some, the problem was compounded when tenants clandestinely offered temporary lodging to relatives who arrived in Milwaukee seeking work and a place to stay until they could afford to rent their own apartment. On the South Side, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans resided in predominantly Polish neighborhoods where some Polish residents did not accept big families, barely tolerated the newcomers, and closely monitored the number of people living in a unit. Some landlords openly discriminated against Latino families by claiming a unit was already rented even though a “For Rent” sign was displayed prominently on the rental property. When confronted about this, landlords explained they had “forgotten” to remove the sign.

As a result of rising social tensions, youth gangs appeared in the 1950s, notably the Latin Kings and the National Avenue Rebels (Hagedorn, 1987; La Guardia, Nov. 1974). Some Latino students, who struggled with limited English and dealt with the inability of Anglo teachers to reach out to them, dropped out of school and joined gangs. As petty crime and drug use increased, police and Anglo residents stigmatized Mexicans and Puerto Ricans as criminals, and Latino youth faced police harassment (Hagedorn, 1987). Police also harassed and intimidated community leaders and social service organizations in the South Side who intervened to address these issues.

By 1970, the Latino population in Milwaukee increased and had, indeed, surpassed the 30,000 mark (Valdez, 1979). Several factors explained the increase: immigration from Mexico, migratory farm labor from south Texas, and a steady influx of Puerto Ricans from the Island and other mainland cities, particularly Chicago. Mechanization of agriculture drew rural migrant farm workers into the cities. Labor contractors working for factory owners enticed workers to the city. Puerto Rican authorities on the island,
and their representatives in Chicago worked with Midwest employers to secure workers for factories. While many arrived in Milwaukee as manual laborers, others came to attend colleges and universities in the area (Valdez, 1979; Berry-Caban, 1981).

The immediate South Side, considered the hub of the Latino community, attracted Latinos because of its growing array of ethnic cultural activities, restaurants, bars, and food stores that catered to Mexicans, Tejanos, and Puerto Ricans. The Royal Theater on 6th Street near National Avenue showed Spanish-language movies, particularly Mexican films. Dances were held at the Eagles Club on Wisconsin Avenue and at the dance hall at the National Avenue Bar (now the Acapulco Club) on the corner of 6th and National Avenue. While the Eagles Club had top musicians and family-oriented dances, the musicians and dances at the “National Bar” were more Tex-Mex conjunto variety that appealed to single men and women seeking to have a good time. South Side Catholic churches like Holy Trinity-Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Anthony’s became the centers of worship and socializing. Bars and restaurants proliferated, catering to distinct social groups (Mexican immigrants, Tejanos, and Puerto Ricans), such as Jalisco Bar, Juana Díaz Tavern, Club De La Rosa, Monreal’s Matador Restaurant, Luna’s Café, and Acapulco Restaurant. Two Mexican grocery stores, Tienda Segovia and Tienda Martinez, sold the daily staple of Mexican food (such as beans, rice, tortillas, hot peppers, etc.), pan de dulce, and weekend specials such as barbacoa and menudo.

Much of this vibrancy seemed under threat by the 1960s. The construction of the north-south freeway in the early to mid-1960s displaced stores and residents. Absentee landlords did not maintain (or poorly maintained) properties and, as new residents migrated to the area, housing conditions worsened, discrimination and social problems increased, and problems in the Milwaukee Public Schools magnified over issues like bilingual education, the high rate of school drop outs, and the lack of bilingual teachers and cultural-sensitive curriculum. One writer feared that these trends would “seriously reduce Latino cohesiveness and visibility to the level of other ethnic nationalities in Milwaukee” who had dispersed to the suburbs as their ethnic cultural neighborhoods declined (La Guardia, Aug./Sept. 1975).

As social problems increased, social workers, community workers, and job and housing specialists from the Community Relations-Social Development Commission (CR-SDC), an intergovernmental agency, and its delegate agency, the Inner City Development Project (ICDP), responded. The South Side, which had been home for Polish immigrants at the turn of the century, now had settlement house workers instructing the newcomers in sewing, English language, and citizenship classes (Jaime Davila interview). Some of the church organizations, which still existed, shifted to working with the Mexican and Puerto Rican newcomers. These included evangelical Protestant ministers and Catholic clergy. The Milwaukee Christian Center formed by a consortium of Protestant churches created programs for Latino youth such as The Spot. The Milwaukee Archdiocese got involved in organizing the poor in the early 1960s as a result of new activist priests inspired by the Vatican II reforms to reach out to the poor in urban neighborhoods.

James Groppi was well known for his work with the African-American community on the North Side. The majority of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were Catholics so Catholic priests got involved in Latino communities. Two who did so were Fr. John Maurice and Fr. Patrick Flood, pastoral assistants at St. Thomas Aquinas. They helped establish the Migrant Worker Program in 1960 that served Mexican migrant farm workers (Braun, 1999:215; Pokorny, 1991). By 1965, a group of Protestant and Catholic clergy founded an organization to help migrant farm workers, the United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS). Although UMOS started as a statewide migrant organization; today, after nearly 40 years of existence, it has branched out with offices in the States of Minnesota and Texas.

In 1963, Fr. John Maurice organized the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council for the Spanish Speaking, also known in the Latino community as the Spanish Center (El Centro Hispano), with a storefront office on National Avenue between South 5th Street and South 6th Street. The Spanish Center provided legal aid services, health care services, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, citizenship education, employment referrals, and housing assistance services. By 1966, Maurice and nine Mexican Americans opened El Centro Hispano Credit Union, which offered migrant farm workers and other community residents financial services, savings accounts, small loans, and consumer counseling. Its board included Ernesto Chacon, who was co-founder of the Latin American Union for Civil Rights (LAUCR) and the Brown Berets in 1969.

Protestant clergy were also active in the Latino community. In 1965, Rev. Gilberto Marrero was hired by the
Milwaukee Christian Center to direct the Hard-to-Reach Program in the South Side. A year later, the Milwaukee Christian Center opened a storefront youth program called The Spot. From 1967, The Spot expanded its facility and John Herod, a former missionary to the Dominican Republic, was hired as director. After a brief tenure as director of The United Spot, Emilio Velez passed on the directorship to a Baptist minister named Orlando Costas in 1969. Costas had just received his doctorate in theology from El Seminario Bautista de Puerto Rico, and after a tour as a missionary in Costa Rica, he was hired as pastor of the Evangelical Baptist Church in the heart of the Latino community.

In 1969, Rev. Jaime Davila came to Milwaukee from Puerto Rico and served as associate pastor of the Evangelical Baptist Church, along with Rev. Orlando Costas. Together, several of these South Side religious leaders created the “Cooperative Ministry of the Spanish Speaking People of Milwaukee,” which raised funds to provide social services to the Latino community. Costas’ friendship with a black Milwaukee Baptist minister named Lucious Walker became pivotal in securing community organizing funds for the Latin American Union for Civil Rights (LAUCR) in 1969, after Rev. Walker became executive director of the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). As a result, LAUCR hired its full-time community organizer, Ernesto Chacon, who along with other leaders, such as Roberto Hernandez, Juan Alvarez, Avelardo “Lalo” Valdez, Jesus Salas, and Dante Navarro amongst others, spearheaded the Chicano civil rights movement in Milwaukee.

**EL MOVIMIENTO/ LA CAUSA**

From the mid-1950s onward, a politically conscious generation of Mexican American activists began organizing Milwaukee’s Latino residents. The previous generation, which was more social than political, formed self-help mutual aid societies, e.g., *El Club Cuauhtemoc de Racine and La Sociedad Mutualista Hispano-Azteca*. Others became active in local labor unions and rose up the ranks. However, between 1956 and 1963, a young generation of Mexican Americans led by Dante Navarro in Milwaukee, Benny Navarro in Racine, and Manuel Oyerbides in Waukesha organized the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council, number 302, in Milwaukee, and helped in the formation of Council branches in Waukesha, Racine, and Delavan.

In a *Milwaukee Journal* interview on October 25, 1978, Navarro said the organization aimed “to improve economic and educational opportunities and to increase political power.” In 1965, membership in LULAC Council 302 waned, but Navarro continued to rally the Latino community through his Spanish language radio programming in Milwaukee and Racine. Then on November 1, 1966, Navarro took a leave of absence from his job at Ladish Company in Cudahy, and at the request of Frank A. Mueller, the Executive Director of the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), he began his advocacy for migrant workers in Wisconsin. By early 1968, Dante Navarro, Ponciano and Juanita Renteria, and others formed the Mexican American Political Education Committee (MAPEC), whose aim was to organize the Latino vote, invite elected officials to speak to their group, and access the political system.

By 1968, the time was ripe for change in the Latino community as Chicano activists confronted discrimination, segregation, unemployment, political indifference, and institutional racism in the public school system, higher education, city hall and county government, and at the UMOS hierarchy itself. Moreover, by the late 1960s, the Latino community had increased threefold, and a younger cadre of Chicanos experienced in union and community organizing tackled urban social problems mounting in the South Side. One glaring example of institutional racism was the UMOS management structure itself. The upper management ranks were filled by whites, while lower level supervisors and workers, as well as the clientele served by UMOS, were all Mexican Americans. On November 13, 1968, a young cadre of Mexican American activists, together with the Mexican American members of the UMOS Board of Directors, outlined their 12-point grievances, and forced the entire Board to ask for the resignations of its executive and upper management staff.

By late Spring 1969, the UMOS management revolution had completely transformed UMOS from an old white male, Anglo-dominated structure to a young, pragmatic Chicano management team led by the former charismatic leader of Obreros Unidos, Jesus Salas. By 1970, a new UMOS Board of Directors elected Dante Navarro as Vice President, Juanita Renteria as Secretary, and two Chicano activists: Ernesto Chacon and Juan Alvarez. Once the UMOS Board cleaned its slate and hired qualified Latinos in executive and upper management ranks, this young cadre
of Chicano activists turned their focus to other pressing urban problems in the Latino community.

In August 1968, the first major protest that included Latinos occurred in the South Side. Latinos joined the NAACP’s Youth Council, led by Groppi, in a demonstration outside Allen-Bradley, calling on the company to employ more blacks and Latinos. The Latino protestors included Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, Vietnam veterans, college students, recent Chicano arrivals from Texas, and Puerto Rican ex-gang leaders, according to Avelardo Valdez (La Guardia, Nov. 1974). Since the Allen-Bradley Corporation had multi-million dollars in contracts with the Federal government, particularly with the Defense Department, the leaders of the protests filed a complaint with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), U.S. Department of Labor, to investigate minority hiring practices to ensure compliance with the Presidential Executive Order on affirmative action hiring. By the end of 1969, and throughout the early 1970s, Allen-Bradley began hiring minorities in its South Side plant.

After the Allen-Bradley protests in August 1968, a group of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, which included its leaders Ernesto Chacon, a UMS worker; Juan Alvarez, a Vietnam veteran; Roberto Hernandez, a UWM student; and several community activists, namely Ezequiel Guzman, Armando Guzman, Lupe Rodriguez, Miguel Rodriguez, Manuel Ayala, Ezequias Rivera and Andres Guzman; came together to form the Latin American Union for Civil Rights (LAUCR). Alvarez had just returned from a one-year tour in Vietnam in March of 1968 and, along with Chacon, Hernandez and others, co-founded the LAUCR; and later co-founded and became the leader of the Brown Berets—a group linked to the national Brown Berets organization in East Los Angeles, California.

The organizers and members of LAUCR would eventually help create several other activities including a newspaper, La Guardia, founded in 1969 by Roberto Hernandez, Avelardo Valdez, Juan Alvarez, Ernesto Chacon, Ezequiel Guzman, and Rico Shalhoub; a youth organization—the Brown Berets; CELA (Latin American Education Committee); and Fiesta Mexicana (the forerunner of Mexican Fiesta International). LAUCR, through its leadership—Chacon, Hernandez and Alvarez, assisted and participated with Avelardo Valdez and United Farm Workers (UFW) organizing committee, led by Bill Smith and Manuel Salas, with the grape boycott in Milwaukee by picketing food store chains that carried non-union grapes and by speaking to community groups and local labor unions to support the boycott. Moreover, from the very beginning, women began to play an important role in the movement. After LAUCR was formed, women like Maria G. Moreno, Maria Ortega, Clementina Castro, Carmen Cabrerra, Irma Diaz, Bertha Zamudio, Blanca Gomez, Mercedes Rivas, Marla Goodson, Juanita Renteria, Lucha Sarabia, Mary Lou Massiagni, and others took part in the decision-making process of the movement, and many of them participated in protest marches, picket lines, demonstrations, and takeovers.

The multi-prong approach to the Chicano civil rights movement in Milwaukee by many of these leaders led them to spearhead job and housing discrimination protests as well as welfare rights marches, including a week-long welfare rights march from Milwaukee to Madison that culminated with the takeover of the Wisconsin legislative chambers on September 30, 1969. This Welfare March to Madison was led by a coalition of blacks, Latinos, welfare mothers, and students; among its leaders were Fr. James Groppi, Jesus Salas, Ernesto Chacon, Juan Alvarez, the NAACP youth Council, the Welfare Warriors, and many others.

A growing concern among some of the activists in the South Side was that social programs in Milwaukee too often served only the growing black neighborhoods of the city’s North Side. Black activists in 1963 pushed for improved social services in the black inner city. Their fights with the “establishment” led to the formation of the Community Relations-Social Development Commission (CRSDC), a countywide agency that ran Milwaukee’s poverty programs. The SDC ran the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP) that offered job training and employment services to all minorities and low-income people, not just African-Americans. In 1969, activists led by the Brown Berets took over the CEP South Side office, arguing that the program needed to provide South Side residents not only with access to CEP’s higher-paying job announcements, but also demanded that the office be autonomous from the North Side headquarters (La Guardia, Aug. 1969; Alvarez interview). The takeover of the South Side CEP office threatened federal funding, and the North Side director of CEP, Monroe Swan, capitulated to the demands set by the Brown Berets and granted the South Side CEP office relative autonomy, access to better job postings, and employment training (Dante Navarro interview).

A major focus of South Side activists’ ire was Alderman Robert Sulkowski, who was elected to the city council representing the 12th ward in
1952. He refused to apply for low-income housing grants out of fear that the programs would attract blacks to the South Side (Mary Anne McNulty interview). In the 1960s, community pressure on Sulkowski increased. One source of criticism was from poor elderly whites who protested housing conditions. Poor whites were represented by the Inner City Development Program’s (ICDP) Milwaukee Tenant’s Union led by Ted Seaver. The Milwaukee Tenant’s Union advocated for housing improvements, protested high rents, and sought accountability for absentee landlords. As pressure mounted, Sulkowski tried to split elderly whites and Latino activists by striking a deal with city leaders that resulted in the construction of low-cost housing in the South Side for the elderly (Alvarez interview). This political tactic, which had the support of Mayor Henry Maier, was in direct alignment with Maier’s political agenda to construct elderly housing. By constructing circular high-rise apartments and placing election polling places in the lobbies of these high-rise units, Mayor Maier was able to ensure that the elderly voted and were reminded as to which administration provided them with improved housing (Alvarez interview).

Despite differences on some issues, blacks and Latinos united on numerous protests during the late 1960s concerning welfare rights, farm workers, and fair employment. Milwaukee’s police department, led by Police Chief Harold Brier, feared this developing minority coalition and used his officers to repress activists who facilitated racial cooperation throughout the city. During this time, the Milwaukee Police Department, under Police Chief Brier’s administration, not only planted spies in black and Latino activist groups, but his infamous “Red Squad” police unit also conducted intensive surveillance of black and Latino leaders. The Red Squad unit took photographs at demonstrations and protest marches, and kept dossiers on each black and Latino “subversive” and “agitator.” The level of police brutality, intimidation, and surveillance against minority leaders during this civil rights period was reminiscent of the McCarthy era “witch-hunts” of the mid-1950s.

The new generation of Chicano activists had benefited from the lessons of the civil rights movement of the mid-1950s and early 1960s, as well as from the labor union activities of farm workers led by Cesar Chavez. Moreover, their experiences in various social agencies, such as SDC, ICDP, the Spanish Center and UMOS, all of which served the Latino community and migrant workers, enabled activists and community organizers to become effective leaders. For some, their experiences in organizing farm workers led them to cities like Milwaukee, Madison and Racine, where they joined urban social movements. Union activists like Jesus Salas, Salvador Sanchez, Manuel Salas and Francisco Rodriguez, who had been active in farm worker union organizing in the Crystal City, Texas Chicano movement for political and social equality (Rodriguez, 2003), made a smooth transition to the Milwaukee Chicano civil rights movement.

For Puerto Rican activists in Milwaukee, an important influence in the movement was the Young Lords Organization, a former street gang that became a grassroots political group in order to protest the gentrification of the Lincoln Park area in Chicago. In the summer of 1969, three of these Puerto Rican activists, Edwin “Eddie” Quiles, Luis Santiago and Carmen Cabrerra, went to Chicago to meet with the Young Lords. When they arrived at the People’s Church on Armitage and Dayton Street, the first person to greet them was Tony Baez, Minister of Education of the Young Lords, and two other Young Lords named Lucky and Rory (Carmen Cabrerra interview). Some Puerto Ricans—like Cabrerra, Quiles and Santiago—came to Milwaukee as children, entered the public school system or parochial schools, and grew up in the South Side or the Riverwest area of Milwaukee.

Others, like Ricardo Fernandez (former director of SSOI), Miguel Rodriguez (co-founder of LAUCR), and Josue Gonzalez (first director of the Bilingual Bicultural Program in the South Side), came to Milwaukee either to teach or to attend a college or university in the area. The need to address the urgent, local urban issues and problems that affected the Puerto Rican community became a rallying point for academics, youth, and Independentistas (those who favored an independent Puerto Rico). That is to say, the urban struggles of Puerto Ricans in Milwaukee provided common ground and solidarity to these diverse ideological strains within the Puerto Rican community as former barrio gang members, academic types, and Independentistas coalesced to give direction and impetus to the movement. As Latinos, the Puerto Rican and Chicano leadership united in fighting issues common to both groups, and to some extent these two groups achieved a Pan-Latino identity rarely seen elsewhere. However, there were also stark differences along cultural and nationalistic lines.

Colleges were hotbeds of student activism throughout the U.S. UW-Madison (UW) and UW–Milwaukee (UWM) were sites of anti-war protests, and minority students demanded
ethnic studies courses and increased diversity of students and faculty. The creation of UWM in 1956 placed a college within the heart of the Latino community in Wisconsin, and drew Latino activists who had attended college outside Wisconsin to come to Milwaukee to complete their degrees. Some, like Roberto Hernandez, worked for UW Extension. Moreover, on campus, mostly at UWM and UW, they encountered some younger, progressive, activist faculty members like Richard Davis, dean of the School of Education at UWM, and James D. Cockcroft, a noted historian and Latin Americanist at UWM.

Student activists argued that the University should organize and educate the minority community for self-empowerment. Demanding community empowerment led activists to call for minority control of various poverty and youth programs. In Milwaukee, Latino/a activists took over UMOS in 1969, which had been Anglo controlled, and also took over the youth center called “The Spot” (now the United Community Center) from the Milwaukee Christian Center by protesting and marching to the board meeting in winter of 1970 (McNulty interview; Davila interview).

**UWM TAKEOVER**

Probably the most significant protest of the era was the takeover in August 1970 of the Chancellor’s office on the UWM campus. In 1969, the Council for the Education of Latin Americans (CELA) and the dean of School of Education, Richard Davis, agreed to work on improving Latino access to UWM, and to develop community education programs. Davis and CELA specifically endorsed the Latino community having the central role in the formation and management of programs designed to improve Latino standing at UWM. Primarily, because of Davis’ support, CELA proposed the formation of the Spanish Speaking Outreach Institute (SSOI), and that it be housed in the School of Education (Rodriguez-Donato, 1988:20).

But when CELA asked UWM Chancellor A. Martin Klotsche to fund the SSOI, they encountered resistance. This led to the first protest outside Chapman Hall on August 26, 1970. The next day, CELA was scheduled to meet with Klotsche in his office, but Klotsche failed to attend the meeting. CELA and about 150 other Latino activists staged a sit-in in the Chancellor’s office. Five protestors were arrested: Marla O. Anderson, Dante Navarro, Gregorio J. (Goyo) Rivera, Jesus Salas, and Jose Luis Huerta-Sanchez. Others active in the movement included Ernesto Chacon, Roberto Hernandez, Clementina Castro, Enriqueta González, María Ortega, Juanita Rentería, Rev. Jaime Davila, Luis Lopez, Delfina Guzman, Juan Alvarez, and many others. William Quiles, a participant in the sit-in, recalled the protest:

> People were marching outside (Klotsche’s office), carrying the Mexican and Puerto Rican flags, symbols of nationalist fervor and our ethnicity. There were kids, grandparents, mothers, revolutionaries, agency people and Anglo friends, who were interested in our cause.

Soon a combination plate lunch with tortillas would be brought to the marchers by people who were operating the Summer Youth Programs. Some people camped outside, others went home and returned the next day. Policemen were all over. Maybe some FBI too. Everybody was taking pictures. Inside, of some we were waiting nervously, planning what to do if we were arrested, or what to say to the press if we were dragged out. Others were just having fun. Just the bare fact of being inside that huge office, bigger than most of our homes, full of fine furniture, was in itself a unique experience; not to mention that to most this was the first time they were inside a university building; and to think that to get inside we had to force our way in. We had to take over the Chancellor’s office (Quiles statement, SSOI archives).

The demonstrations continued after the protestors were arrested. Some returned to UWM after being released and slept on the grass in front of the Chancellor’s office for several nights in October. There ensued a series of protests including sit-in and a hunger strike on campus. In October of 1970, about 150 protestors, including students and community members, marched up Lake Drive and picketed.
outside the Chancellor’s house. They also led a hunger strike and sit-in that lasted for nine days (Braun, 1999:222).

The protests made the city newspapers and Klotsche featured the struggle in his autobiography. Klotsche suggested that the protest was the logical result of Latinos not being served well by the University. He prided himself on understanding the role of the urban university and wrote three books on the topic. He insisted that there was a basic difference between the black and Latino campus protests. Whereas black protests were led by students with the community in the background, the Latino sit-in was mostly led by community that included “older men and women, young mothers and their pre-school children, plant workers waiting for their shift to begin, some students from South Division High School, and others” (Klotsche, 1985:297).

CELA’s demands included an institute be established in the South Side, a director hired as an Assistant to the Chancellor, a GED program and an ESL program on campus. They also demanded increased Latino enrollment on campus and the university waive tuition and book fees. Roberto Hernandez was a member of the CELA negotiating committee. He wrote a letter to the Board of Regents critical of Klotsche and the UWM administration. Even though the activists demanded an institute, the administration proposed expanding already existing programs, while sending four student recruiters into the Latino community. Klotsche proposed guaranteeing slots for Latinos in programs like the Experimental Program in Higher Education (now the Academic Opportunity Center). However, the activists questioned this strategy. The proposed initiative would not involve the community and it would be short-term, not a permanent institute located on campus and in the community (Rodriguez-Donato, 1988:25).

CELA, in September of 1970, consulted with lawyers about possibly filing a lawsuit against the University and requesting a review by HEW for the misappropriation of funds designated for minority programming. As negotiations dragged on, CELA clarified what it wanted: a permanent institute for Latinos located within the University under the Chancellor’s Office so that it might serve all majors (Rodriguez-Donato, 1988:23-24).

CELA members made a trip to Madison to attend a Regents Board meeting after Klotsche said he could not meet. Though not on the agenda, the chair of the Board of Regents (BOR) allowed CELA representatives to speak, and they did so before the Regents and Klotsche. Roberto Hernandez chaired CELA’s negotiating team and read a statement that called on the BOR to force Klotsche to “bargain with us in good faith, and to honor previous commitments by University officials” (Rodriguez-Donato, 1988:28).

The negotiations surrounding the demands by CELA evolved gradually. Initially, CELA called for the SSOI to be in the School of Education but then changed the location to the Chancellor’s office. CELA also set a goal of 85 new Latino admits, 10 graduate students, 50 undergraduates, 25 recent high school graduates, and special students. CELA demanded that students receive college credit for work in the community and that UWM create scholarships and grants for such work. The demands were innovative, particularly for special students. CELA got UWM to agree to admit Latinos before graduating from high school. This may have been one of the first such programs in the country (Goodson interview). CELA also demanded a GED program be established in the community that would include credit for community work.

Klotsche then had University officials and CELA work out the details of the SSOI. CELA proposed that Ricardo Fernandez, a Marquette University instructor, be hired as director. But negotiations broke down again and Fernandez withdrew his application for the directorship. Activists then staged a hunger strike outside Chapman Hall on October 12, 1970, and wrote a letter to the Regents. Finally, this pressure led the administration to make good on its promises. On October 23, 1970, Klotsche and CELA announced an agreement to form an institute. UWM would hire a director, assistant director, teacher, secretary, and a counselor. The institute was in operation by November 1, 1970, with an office on campus and a site at 805 S. 5th Street, in a building that also housed La Guardia, a Latino community newspaper, and the Latin American Union for Civil Rights (LAUCR), led by Ernesto Chacon (Baex interview).

The UWM protest was only one of many in the late 1960s and 1970s in which Chicanos/as and Puerto Ricans united to advance Milwaukee’s Latino community. All activists were driven by a self-help ideology that led to new initiatives in job training, health care, housing and welfare advocacy, ESL, adult education, cultural and bilingual
education. The community created El Centro Cultural Educativo Chicano-Boricua, which was an alternative school offering classes covering the history and literature of Puerto Ricans and Chicanos. Similarly, El Programa Bilingue-Bicultural offered Mexican and Puerto Rican history, culture, and art classes taught by Juan Alvarez. El Programa was formed by LAUCR leaders, Roberto Hernandez, Juan Alvarez, Avelardo Valdez, and Rose Guajardo, and financed by Community Services Extension of UWM. Another South Side organization, Union Benefica Hispana, assisted Spanish-speaking welfare recipients.

This new Milwaukee Latino generation was conscious of its youthful exuberance, and embraced and accepted rebels. Photographs showed lots of long hair, beards, and mustaches. This created some conflict with the older generation who sometimes criticized the rebellious attitudes. One activist, however, described tongue-in-cheek the founders of La Guardia as a mixture of “batos locos...womanizers, borrachos, y marijuanos” and “responsible Mexicanos and Puerto Ricans who dominated the various community agencies, boards, etc. at that time” (La Guardia, Aug.-Sept. 1975). Latino activists reflected the youthful activism throughout the country that questioned the older generation’s leadership.

Protests continued in the 1970s and 1980s as Latinos/as focused on education reform. Latinos/as were particularly active, along with African-Americans, in the effort to reform Milwaukee Public School system. Protests focused on MPS’ lack of an adequate bilingual education program, the lack of Latino/a teachers and administrators, and the absence of Latino history, culture, and literature in the curriculum. Latino/a activists and parents joined with students to demand bilingual education programs and classes on Latino history, literature, and art. Activists organized student strikes at South Division High School, in the tradition of the “blow outs” by Chicano students in Los Angeles, demanding a reformed curriculum. In 1974, the activists formed the City Wide Bilingual Bicultural Advisory Committee (CWBBAC), which became the “official advisory board for bilingual bicultural education within Milwaukee Public Schools on all matters related to Hispanics” (Baez et al., 1980).

**CONCLUSION**

Since the 1970s, the Mexican and Puerto Rican populations in Milwaukee have been joined by other South and Central American immigrants and refugees. However, the greatest increase has been the arrival of new Mexican immigrant settlers. By 2000, there were over 70,000 Latinos in Milwaukee and over 100,000 in the metropolitan region. Along with the population growth has come the rise of non-profit organizations in the community. For a city its size, Milwaukee possesses several major non-profit organizations run by Latinos. These are multi-million dollar agencies that fund everything from education, housing, and day care to elderly, health, job training, and meals programs. One of the reasons for these non-profits is the great depth of leadership that grew out of the 1960s organizing in the neighborhoods and in the fields.
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Valdes, Dinoicio Nodin, Barrios Nortenos: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century (Austin, 2000).


Vargas, Zaragosa, Proletarians of the North (Berkeley, 1993).
Mary is almost 77 years old, blessed with a sharp mind and memory. She thinks of her late husband, James, who labored in the steel mills of Chicago, and she recalls rubbing liniment into his deeply etched hands which pained him due to arthritis. She wonders if she should move back home to Louisiana. Her sons tell her that the new South is the place for her to retire. Mary would like to see the peach and pecan trees of her youth and warm her bones again in the hot sun. Can she survive another harsh Midwest winter? If only James were still alive, he’d help her decide, but he’s gone now. Mary raised her sons to be independent, but she rarely sees them as they live in California and Tennessee. Her church friends are more than kind, but they cannot fill the space left by her sons and James.

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African Americans constitute the largest minority group in Wisconsin, numbering 304,460 persons or six percent of the population in 2000. Additionally, African-Americans represent 24 percent of the total population in Milwaukee County, and 37 percent of the population in the city of Milwaukee. African-American elderly represent three percent of all elderly in Wisconsin, 11 percent in Milwaukee County, and 23 percent of all elderly in the city of Milwaukee, according to the 2000 census. Of the 32,012 elderly African-Americans in Wisconsin, 78 percent live in the city of Milwaukee. Proportionally, there are greater percentages of males between ages 55-64, and greater percentages of females over the age of 74. Both Milwaukee County and the city of Milwaukee experience similar trends. The percentages of male and female African-American elderly 65-74 years old are approximately the same as other elderly groups for both 1990 and 2000. (See Tables 1-3.) In many regards, African-American elderly are not unlike other elderly Americans, except in one extremely significant and life altering way, i.e., their inheritance of the historical impact of our country’s tortured history of race relations. Consequently, the African-American elderly experience in Wisconsin is radically different from the experience of the state’s other older adults.

Many of Milwaukee’s African-American elderly were born in Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi; Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky; Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Louisiana. Most came from predominately African-American communities. They attended both segregated substandard schools and integrated schools. Some never completed high school, while others graduated from college. Life experiences included hard labor in corn, tobacco, and cotton fields for years before arriving in Milwaukee. Some completed a tour of military duty during World War II or in Korea, while others worked as waitresses, maids, cooks, teachers, ministers, and in other service occupations. Many were homemakers who raised their immediate and/or extended family members.

Strong family ties and values are demonstrated by the fact that, today, many are raising grandchildren on a fixed income with religion figuring prominently in their lives. Milwaukee’s African-American elderly reside in both segregated and integrated surroundings. Many reside in nursing homes, while others live in retirement homes. Some live independently in their own homes or apartments, while others are among the homeless. Many assert or imply that being an African-American elderly has had its disadvantages. Some say that they have had personal experiences with racial discrimination, while others report they have little to no such experience with mistreatment based upon race. Some are hopeful, while others feel hopeless.
Table 1: Number and Percent of African-Americans Age 55 and Older by Age and Gender
Wisconsin: 1990 and 2000

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>12,374</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>5,567</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>6,807</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16,095</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7,167</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>8,928</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>6,908</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3,922</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10,199</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4,308</td>
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<td>5,891</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td>75-84</td>
<td>2,952</td>
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<td>1,068</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1,884</td>
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<td>4,374</td>
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<td>1,654</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>85+</td>
<td>797</td>
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<td>252</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>545</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>23,031</td>
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<td>9,873</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>13,158</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>32,012</td>
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<td>13,471</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>18,541</td>
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Table 1 compares the African-American population for persons 55 years and older by age and gender in 1990 and 2000 for the state of Wisconsin.

Table 2: Number and Percent of African-Americans Age 55 and Older by Age and Gender
Milwaukee County: 1990 and 2000

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>10,299</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>4,578</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>5,721</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>12,865</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5,484</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>7,381</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>5,755</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2,466</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3,289</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>8,421</td>
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<td>3,518</td>
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<td>4,903</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>2,422</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1,557</td>
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<td>1,359</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>85+</td>
<td>648</td>
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<td>205</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>443</td>
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<td>270</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>11,010</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25,976</td>
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<td>10,631</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15,345</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Table 2 compares the number and percentages of African-American population for persons 55 years and older by age and gender in 1990 and 2000 for Milwaukee County.

Table 3: Number and Percent of African-Americans Age 55 and Older by Age and Gender
Milwaukee City: 1990 and 2000

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<td>55-64</td>
<td>9,815</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>4,258</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>5,557</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>12,314</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>5,203</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>7,111</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>5,706</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>2,341</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3,365</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8,128</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3,385</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>4,743</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3,436</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1,293</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2,143</td>
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<td>85+</td>
<td>643</td>
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<td>203</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,245</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7,569</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10,676</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>24,885</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10,132</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>14,753</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 compares the number and percentages of African-American population for persons 55 years and older by age and gender in 1990 and 2000 for Milwaukee City.

African-American elderly are the fastest growing segment of the African-American population. The number of African-American elderly increased 56 percent from 1980 to 1990 and over 36 percent from 1990 to 2000, while the total African-American population increased only 31 percent from 1980 to 1990 and 20 percent from 1990 to 2000. The increase in life expectancy has prompted demographers to project a significant increase in the population of Milwaukee’s elderly African-Americans in years ahead.

As women experience a greater life expectancy than do men, the majority of African-American elderly are women. Elderly African-American
women outnumber elderly African-American men in Wisconsin, in Milwaukee County, and in the city of Milwaukee.

Unfortunately, greater life expectancy is sometimes accompanied by a daunting and insurmountable loss of income or significant reduction in financial resources. In Milwaukee, many African-American elderly live in a state of penury. Over 20 percent (2000) of African-American elderly in the city of Milwaukee live below the poverty level as compared to less than 10 percent of non-African-American elderly in the city of Milwaukee, where a majority of African-American elderly in Wisconsin reside. Similarly, 35 percent of African-American elderly are low income (below 150 percentile of the poverty level) as compared to 18 percent of non-African-American elderly.

There are many reasons for the high poverty rates among African-American elders, including inadequate education, i.e., over 61 percent of Milwaukee’s African-American elderly do not have a high school diploma as compared to 34 percent of the city’s non-African-American elderly population in 2000. While this is an improvement over 1990, the differences between African-American and non-African-American elderly educational levels remain significant. (See Table 4.) Other reasons for the high poverty rate include unemployment, underemployment, low wage jobs, and lower social security and private pension plan coverage.

Generally, trends show that the economic gap between African-American elderly and non-African-American elderly is widening. The number of African-American elderly in poverty continues to increase. The significant gap in economic well-being between African-Americans and their non-African-American elderly counterparts has critical implications for African-American elders’ quality of life. (See Table 5.) What’s also important to note is the increasing percentage of African-American elderly at the lower income levels in 2000 as compared to 1990.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than H.S. Diploma</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Graduate</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Post Secondary</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 compares the percentages of educational attainment for the African-American and Non-African-American populations age 55 and older in 1990 and 2000 for Milwaukee City.
Table 5: Income Status of African-Americans and Non-African-Americans Age 55 and Older
Milwaukee City: 1990 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $24,999</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 or More</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 compares the percentages of the income status for the African-American and Non-African-American populations age 55 and older in 1990 and 2000 for Milwaukee City.

decline in personal health. African-American elderly are also impacted by the institutional inequalities that characterize so much of American life. Are they receiving their fair share? Are we honoring the legacy of struggle and commitment that they have left us?

African-American elderly are part of a specific history and the offspring of a people whose elders were considered wise and sacrosanct. Though there is a paucity of information about the current trends and needs of Milwaukee’s African-American elderly, we must work harder to ensure that these men and women receive what they have earned. In addition to allocating a fair share of public and private resources, we must honor their lives with dignity, respect, and action.

As an anthropologist with areas of specializations in cultural and linguistic anthropology, I combine teaching and research. Students in my courses are provided with experiential learning activities in the field. Since 2000, I have offered courses based in Milwaukee’s Walnut Way community and in Senegal, West Africa. My teaching is reflective, and my goal is to provide students with opportunities to make explicit connections to their lives and the communities where they learn as participant observers.

At UW–Milwaukee, Wisconsin’s urban campus, there have been on-going efforts to create campus to community connections with the city of Milwaukee. Starting as a Cultures and Communities fellow and with a mini-grant for the Walnut Way community, I was able to undertake a year of planning and build a relationship with the Walnut Way community. Located less than three miles from downtown; Walnut Way is bound by Fond du Lac Avenue, 20th Street, North Avenue, and 12th Street. Before urban disinvestments, this community was known as a place of entry for people seeking freedom and culture. In 1842, Reverend Samuel Brown’s farmhouse (near 17th and Fond du Lac Avenue) provided safety to an enslaved African fleeing to Canada for safety. The neighborhood was home to German immigrants in the mid-1880, later to Jewish immigrants. During the 1960s, African-Americans migrating from the South became the primary residents. Most worked with their hands in one of the many factories along the Milwaukee River. Over time, the community became vibrant with the religious and social traditions of each culture. Once home to the former volunteer chairman emeritus of Milwaukee’s Great Circus Parade, Ben Barkin, and civic leaders, Cleo and C.L. Johnson, the area was known for its neighborly spirit.

A critical point of this project was to build a trust relationship, which allowed both the campus and the community to see clear benefits for an affiliation. There were critical challenges to overcome before the relationship could begin. Experiences on both sides had created an atmosphere of mistrust. Hence, the first steps were critical if we were going to succeed.

This was an important meeting; representatives from the Walnut Way community had agreed to come to UWM to discuss their possible involvement with UWM. The meeting date and time was set, all that was needed was for community members to arrive. We had agreed to meet on the corner of Hartford and Downer. And so allowing for time, I arrived at the corner waiting in anticipation. Soon a car passed, hands waving, we had seen each other. They were able to find parking on Downer and we proceeded to the meeting together (Fieldnote excerpt).

During this planning year, invitations were extended for visits from the campus to the community and from the community to the campus. The Walnut Way held one of its community meetings at UWM and toured the campus; representatives from UWM visited Walnut Way to listen, observe, discuss, and negotiate possible UWM involvement with Walnut Way project. Like many neighborhoods in the city of Milwaukee, Walnut Way had its share of problems, which it was working to solve. In the 1970s, demolition of troubled properties left a neighborhood of approximately 30 blocks with over 100 vacant lots. A resident commented, “When a house disappears, the memories of the people who lived there also disappears.” This and other comments like it were used to locate our plans for future collaborations.

There were memories in Walnut Way of a different time in this place. A time when Walnut Way was a point of destination for newly arriving immigrants and migrants when neighbors knew and looked out for each other. The heart of
Milwaukee’s Bronzeville and within walking distance of downtown, Walnut Way was known as an integrated community with a diverse ethnic population in which strength was found in the mutual respect of its residents.

When I walked with Attorney Leonard Brady, former mayor of Bronzeville, in the Walnut Way, he was able to recall some information about each of the families that had lived in the homes we passed. I remembered the clarity of his descriptions of how, in this particular house, the parents of the children were deaf. Neighbors on both sides of this home and across the street had learned to sign in order to communicate with their neighbors. Children in the Walnut Way community often learned a second language since they frequented the homes of friends whose parents were immigrants.

Listening to memories of long-term residents helped to establish the basis for the research, a course and its benefits. Together, we negotiated a four-year commitment to host the Oral Traditions course. Course themes were developed to insure wide participation from residents. In year one, the course theme was remembering; we focused on identifying long-term residents for student interviews. Year two’s theme was social change and transformation; new residents in the Lindsey Heights homes were the target population. Work was the course theme in year three, combining experiences of recent and long-term residents. The fourth and final year’s theme was social traditions and rituals. Each year, the course concluded with two public forums in which students presented their course papers based on interviews.

Creating courses in the community involves a certain amount of risk. Expanding the classroom into the community means bringing students into the lived or real world of this community. The Oral Traditions course was established as a Freshman Scholars course and part of the Cultures and Communities program. The initial offering was a demonstration and targeted students who were prospective teachers. The design of the course supported students with four visits to the Walnut Way community. Entry into the community was facilitated through an invitation for students to participate in a resurgence of the annual block party. At this event, the student project was to assist in transforming a vacant lot into a garden. Residents along with UWM administrators, faculty, Teachers in Residence, and students participated in a kick-off rally, which officially brought UWM into the Walnut Way community.

As part of the course, students were prepared to conduct interviews, present themselves to strangers, and reflect critically on the experience as valuable knowledge. Students were invited into the homes of residents to conduct interviews in teams of two. They were accompanied by an observer who acted as an additional set of eyes and ears to assist the students and resident in achieving a successful interview.

On our first day in the field, students assembled on campus and proceeded to the Walnut Way community. We had a common meeting where students gathered tape recorders and then left for their interview sites. With anxious anticipation, I waited. (I had spoken with residents who had agreed to be interviewed, I had sent out an informational letter expanding on what to expect, I made follow-up calls to answer any additional questions residents might have had about the students. Did I miss anything?) After about an hour and half, students began to return. These were not the same nervous and anxious students who had left earlier that evening. First, I saw the lights in their eyes. It is the “aha” moments teachers live for, meaning students “get it” and understand what you want them to learn. Then I noticed their hands, most were carrying covered paper plates, obviously with food. As students shared with each other, I overheard them comparing their experiences. They were excited about the stories they had heard; their perspectives were being transformed. For many of the students, this was their first time visiting the home of an African-
American. They were amazed with the commonalities they had uncovered.

The students’ interviews are part of research to document the ethnohistory of one of Milwaukee’s oldest African-American communities. As a follow-up to student interviews, I conduct more in-depth interviews with residents, who now see me as an honorary member of the community. Over the course of the four years, I have observed and documented substantial growth in the Walnut Way Community. Field notes, video documentation, and photos from the personal archives of residents have provided the evidence of milestones identified by the community as important steps in their renaissance as a caring community. Students’ work on the oral traditions in the Walnut Way community is making a meaningful and purposeful contribution to the understanding of diversity in the city of Milwaukee, and to their academic development as future UWM graduates.

Following a similar process, I also have created a global course called Traditions of Senegal, a four-week study abroad program. As the field school director, I developed this course using many of the same process and procedures implemented in Oral Traditions. Students are immersed in the traditions of Senegalese culture as part of their transformation. They learn and experience a vast array of Senegalese traditions, which they are required to use. For example, they learn the Senegalese greeting system in which it is common to state greetings in three different languages: Wolof, French, and Arabic. The ritual of communal eating is an immersion experience for students, which they will encounter throughout Senegal. Students are given practical experience in how to participate in this custom known as eating around the bowl. Their stay concludes with a visit to the city of Touba where, in traditional Senegalese dress, we tour the Mosque and library. Students’ visit to Senegal provides them with insights into an Islamic country. In Senegal, students’ projects are in two settings, rural and urban. In Dakar neighborhoods, students assist neighborhood associations with their local projects. In the rural area, we will be engaging in a geographic information systems (GIS) project to map the town, and provide street names and house addresses.

As an anthropologist, I have developed both of these courses in the lived environments of communities, which can facilitate students’ learning as lived experiences outside of the classroom. These courses provide students with meaningful civic engagement activities that broaden personal as well as academic interests. This fosters a sense of citizenry, and challenges students to put their citizenship and service into practice.

Participants at a public forum for the Oral Traditions course.
The Milwaukee Commitment Phase II
Closing the Achievement Gap: Retention and Graduation

Please note that only goals and strategies of the Phase II plan are included in this excerpt. For the entire Milwaukee Commitment Phase II document, please access it on the Web at http://www.ma.uwm.edu/files/MCPPhaseII.htm.

The UWM plan for Phase II of the Milwaukee Commitment focuses on increasing enrollment and success of TRE/D* students, increasing the number of TRE faculty and academic staff, and putting in place an organizational structure that would sustain success and make accountability possible. The following principles guide the formulation of our goals:

1. Diversity is a strongly held institutional value.
2. Campus administration, shared governance bodies and faculty and staff ranks must share leadership and accountability for achieving the UWM’s diversity objectives.
3. Enhancing academic and professional success of TRE/D students is in the best interest of UWM and the community it serves.
4. Increasing diversity among faculty and staff provides a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for success of a diverse student body and a better campus climate.
5. Improving the campus climate for students, faculty and staff of color is a necessary part of the plan to enhance diversity.
6. Resources must be appropriately allocated for UWM to sustain programs that assure successful achievement of its diversity goals.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND SUCCESS

The major goals of Phase II of Milwaukee Commitment are to increase the enrollment of TRE/D students and to close the achievement gap in retention and graduation. Congruent with our goal to be a premier urban research university, we aim to have our retention and graduation rates of TRE/D students to be in the top quartile among the Urban 13 institutions.

This benchmark guides us to put in place the best practices for enrolling, retaining and graduating TRE/D students. The specific strategies…are developed based on our analyses of what is needed at UWM to achieve these goals. The strategies include:

1. Aggressively recruit TRE/D students to UWM to achieve a critical mass of student diversity.
2. Continually narrow the gap in retention and persistence of all TRE/D students with the long term goal of achieving parity and an intermediate goal of reducing the gap in retention by at least 25% by 2008.
3. Increase the yield of TRE/D applicants from MPS and other public and private high schools in the state.
4. Increase the yield of UWM pre-college program participants enrolling at UWM.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Having a critical mass of faculty and staff of color in all units is necessary for achieving and maintaining an appropriate climate for academic and professional success of employees and students. Diversity training of faculty and staff is also critical for maintaining an appropriate climate. Both aspects are important for UWM to achieve its Phase II goals. The strategies include:

1. Increase the percentage of TRE faculty and the percentage of TRE staff to reflect and/or exceed the U.S. Department of Labor accepted availability and utilization data and achieve parity in the promotion rate with non-TRE faculty and staff.
2. Expand effective diversity training for all faculty and staff.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

One of the lessons learned from Phase I experience is that a lack of coordination of diversity initiatives in the various units leads to ineffectiveness and inefficiencies. Assessment of the progress providing feedback to facilitate continuous improvement needs to be in place for achieving the diversity goals. Ensuring accountability at the various levels of implementation of the plan is key to institutionalizing diversity initiatives. The strategies include:

1. Establish an organizational structure on campus that effectively (i) coordinates diversity initiatives on campus, (ii) monitors progress and assures accountability at all levels.
2. Establish an infrastructure that develops and sustains a climate for academic success.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN PHASE II

Collection and analyses of student related information including applications, enrollments, achievement, retention, graduation, financial aid, and diversity components of curricula will be coordinated by the Office of Assessment. Key administrative offices that will be responsible for providing both data and analyses in this effort include, but are not limited to, Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, Recruitment and Outreach and Resource Analysis. Further information will be collected via survey instruments. All assessment information will be made available to the campus and the information will be used to monitor progress at the institutional and unit levels.

Deans and division heads are responsible for ensuring that progress is made at the unit level. At the campus level, Vice Chancellors of the divisions have the accountability for progress in their divisions. The Chancellor’s Council for Inclusion will have oversight on the diversity planning, monitoring of progress and accountability.

* TRE – Historically targeted racial/ethnic groups (African American; American Indian/Native American; Hispanic/Latino(a); and Asian American, with a particular emphasis on Southeast Asian American).

D – Disadvantaged groups (include those who are from low income and first-generation college families).
Top to bottom: Associate Professor and Director Swarnjit Arora (Economics and Institute for Survey and Policy Research), Assistant Professor Taly Drezner (Geography), and Graduate Assistant Pithoon Thanabordeekij (Economics) presented a Tsunami Teach-In on March 10, 2005. This educational event was co-sponsored by the UWM Tsunami Relief Coalition, Center for Volunteerism and Student Leadership, Union Sociocultural Programming, Asian Faculty and Staff Association, and the Department of Multicultural Affairs.

As part of the IMR Scholars in the Round seminar series, Professor Festus Obiakor (Department of Special Education) presented the following two seminars: “Retention Models for Minority College Students” on Oct. 6, 2004; and “Practical Perspectives on Recruitment and Retention of Minorities at College Levels” on Feb. 23, 2005. An excerpt of Professor Obiakor’s first presentation can be accessed on the Web at www.imr.uwm.edu/files/Obiakor6oct04.pdf