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Abstract

Little is known about home economists' perceptions of international development (ID). This paper offers some insights about this issue gained from an interpretative, thematic analysis of a very small sample of participants who attended the 1996 International Federation of Home Economics congress. The analysis suggests inconsistencies in how home economists understand ID and what is seen to constitute ID activities, a lack of consensus about the meaning of development work, a lack of certainty about the difference between criticism and critique, and concern for the imposition of western ideology on southern countries. Seven themes for future research are offered to help gain a better understanding of how home economists' perceive ID including: (a) the role of participatory action research, critical theory, science and critical reflective practice in ID; (b) meanings attached to the concepts of international, development and economic growth; (c) the necessity of positioning an ID philosophy in practice, curricula, research and policy; and, (d) perceptions of what constitutes development activities, at home and abroad.

Introduction

There is a compelling need for home economists to be involved in International Development (ID) activities. Even though human welfare is a universal concern, there is a greater concern for human welfare in southern countries where individuals and families (80% of the world's population) often face serious problems related to inequality, inequities, inaccessibility, lack of freedom, insecurity, injustices and war or civil unrest, values which are central to home economics (Bubolz & Sontag, 1988) and forefront in our minds given the recent events of September 11, 2001. The basic premise of this paper is that, although home economists have a legitimate role to play in ID¹ (Sproles & Sproles, 1996), little is known of how they understand that role.

Knowing why home economics practitioners are, and are not, involved in ID and how they understand ID, would help us understand the potential impact the profession can have on citizens living in southern countries who comprise the bulk of the world's population. There were three objectives for this study: (a) determine what the phrase "International Development" actually *means* to home economists in terms of daily practice and in the wider field of home economics, (b) determine the various degrees of involvement in ID projects and initiatives, and (c) identify other professional activities seen to relate to ID but that do not involve travel to, and work in, a southern developing country.

To obtain answers to these three objectives, a survey instrument, containing both open and closed ended questions, was developed (taking direction from Backstrom and Hursh-César (1981)), pilot tested and then air mailed to a random sample of 80 of the approximately 1000 home economists who attended

¹For clarification, this paper assumes that ID refers to activities occurring in southern developing countries, often called Third World countries but more recently referred to as "the Majority World," the 80% of the world's population that is not part of the North Atlantic system (Elworthy & Rogers, 2001). The north still refers to developed countries (Mikkelsen, 1995). Also, Evans (1994) clarifies the difference between development and economic growth. He claims that development often is brought in from the outside while economic growth is usually initiated from within a country. Development initiatives strive for sustainability, institutional capacity and capability, poverty reduction, empowerment, gender relations, environmental protection, feasibility, good governance, dialogue and participation (Mikkelsen). If done properly, attempts to stimulate economic growth can facilitate development but often they do not.

the 1966 International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE) congress in Bangkok, Thailand. There were participants from 44 countries and I tried to get two from each country in the sample. The questions were structured so that the respondents could write down their comments to justify their responses to specific menu driven questions. It was assumed that participants at an IFHE Congress would be predisposed to international concerns and to the role home economics plays in shaping societal, human and family betterment through ID activities.

This paper shares insights drawn from an interpretative, thematic analysis of the written comments offered by the eight respondents, as well as some basic frequency counts. Obviously, such a small sample (10% response rate) does not enable one to generalize to the larger population of home economists. In fact, this is not a limitation because interpretative research adheres to different research criteria that does positivistic research. It focuses on uncovering and understanding the meaning of lived experiences (Pullen, 2000), in this case home economists' experience with ID. The results generated by qualitative research do not illuminate the "right answer" but reveal multiple truths, thereby making the results less capable of generalization (Pullen). The study strived to gain knowledge that can be used to stimulate dialogue and generate new research questions. Indeed, Pullen notes that "the results are valid if the knowledge developed improves the practice for which the project was intended" (p.127).

Thematic Analysis

There are many ways to analyze respondents' communication about their experiences and perceptions of their reality (in this case, written comments) and thematic analysis is one such way. Thematic analysis enables one to 'unwrap' the meanings of messages tendered by respondents leading to the development of themes. A theme is a concept, trend or distinction that emerges from reiterative reading of the written comments (Aronson, 1994). Looking for themes requires that the researcher have a deep understanding of the subject matter, with all its shades and nuances of meaning (Krippendorff, 1980). Upon analyzing the written material, all of the comments that fit under a specifically identified theme (components or fragments of ideas or experiences that may be meaningless when viewed alone) are identified and brought together. Then, the researcher develops a valid argument for choosing each theme by referring to appropriate supportive literature (Aronson, 1994; Torrance, 1998). The results of this process are shared in the following section.

Results - Insights Into How Home Economists Perceive ID

The three objectives are used to organize the discussion of how these eight home economists perceive ID. To bring the discussion alive, and to give respect to the ideas expressed by those home economists who replied, verbatim quotes are used to provide evidence that shaped the identification of the themes. Qualitative research protocol supports the use of respondents' comments as a means to gain a sense of how they see the world and the meaning they bring to a phenomenon. Interpretative research is fundamentally concerned with seeking to understand social members' (in this case, home economists) definition of a situation (work in international development) (Schwandt, 1994). Verbatim quotations are a permanent record of a person's thoughts and feelings and the researcher can extrapolate meanings and the world view of the speaker through these written communications (Fetterman, 1989). More importantly, "judicious use of such raw data... can provide the reader with sufficient data to determine whether the [researcher's] interpretations and conclusions are warranted" (p.115). It is worth noting that it is accepted practice, in interpretative research, to use the same words from a person and infer multiple meanings and interpretations; hence, some quotes will be used more than once to make different, yet credible, points.

Objective One - Meaning of International Development

The first objective was to determine what the phrase "International Development" actually means to home economists in terms of their daily practice and in the wider field of home economics. As a point of reference, a summary of the Canadian Home Economics Association (CHEA) definition of ID was taken its ID material and shared with the respondents:

The CHEA International Development (ID) Program was established twenty years ago to deal with: (a) improving the socio-economic conditions of poor families; (b) empowering women as agents and beneficiaries of development rather than as means to development; (c) facilitating the

effective transfer of [and appreciation and incorporation of indigenous] knowledge to communities on food, nutrition, family relationships, housing and waste management; and, (d) the critical examination of human rights violations, the environment, trade, unemployment, poverty, food security, foreign aid and appropriateness of technology. (CHEA, 1993, brochure)

Personal congruence with CHEA's ID definition. Five respondents agree that their personal understanding of ID matches CHEA's conceptualization of ID (used in this study because CHEA funded the research. Future studies can add other organization's definitions of ID for comparative analysis). The other three respondents say they generally agree with CHEA's understanding of ID then go on to share opinions on how their understandings differ. One respondent, who agrees with the basic premise of CHEA's position, clarifies that, *"I prefer to keep roles of family members as they are and build on those rather than exporting our beliefs to them, either implicitly or explicitly."* Along the same vein of thought, another respondent takes issue with occidental development, meaning that the view of what constitutes development stems from western society and ideology. This respondent feels that occidental development is dehumanizing because it puts the formal, money driven economy before human quality of life. S/he claims that, by imposing a western way of life on other countries, we assume that it is alright to promote the same way of life all over the world. This respondent takes issue with this, claiming that Third World Countries (his/her words) are now fighting to have their cultures recognized. They are striving to make sure that, at international and United Nations organizations' meetings, the consequences on their people are considered and factored into the discussions of all points germane to an issue. This respondent argues that *"home economics has an important role and it has to be specifically thought out for each country, culture and population."* Embracing the action research paradigm, this respondent continues, *"situations must be studied with concerned persons to find the real needs, the causes of them (affective, historical, economic) and wishes for change or not."*

A third respondent notes that *"it was difficult to argue with the intent of CHEA's position but I question whether it adequately deals with the realities. Public and private policy within countries as well as those without may well be where the influence, empowerment and action needs to be. Also, the positive as well as the negative needs consideration as these are closely linked-- employment and unemployment, poverty and well-off or at least better off, etc. I also find it difficult to understand why health and education are not specifically included."* In the author's opinion, CHEA assumes health is part of well-being and that a home economist's approach to practice includes education, development and prevention; hence, the positive rather than the negative approach to CHEA's ID statement.

The fourth respondent who agrees with CHEA's position on ID in a general sense clarifies that *"I would support a more political and analytical approach with an economic perspective on the household as the fundamental production unit in a society. Thus add to (c) 'based on a social and economic analysis of the household as an enterprise, facilitate the effective transfer of...' and also add to the list of subjects quoted in c, '...food, nutrition, family and community relationships, household economics, housing and waste management'."* This respondent also challenges the critical approach to practice, claiming s/he would *"delete this and substitute it with 'a political, social, economic and environmental analysis of...'"* A second respondent also challenges the critical approach to practice claiming, *"I am not sure how this is handled. It is so easy to treat this simply without understanding the complexities of the situation. The latest example is child labour. Certainly, child labour does not fit our criteria [of human rights] but what does banning it, et cetera do for the family of that child?"*

Respondents' associations' congruence with CHEA ID definition. Only one respondent feels that her/his professional association's conceptualization of ID matches CHEA's. Three respondents clarify that their association did not have a formal definition of ID. Two others note that they do not know if their association has a formal definition of ID and the others did not answer. One respondent comments that *"perhaps the local organization has something on ID but if they do, the members are not aware of it."* Another notes, *"much of ID related to 'act locally, think globally' is important since it gives all home economists a stake in the issue, not only those that work directly in ID. The impact of ID is not solely what happens in developing countries or in areas of developed countries but what is happening in our*

back yards.” This sentiment is expressed by another respondent who asks, *“What is so special about ID? All of the dimensions mentioned in CHEA’s statement apply equally to national development as well as to ID. Basically we are trying to help and empower people wherever they may be. We have to be humanistically and culturally sensitive to whatever we do. Although many of us may not be on the scene, we are involved in ID when we work with international students or other professionals.”*

Objective Two - Degree of Involvement in ID Projects and Initiatives

The second objective was to determine the various degrees of involvement in ID projects and initiatives. Over two thirds of the respondents note that they plan to continue their involvement with ID (6 out of the 8). Those continuing their involvement are involved in a wide range of activities including home economics association executive officers, planning conferences and workshops on reconceptualizing home economics, and conducting social impact analysis, gender analysis and household economic analysis through to partnerships with other home economics associations and NGOs. These partnerships focus on training home economics educators, bio-technology transfer, orphanages, micro-enterprises, food security, foreign aid, human rights, basic needs, rural development and training of women, and food habits of pre-school children. The activities take place all over the world: Russia, Sweden, Africa, Norway, Finland, France, Asia, India, Germany, East Pacific countries, and Australia. Several projects are linked with CHEA’s ID Program.

One respondent says s/he was involved in ID but is no longer. This position is then contradicted when the respondent describes a link with African women through a small bulletin. It seems that writing a small bulletin is not construed as ID involvement compared to this person’s previous involvement with training African home economists and developing a university department and research centre.

Another wants to be involved in ID but is not yet involved because his/her local association has no ID projects. S/he wants to become involved to share knowledge and expertise in home economics education. Later on, s/he notes that *“I am doing my part locally since I teach at a local university that offers home economics as a major in the Bachelors of Elementary Education and Secondary Education [to 3000 students] as well as vocational home economics or food and garment technology. This involves extension services to the community.”*

A third respondent wants to support others but not be directly involved. *“I am pleased we have dedicated professionals in the ID area. I am primarily a researcher and teacher and value the information available for use in classroom and research. I might be interested in a tax donation to some efforts.”*

Objective Three - ID Activities Not Involving Direct Travel to and Work in An LDC

The third objective was to determine the scope of professional activities construed as ID, including those which do not involve direct travel to, and work in, a southern country (referred to as a Less Developed Country (LDC) in the survey instrument). Of those respondents who indicate they will continue to stay involved with ID (n=6), four of them travel directly to LDCs to conduct international development activities but not necessarily for extended periods of time in those countries. To illustrate, one respondent indicates that, *“actually, very few of my ID activities involve travelling to developing countries. I have not undertaken specific projects in developing countries which required my residing there for a period of time. [Instead,] I have travelled to developing countries and have met the home economists there or they visited [my country]. The projects I am involved with are more or less on an ad hoc basis and arise spontaneously from meeting international colleagues.”* The respondents tend to travel to both developing and other developed countries and partner with ‘other country’ colleagues in their ID work. The scope of ID involvement of the other two respondents who intend to continue their ID work extends, for one person, to *“planning international conferences related to reconceptualizing home economics”* and for the other, to expanding his/her *“personal understanding of the work of the UN and other government agencies in ID while continuing to work with international students studying in America.”*

The following five categories were provided to help the respondents answer the question related to types of ID activities that they undertake which do not involve direct travel to, and work, in an LDC:

(a) policy at all levels of government; (b) scholarly works and research; (c) curriculum development; (d) educating one's self or offering professional in-services; and (e) activities with a professional association. Six respondents indicate they will continue their involvement with ID. Only one of them indicates current involvement with policy, in this case a government's development cooperation policy. This respondent shifted policy arenas, moving from over 21 years with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of a developed country. None of the others gave any indication of a predisposition towards personally being involved in policy but one did say that we should be involved in policy from an ID perspective, *"public and private policy within countries as well as those from without may well be where the influence, empowerment and action needs to be."* What was striking was that research, conducted by six of the respondents, was never explicitly linked with policy implications; that is, no one says explicitly that they use the results of their research to influence policy (although this may be the case).

Six respondents indicate they are involved in all three of: scholarly works or research, curriculum development and self education. First, collectively, their scholarly activities include: publishing, drafting grant and research proposals, publishing proceedings and preparing technical papers for the IFHE congress. Self-funding of scholarly works related to ID and assisting international students as they applied for admission to enter North American universities are construed as scholarly works and research related to ID. Second, curriculum development occurs in the form of: needs assessments leading to non-formal education courses, and in the development of farmer agricultural education, and a gender analysis training curriculum. Encouraging domestic student's understanding and involvement in ID, and working with international students studying in North America, is also categorized as curriculum development by one respondent. Third, they understand self education to comprise: attendance at international conferences, international development activities and workshops and reading international publications, and membership in a professional association. It also encompasses becoming familiar with the work and role of the United Nations and national government agencies involved in ID. Finally, three respondents note they take part in professional association activities ranging from being on the executive and board of governors to speaking personally at conferences sponsored by the association and distributing association information and promotional material.

Analysis - Seven Themes for Future Research

One of the benefits of exploratory research is the identification of themes that provide direction for future research. The next section outlines a framework of seven themes that emerged from the analysis. These are rich areas for future research, practice and professional development on the topic of how home economists perceive and understand international development as a professional activity: (a) need for participatory action research, (b) need to have ID work occur in civil society and with families as well as in the public and private domains, (c) need to examine the relationship between development work in the North and the South, (d) need to examine the link between the concepts of international and development and whether work done in the national domestic arena counts as development work, (e) need to maintain a critical approach to ID, (f) need to consider the place of ID in home economics curricula and research agendas, and (g) the need to discuss the necessity of whether an ID philosophy should be entrenched into the pre-professional socialization process so that it is adopted by the profession at large. Each theme now will be discussed with support from the appropriate literature, as recommended by Aronson (1994).

Theme One - Need for Participatory Action Research in ID Work

One striking finding was the inconsistency in how home economists understand international development. Despite that half agree with CHEA's definition of international development, the comments of those in dissent are very telling. Respondents charged others to resist the current trend to impose a western way of life all over the world. Instead, we are mandated to specifically think through our role for each country, culture and population. We are to study each situation separately because no two situations are the same. As we do this, we are to study with the concerned people to find out their perceptions of real needs, their causes and acceptable solutions.

These recommendations from the respondents compel us to embrace participatory action research in that it calls for the active involvement of, and often control by, those people who would be among the objects or beneficiaries of the research. Their roles should include defining the questions, controlling the process, and interpreting the findings, ideally as originators, proponents, and executors of the research. There is a movement within home economics towards the participatory action research (PAR) strategy (Engberg, 1996; Peterat, 1996).

Theme Two - Need to Have ID Work Occur in Civil Society, with Families and in Power Sphere

Respondents interpreted CHEA's definition of ID as working directly with individuals and families rather than in civil society or the private and public policy domains, the power sphere - they call for the latter. ID was seen as influencing, empowering and taking action at the political level rather than in the home. Respondents seemed to assume that the effects of this intervention would trickle down to families and communities. This assumption is suspect but it was a reality for some respondents and, by implication, may be for other home economists. Indeed, while seven respondents indicate they are involved in scholarly works or research, curriculum development and self education, only one is involved in influencing policy. Continual calls for our involvement in public policy must be heeded if we are to create situations conducive to the empowerment of the family as a social institution (McGregor, 1995). In the meantime, we need to continue our focus on individuals and specific family units, in all their diversity, if we are to help them improve their daily quality of life. The United Nations' Secretariat for the International Year of the Family suggested we embrace both roles, by "creating individual well-being by empowering families and fostering the conditions that will allow them to improve their own well-being and that of future generations" (United Nations, 1995, p.6). If nothing else, this thematic analysis suggests a need to dialogue about which combination of these roles is preferred and feasible: influencing policy to respect the family as a social institution, working directly with, or on behalf of, families and their concerns, or both?

Theme Three - Need to Examine Link Between Concepts of 'International' and 'Development'

It was assumed that international development referred to development occurring in southern developing countries rather than in the developed northern world. Related to this distinction is the apparent confusion among some respondents about where a home economist must work in order for the work to be construed as international development. Development refers to efforts brought in from the *outside* (Evans, 1994). International refers to the involvement of two or more nations (Webster's Dictionary, 1969). This means that international development involves bringing outside resources to bear between two nations, one with the resources, the other needing the resources. Most respondents indicated they do not travel directly to LDCs to conduct international development activities. They do, however, collaborate with partners from other developed nations. One respondent's comment illustrates this discrepancy in what constitutes ID or illustrates a different emphasis, "*although many of us may not be on the scene, we are involved in ID when we work with international students or other professionals.*" This comment implies that some home economists may feel that implicit work outside the country, in the form of curricula development to sensitize northern citizens of southern contexts, and teaching southern students who will return to their own constituents, counts as legitimate ID work. If this is an accepted convention, and the author thinks it should be, these people need to be supported in their role just as we support direct involvement in another nation.

Related to this discussion is the recent work of some home economists in Eastern Europe, where nations are rapidly moving from communist, planned economies to democratic, market economies. These home economists consider their work to be international development even though they are not engaging in work in southern economies. Slocum and Engberg (1995), for example, are involved in rethinking home economics in war torn Eastern Europe, from a participatory action research perspective. One respondent is involved with a project training home economic educators in Russia. It seems that we need to dialogue on what we mean by ID so that we can support each other in our endeavours.

Theme Four - Need to Clarify Differences Between Development in the North and the South

Evans (1994) clarifies the difference between *development* and *economic growth*. Development is

brought in from the outside and economic growth is initiated from within a country. Confusion between these two concepts seems to have surfaced in this analysis. Several respondents felt that international development could be construed as working at home at the local level (economic growth) as well as in another country (development). *"The impact of ID is not solely what happens in developing countries or in areas of developed countries but what is happening in our back yards. What is so special about ID? All of the dimensions mentioned in CHEA's statement apply equally to national development as well as to ID. Basically we are trying to help and empower people wherever they may be."*

Part of this quote is intriguing because it suggests that some home economists consider their work in impoverished areas within their *own* country to be *international* development. Consider, does international development place more emphasis on the development part or on the international part? Development includes poverty reduction, empowerment, gender relations, dialogue and participation (Mikkelsen, 1995). Those involved with poverty, women, children, the unemployed, homeless and disempowered do not necessarily have to have an international perspective. CHEA's ID mission includes "enabling home economists both in developing countries and in Canada to promote sustainable development based on justice and popular participation" (Engberg, 1995, p.1). Should, for example, this be construed as enabling: (a) Canadian home economists to do ID work in Canada with Canada's population, (b) home economists from other countries to do ID work as well as (c) Canadian practitioners to do ID work in other countries, or all three? Should there be a stream of work that relates to development and another that deals with international development? These are interesting questions and are likely relevant to other countries involved in ID.

Theme Five - Need to Entrench a Critical Science Approach in ID Work

CHEA's critical approach to ID practice was challenged by several respondents. This may be persuasive evidence that practitioners still do not appreciate what a critical approach to practice is since it was suggested that critical practice be deleted and substituted with *"a political, social, economic and environmental analysis."* While an analysis of a situation is valuable because it reveals the parts and how they fit together, a critique entails evaluation and judgements of a situation using critical discourse. Also, criticism is not the same thing as a critique of a situation, a distinction that is not always appreciated by home economists. When we criticize something we find fault with it, place blame, or condemn it (Webster's Dictionary, 1969). On the other hand, if we critique something, we engage in careful judgement, discussion and evaluation.

Critical theory is evident in CHEA's conceptualization of ID. Critical theory also provides the foundation for a critical reflective approach to practice, a hallmark of CHEA's ID program. Critical theory provides a means for us to raise the consciousness of, and enlighten, people whose suffering is brought about by their own, conscious or unconscious, involvement in maintaining certain practices such that their life conditions are not conducive to a healthy state of well-being and quality of life. The resultant self understanding, stemming from reflection and dialogue about the conditions of their life, can lead to revision of their role in society shaped by the new found belief that they can make a difference (Baldwin, 1991; Brown & Baldwin, 1995; Smith, 1996). Critical theory is concerned with power relationships in society, relationships that can lead to oppression, injustice, inequities and conflict unless revealed and dealt with effectively. This theory is an ethical stance primarily concerned with emancipation by revealing factors that prevent people from taking control of their lives. The intent is to improve the human condition by making transparent, tacit and hidden assumptions that keep people downtrodden and oppressed (Smith). The end result is to provide people with autonomy and satisfaction because they have freed themselves from the control of more powerful people and groups (Gentzler, 1999). The critical philosophy is evident in CHEA's definition of ID rather than a criticism perspective or simply analysis. But, if it was misconstrued by respondents, then this means the message is not clear or more education is needed on critical theory and science in practice in general, and in ID work in particular.

Theme Six - Need to Embrace Global Perspective in Home Economics Curricula and Research

One respondent says that s/he is *"pleased we have dedicated professionals in the ID area"* but, rather than be involved directly in ID work s/he, *"might be interested in a tax donation to some efforts."*

There are still home economists who feel that leaving development issues to "dedicated professionals," who are doing things removed from the standard home economics curricula and research arena, is acceptable practice (yes, I know this is a value judgement). Since this perception exists, its implications merit study by the professional community. Furthermore, this sentiment provides evidence for the continuance of the ardent, ongoing work by some home economists who are struggling to engage the professional community in a dialogue of the place for a global/development perspective in home economics education (Smith & Peterat, 1992). They suggest that, "at first, development education was the focus of groups, mainly non-government organizations such as the Canadian Home Economics Association (CHEA), working in international development projects" (p.1). Their goal now is to convince people to bring a global perspective to their approach to practice rather than limit it to only those working on ID projects. A global/perspective focuses on global problems and issues, interdependence of people, reciprocal relationships and it chips away at apathy, ignorance, prejudice and injustice. It increases people's awareness and understanding of global issues, helps them articulate and reason about moral questions and encourages reflection and responsible actions (Smith & Peterat).

Theme Seven - Need to Include Development Philosophy in Pre-Professional Socialization

One respondent commented that, "*I am pleased we have dedicated professionals in the ID area. I am primarily a researcher and teacher and value the information available for use in classroom and research.*" Initially, the author interpreted this comment as valuing the work done by others in ID because it could be used by others in their teaching. Upon reflection, this comment raised concerns in me. Does it infer that other home economists perceive ID as something removed from the classroom and research agendas? Is not information generated from, or about, ID theory, policy and initiatives especially relevant to socializing current students to appreciate the merit of becoming, or supporting those, involved in ID initiatives? This is a crucial issue that needs to be examined by the professional community. Negative perceptions, or dismissal, of ID work should not be condoned given that our responsibility is to the well-being of families as an institution, regardless of the country where they happen to live.

The concept of development includes several sub-concepts: sustainability, institutional capacity and capability, poverty reduction, empowerment, gender relations, environmental protection, feasibility, good governance, dialogue and participation (Mikkelsen, 1995). Comments from the respondents indicate that they also recognize these factors as central to international development. This is encouraging but further analysis of a larger data base needs to occur to determine if this philosophy is transferred to actual practice on a wide scale. The following comment suggests that theory and practice are not in sync: "*International development is the objective of the UNO (of which IFHE is a part) since 1945 but the result is not what had been hoped for. Countries from the Third World now fight against the Occidental countries and wish their cultures to be recognized in the International UNO meetings. ... Our efforts as home economists must allow the population to create their own development from their own recognized values.*" We must determine if sustainability, empowerment and participation are desired by the population in question rather than us assuming they are. As the respondent confirms, despite home economists' best efforts, "*the poor get poorer and the rich get richer; we have more and more poor people outside society, without jobs, homes or power.*" We are compelled to ask why this human condition prevails and whether or not entrenching a development philosophy in pre-service and in-service programs would serve to sensitize our profession to its potential role in ID.

Summary of Recommendations for Future Research

Only one participant could say for certain that his/her association had an ID mission and a working definition of this aspect of professional practice. When discussing CHEA's ID program (now over 30 years old), Engberg (1995) noted the challenges in implementing CHEA's program and concludes that we need collaboration, interaction and dialogue to successfully implement the ID mission. This thematic analysis seems to corroborate her conclusion, extending the concern from Canada to the international arena. Collaboration and dialogue would take us closer to working toward a common understanding of international development, finding common ground, meanings and agreements while respecting each other's points of views and positions (Mitstifer, 1996). The thematic analysis undertaken

in this paper reveals at least seven areas of concern about the diversity of meanings about what is international development. These issues need further dialogue, collaboration and interaction if we are, through ID work, to realize our potential to create situations conducive to the self empowerment of individuals and families on a global scale. These seven themes are now summarized as a series of possible research questions:

1. What constitutes international development? How broadly or narrowly should we define ID? How involved and extensive does our work have to be to be construed as ID? Does a small bulletin or a conference have as much credence as developing a university department or a research centre? Is there some continuum of work that could be developed so that everyone can find a niche in ID? Is this approach desirable?
2. How do we, as a professional community, understand the link between 'international' and 'development' and between development and growth? Should we focus on development at home, abroad or both?
3. Can we do ID work 'well' if we avoid influencing policy at the local, national and international levels, even at the corporate levels? How are initiatives to influence policy in southern countries compromised by the nature of the political regimes or other factors?
4. Is working directly with families and other home economists sufficient to achieve the mission of ID and the mission of home economics or do we need to partner and influence non-governmental organizations and international institutions as well?
5. How do we reconcile the trend to impose our western values on southern developing countries, assuming that our perceptions of well-being and human welfare are 'right' for the entire world?
6. Should participatory action research, critical theory, critical science and a critical reflective approach to practice be embraced on a wider scale within the profession, especially in ID work?
7. Should a global/development perspective become an integral part of home economics curricula ensuring that emerging practitioners are socialized to the merits of international development initiatives?
8. Finally, it also is recommended that future researchers refer to papers or positions taken by non-home economists on participatory action research, policy and development, development versus economic growth, and the philosophical basis for international development so as to strengthen their discussion of ID as a professional activity.

Conclusion

This list of compelling questions for future research begs for personal, programmatic and professional attention and introspection. The thematic analysis provides evidence of a need for future studies which focus on the role of the home economics professional community in international development, *especially* their perception of this role. Knowing (a) how home economics practitioners perceive ID, (b) why they are, or are not, involved, and (c) to what extent and how they are involved, plus (d) what they perceive as legitimate involvement, contributes to an understanding of the potential impact the profession can have on the world's collection of individuals, families, communities and societies. Our practice, research and professional socialization (pre-service) and in-service programs will be richer and more relevant if more information, knowledge and shared understandings are collected around the topic of home economists' perceptions of international development.

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