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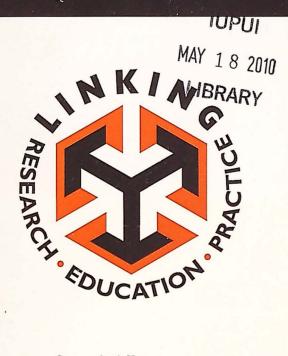
Special Issue on
HBSE Theories

Indiana University
School of Social Work

Advances in Social Work is committed to enhancing the linkage among social work practice, research, and education. Accordingly, the journal addresses current issues, challenges, and responses facing social work practice and education. The journal invites discussion and development of innovations in social work practice and their implications for social work research and education. *Advances in Social Work* seeks to publish empirical, conceptual, and theoretical articles that make substantial contributions to the field in all areas of social work, including clinical practice, community organization, social administration, social policy, planning, and program evaluation.

The journal provides a forum for scholarly exchange of research findings and ideas that advance knowledge and inform social work practice. All relevant methods of inquiry are welcome.

Advances in Social Work is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes original work. Articles are accepted on the basis of appropriateness, clarity, sound methodology, and utility for social work practice, research, and education. Articles are indexed or abstracted in *Social Work Abstracts* and *Social Service Abstracts*.

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CONTENTS

Editorial

James G. Daley

With great pride, we offer this special issue on a critical review of theories of human behavior in the social environment (HBSE). The original idea for this special issue stemmed from several simultaneous issues. First, I taught a doctoral class on theory development twice, with three resulting articles (Daley et al., 2005; Gentle-Gennitty et al.; and Decker et al. featured in this issue), which indicated that theory critique and advancement was rarely in the social work journal literature. Second, the Council on Social Work Education (1994) has required that Master in Social Work students should be able to "use theoretical frameworks to understand the interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems" (p. 137) and that "the professional foundation must provide content about theories and knowledge of the human bio-psych-social development, including theories and knowledge about the range of social systems in which people live" (p. 140). Third, there are various textbooks that focus on HBSE and discuss different theories (i.e., Shriver, 2004; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007). Fourth, we could not find such a critique in any recent journal. In summary, our profession seemed to require HBSE theories for our education; the theories are frequently discussed but not critically evaluated in popular HBSE textbooks and such a review is long overdue.

We sent a call for papers with five parameters for each manuscript. First, we asked for each author to describe a historical analysis of theory development, including how theory links to HBSE. Second, we asked that the author clearly describe the components of theory and operationalize the relationship between the variables within the theory. Third, we asked that the author provide a discussion of the goals or outcomes intended with theory and the boundaries of the theory. Fourth, we required that the author provide a description of empirical studies that have supported and/or progressed the theory. Fifth, we requested that each author describe any specific next steps for theory progression and implications for social work. We received a wide range of manuscripts that were diverse in perspective. Some articles focused on well-known theories, such as ecological theory or psychodynamic theory. Some articles introduced innovative theories that are new to our profession, such as semiotic metatheory or complexity theory. The result is a special issue that is likely to expand any reader's horizons!

There are some cautions to consider. Different scholars have developed frameworks for evaluating theories (e.g., Fischer, 1973; Payne, 2005; Turner, 1996; Witkin & Gottschalk, 1988) and some of those authors would challenge our emphasis on "operationalize" or "empirical studies" as being positivist biased. Other authors would probably acknowledge the importance of empirical testing but say that we should have demanded proof that the theory advanced social justice or was ethical or that everything is unique in its own way and cannot be compared to another setting. The arena of theory development is rampant with diverse perspectives of what constitutes a theory, what value any evaluation has, and whether theory progression is a useful term to use. I have had lively discussion in my course on these very top-

ics. Each reader must decide for him or herself how much weight to put on empirical validation of the theory.

I encourage the reader to see each article as an intellectually stimulating journey into a theory's framework and credibility. Consider how that theory could be incorporated into your professional toolbox of skills. How might this article help you to better understand your client and the context of their actions? Then compare and contrast different articles and theories. How could affect control theory (Forte) be compared to attachment theory (Page & Norwood) or kinship ties (Hall)? Finally, consider, after you have read all the articles, what expansion of knowledge has occurred in you. Social work is a broad profession demanding a diverse set of skills. These articles can help you continue to heighten your awareness of the many ways to impact our clients, whether person, family, or community.

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Using A Semiotic Metatheory for
Theory Understanding, Appraisal, and Use:
An Illustrative Social Work Translation of the
Affect Control Theory of Emotion

James A. Forte

Abstract: *Charles Sanders Peirce's creed, "Do Not Block Inquiry," and his triadic model of the signs serve as the base for a semiotic metatheory of science and scientific theory. Semioticians characterize science as a universe of diverse sign systems, and scientists as members of different language communities. This paper introduces this approach. Affect control theorists ponder and investigate how actors, identities, actions, objects, emotions, and social settings are interrelated during interaction. Semiotic tools and principles guide the translation of the Affect Control Theory (ACT) of emotion. ACT is summarized and appraised for its value in increasing our understanding of human behavior in the social environment, its suitability to social work, and its applicability. ACT technical words are translated into simpler language, ACT displays into words, and ACT's interactionist language is translated into the language of ecosystems theory. Suggestions for strengthening ACT and for promoting semiotic translation are included.*

Keywords: Semiotics, human behavior and the social environment, translation, theory

What language should North American social workers speak? English, only. No, Bloom and others (1991) argued, convincingly, that competent social workers must achieve fluency in many additional languages. Besides our native language, professional practitioners must learn to converse in the language of clients, research, information management, social work practice (the profession's distinctive jargon), values, and theory. Often, these languages seem foreign and assistance is required. Social workers have developed strategies for translating the language of research into practice (Allen-Meares, Hudgins, Engberg, & Lessnau, 2005). Translation research refers to "the practice of translating basic science data or discoveries from the laboratory bench into clinical applications aimed at treating various diseases" (Hudgins & Allen-Meares, 2000, p. 2). Translation research bridges diverse professional arenas and specialized languages. The translator works

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to make empirical studies accessible and applicable by creating simple, short summaries, for instance.

Translation research lacks a metatheory of science and a methodology. Moreover, translation work has not been extended to the other languages identified by Bloom, Wood, and Chambon (1991). In this paper, I will concentrate on theory literacy and fluency and introduce a semiotic metatheory for theory translation and its distinctive vocabulary (Forte, 2001, 2002, 2006). I will illustrate the semiotic translation methodology by rendering the Affect Control Theory (ACT) of emotions into a language clear and useful for social work, appraising ACT's suitability for diverse practice challenges, and decoding the theory's implicit directives for application.

In this first section, I present the essentials of a semiotic approach to theory translation. Metatheorizing is an activity that involves theorizing about theorizing (Ritzer, 1991). This activity mandates "reflexivity," the self-examination of the profession's theoretical development by the profession's members (Zhao, 2001). Social work is a pragmatic profession that applies tested theories to ameliorate personal and public problems. Here, I develop a new type of metatheorizing for social work use: metatheorizing for application. The prefix "meta" means "above" or "beyond" (Zhao, 2001). Metatheorizing can result in the creation of a metatheory, a theory about theories. A metatheory's subject matter is the process of theorizing and the structure of the theory. The semiotic metatheory presented in this paper originates in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce was the founder of semiotics, "the systematic investigation of the nature, properties, and kinds of signs, especially when undertaken in a self-conscious way" (Colapietro, 1993, p. 179). Peirce asserted, "everything may be comprehended or more strictly translated by something" (cited in Osimo, p. 606). Meaning, for Peirce is "the translation of a sign into another system of signs" (Osimo, 2002, p. 620). Peirce's semiotics was part of his philosophy of science commitment to the credo, "Do not block inquiry."

A sign is "anything that stands for something" (Colapietro, 1993, p. 180). There are three major types of signs. An icon "designates a type of sign in which the sign vehicle represents its object by virtue of a resemblance or similarity" (Colapietro, 1993, p. 114). Examples include a text, chart, diagram, and a map (Danesi, 1998). An index is a type of sign that represents the object by virtual or real connection; for instance, a weathervane indicates wind direction by connection to the wind (Colapietro, 1993). A symbol is "a sign based on convention or established usage or habit" (Colapietro, 1993, p. 190). A symbol stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way (Danesi, 1998), as the word "tune-in" refers to an important helping action.

Semioticians conceive science to be a multimodal sign system. Metatheory or "metascience" is "the science of sciences," because of its attention to "the methods, history, sociology, and language of sciences" (Morris, 1946, p. 510). Morris, a systematizer of Peirce's intellectual system, added that social-humanistic sciences (referred to by social workers today as HBSE theories) "are semiotical sciences, in that the subject matter studied always involves sign processes and, correspondingly, the terms of the sciences always require for their definition reference to terms in the theory of signs" (p. 511). Scientists communicate by using linguistic sign systems and sign systems using diagrams, graphs, figures, gestures, statistics, and

mathematical formulas (Sarukkai, 2002). Science is a sign system, but it is a sign system that is different in important ways from every day English. Scientific communication requires a precision, a degree of technical knowledge, a mastery of logical argument, a vocabulary, and a familiarity with notations that is not expected in everyday discourse (Halliday, 1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988). Each theoretical tradition is a distinctive sign system with its own central metaphors, core concepts, categories, typical sentences, implicit grammatical rules, pronunciations, dialects, preferred displays, and particular network of native-speakers (Watson, 1985). Because of the multimodality of science and the complexity of its signs, social workers and their clients need assistance in decoding theories.

Translation is the act of translating from one sign system into another, rendering meanings intelligible across sign systems (Forte, 2002). Although Bloom (1975) did not recommend a semiotic metatheory for language mastery, he viewed translation as central to social work problem solving, "the major task of using theories from the literature is to find them . . . to know how to understand them, and, finally, to translate them into direct strategy statements" (p. 162). In the remainder of this paper, I will translate the Affect Control Theory of emotion. My efforts will interweave three strategies (Jacobsen, 1965). Intralingual translation involves the interpretation of ACT as a sign system in its own theoretical language, symbolic interactionism. Interlingual translation is the interpretation of the ACT sign system in the native language of North American social workers, plain English. Intersemiotic translation involves the interpretation of ACT's nonverbal signs (displays, models, and formulas) into words, and the interpretation of ACT words as an eco-map, social work's preeminent visual sign system.

TRANSLATION FOR UNDERSTANDING: HISTORICAL ROOTS

Language translation requires first the placement in space and time of the sounds of the foreign speaker. Theory translation requires similar placement (Forte, 2002). ACT is located in the discipline of sociology, so that social structure and social situations are considered the sources of emotional experience, labeling, and expression. In the early 1980s, sociologists developed an informal network or subdiscipline called the "sociology of emotions," with its own association, newsletter, and conference workshops (Smith-Lovin, 1989, 1995). ACT affirms the sociology of emotions premises that emotions are linked to "aspects of social action including identity, role, identity, and culture" and "emotional responses are an integral part of social interaction" (Smith-Lovin, 1990, p. 238). ACT and Arlie Hochschild's emotion management theory have become the "cornerstones of this subdiscipline" (Lively & Heise, 2004, p. 1110).

Affect Control Theory is located in the symbolic interactionist theoretical school. Affect control theorists share with all interactionists the conviction that the human experience is based in language. Heise (2007) claims, "your ability to interpret actions is built into the languages you speak. Languages everywhere provide nouns and verbs that describe actions in noun-verb sentences" (p. 35). He adds that people use language to describe events, actors, behaviors, emotions, objects, settings, and social actions in culturally standard ways. Affect control theorists share the interactionist aversion to dualistic thinking. The environment influences

how a person experiences and manages emotions, but the person is active in creating definitions of the emotions and actions responsive to emotions (Smith-Lovin, 1995, p. 128). Identities are a function of both situational pressures and personal inclinations. Affect control theorists have an affinity for the structural symbolic interactionism. Members of this sub-school give attention to how society, through stable and reoccurring experiences in institutions and roles, structures the self, and the self then shapes behavior. Affect control theorists share the structuralist appreciation for quantitative research and experiments (Smith-Lovin, 2003). Affect control theorists consider role theory another kindred school of thought. Both assume that actors learn "a set of behavioral expectations associated with a social position" (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006, p. 137). Both agree that, when self and others conform to expectations, positive emotions result. When self and others deviate, negative emotions result. Other sociological theoretical languages have influenced affect control theorists (Francis, 2003). These include Stryker's Identity Theory, Goffman's Impression Management Theory, and Labeling Theory. Affect control theorists have borrowed ideas and words from psychology's attribution, balance, and consistency theories and from Powers' control model of perception (MacKinnon, 1994). Heise and O'Brien (1993) note a commonality with social constructionists who also conceive of "emotions as intelligent conduct, contrived according to cultural rules, so as to effect desired interpersonal outcomes" (p. 490).

While affect control theorists speak the language of interactionism, they reject the theoretical assumptions and language of other schools. Skinnerian behaviorists argue that there is no interpretation between stimuli and response; emotions are triggered automatically and the actor is not an active constructor of situations (Smith & MiowLin, 2006). Parsonian functionalists argue that the person is completely socialized into playing scripted roles within stable institutions. The creative interpretation and use of emotions is minimal (Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 2006). Psychodynamic theorists emphasize the unconscious, instinctual aspects of emotions and how shame and guilt are controlled through mechanisms of repression (Heise & O'Brien, 1993). Organismic, bioevolutionary theorists view emotion as a byproduct, not an integral element, of interaction and focus on the equivalence between animals and humans even in emotional display (Smith-Lovin, 1995). ACT developers consider the sign systems of these theorists bizarre. Affect control theorists have organized a global network organized around a distinctive and shared "theoretical research program" (Heise, 2007). Numerous theorists collaborate in or at least communicate about theory expansion, research projects, and software development. The Affect Control Theory Internet Site (http://www.indiana.edu/~socpsy/ACT/), developed in 1997, posts 175 readings, software, conferences, and exhibits.

What are the historical origins of the theory as they have shaped theoretical language? Here, I will translate by use of exemplary role models (Forte, 2006). George Herbert Mead was the founder of symbolic interactionism. Mead theorized about language as the basis for a social psychology of mind, self, and society (MacKinnon, 1994.) People use culturally provided symbols to assign meaning to social situations and their elements (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006), and people

escape the boundaries of individual consciousness to coordinate action via the use of shared symbols provided by the speech community. The person develops a self and adjusts behavior in membership groups by the feedback provided through taking others perspectives. ACT shares Mead's emphasis on language as a theoretical starting point and Mead's pioneering use of the root metaphor: the self as a cybernetic system. Act has also incorporated into its vocabulary many Meadian key words, including meaning, situation, definition of the situation, role, role taking, identity, self, and coordinated action. Mead's theorizing, however, was thoroughly cognitive, and he gave minimal attention to emotions. ACT advances symbolic interactionism by operationalizing its major concepts, including meaning, identity, behavior, and setting and by focusing on the affective meaning of objects. Unlike Mead, ACT assumes and documents with research evidence that affective meanings are more or less shared as cultural sentiments. Unlike Mead, ACT believes that actors communicate private emotional experience through emotional displays and narratives, and such communication evokes symmetry of responses similar to that in cognitive communication.

David R. Heise is the second major ACT exemplar (Smith-Lovin, 1999). A professor of sociology at Indiana University, he was the first to develop the control system perspective on identity. His statement in 1971 at the Southern Sociological Society meetings, explicated the major ACT tenets about identity, action, and meaning. He has also developed software to facilitate the analysis of social life, conceived of a methodology called event structure analysis, and nurtured many students. Most ACT "texts" considered in this paper were written or co-written by Heise, written by his students, or inspired by his example. David Heise was also the recipient of the Cooley-Mead Award for distinguished lasting career contribution to sociology.

How do the members of the contemporary theory community make use of their historical texts? Translation by intertextuality starts from the semiotic conviction that translation should trace "the allusion of a text to some other text" (Danesi, 1998, p. 286). Affect control theorists seem to agree on the tradition's classics (Francis, 2006; Heise, 2007; Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 2006). In 1979, Heise published "Understanding Events." This first major book-length statement included the essential theoretical principles, mathematical formulas, measurement tools, and dictionaries. In 1987, Smith Lovin's article extended the actor-behavior-object predictive model to include settings. The ABOS model can thereby investigate settings, sentiments associated with a particular setting, such as a church, and how setting sentiments relate to other sentiments. Smith-Lovin and Heise (1988) next published *Analyzing Social Interaction*. This book includes empirical studies, theoretical elaborations, refinements of mathematical formulas, and reports on theory tests. The collection includes an article showing how the meaning of actors can be modified by social identities (membership characteristics, such as class, race, gender), dispositional traits (extroverted agency director), and mood and emotion descriptors (depressed client or angry father), and how such modifiers enrich the model (Averett & Heise, 1987). In the late 1980s, there were a series of studies exploring emotions and their expression (MacKinnon, 1994), followed by a formal call for more emotion theorizing and research (Smith-Lovin, 1995). In 1994,

MacKinnon published *Symbolic Interactionism as Affect Control*, a sophisticated theoretical systematization that organized the theory as seven sets of propositions. This represented a large-scale intersemiotic effort to translate ACT's mathematical models into verbal statements (Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 2006). In 2002, Rashotte added nonverbal behavior into the event grammar (ABOs becomes ANBOS) and demonstrated how nonverbal behavior modifies the meaning of the behavior. Contemporary ACT researchers and theorists frequently cite these classics. Recently, Heise (2007) released *Expressive Order*, an intersemiotic and interlingual translation of ACT from mathematical and interactionist language into plain English. This may become the next classic.

TRANSLATION FOR UNDERSTANDING: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

In this section, I offer a translation of the contemporary set of ACT texts, with a focus on emotions and reference to significant work, conceptual developments, and empirical studies. ACT is a multimodal sign system. Its conception of the interrelation of the actor, identity, behavior, emotion, and setting is represented in visual form (displays and diagrams), lexical form (words, sentences, and para-graphs), and mathematical form (equations and formulas) (Scher & Heise, 1993). I will prioritize the translation of words.

David Heise (2007) has worked to make his theory comprehensible. He provides intralingual translations (Symbolic Interactionism to plain English) and intrasemi-otic translation (equations and formulas represented by mathematical symbols into plain English words). His summary of the 30-year body of work provides "an accessible introduction to affect control theory for advanced undergraduates and graduates" and "communicates affect control theory conversationally, in words enriched with some figures and tables" (preface, 2007, p. i). For example, Heise (2007) clearly identifies focal questions asked by affect control theorists. What are expected behaviors for persons enacting various role identities? How do these behaviors change because of unusual events? What are the typical emotional reac-tions to victimization or oppression? How do emotions vary by identity, setting, and events? In a particular situation, what must one do to feel positive emotions, such as joy, and what negative emotions might be anticipated? How do identity, social interaction, and emotional response vary across cultures?

Translation by Key Words and Dictionaries

Theory understanding requires mastery of a theory's vocabulary. Translation by key words and dictionaries serve as important theory translation tools (Forte, 2001, 2006). Heise (2007) provides nominal definitions of 45 concepts central to ACT, a simple dictionary. Here are a few illustrations. Affect refers to "emotions, sentiments, impressions, and motives" (p. 145). Affective meaning is "the conno-tation of a word or symbol, measured as an evaluation-potency-activity (EPA) pro-file" (p. 145). Affect control theory focuses on "resisting changes in affective mean-ings and actualizing sentiments" (p. 145).

Affect control theorists include much definitional discussion in their publica-tions. Several nominal definitions are focused on emotions. Affect control theory

proposes, "humans try to manage experiences so that immediate feelings about people, actions, and settings affirm long term sentiments" (Heise, in MacKinnon, 1994, p. xi). Affect is "a general mode of consciousness pervading all our cognitions" (MacKinnon, 1994, p. 123). Affect includes "any evaluative (positive or negative) orientation toward an object, such as emotions like contentment and anger, attitudes like liking and disliking, and connotative meanings" (Smith-Lovin, 1995, p. 118). Emotions are "ephemeral affective experiences signaling the extent to which situational identities are being confirmed or disconfirmed in social interaction" (MacKinnon & Goulborne, 2006, p. 245). A mood is an "emotional state of longer duration than emotion" (MacKinnon, 1994, p. 139). Emotion norms are "cultural norms that specify the type of emotion, the extent of emotion, and the duration of feeling that are appropriate in a situation" (Smith-Lovin, 1995, p. 124). Fundamental sentiments are "subconscious references that people have learned from their cultural heritage about the affective meanings about such everyday concepts as individual traits and states, the settings in which interactions take place, the identities of people involved in interactions, and behaviors of people in these interactions" (Francis, 2006. p. 139). Transitory impressions are the "moment-to-moment feelings about the identities and behaviors involved in the interactions, especially about the self" (Francis, p. 143). A deflection is "the discrepancy between a fundamental sentiment and a transient impression "(Turner & Stets, 2006, p. 136).

Translation by Architectonic Maps

Theory understanding requires grasp of the language's grammar and how theoretical elements are organized into hierarchical order. Architectonic is a term adapted by Peirce to describe the systematic form a body of knowledge takes (Colapietro, 1993). Affect control theorists have diligently made explicit their assumptions. I will report those related to emotion. First, people react affectively to every event (MacKinnon, 1994). Second, the appraisal of an event, its categorization, or label, influences the affective impact of the event (Smith-Lovin, 1990), and appraisal considers three dimensions: evaluation, power, and activity. Third, people seek to create events that maintain consistency between fundamental sentiments and their moment-to-moment feelings (Francis, 2006). Fourth, people manage their emotions and conform to emotion norms by effecting culturally acceptable emotion displays (Heise & O'Brien, 1993) and, fifth, emotions signal spontaneously the actor's success or failure in confirming fundamental sentiments and complying with norms (Francis, 2006). Finally, membership processes are critical to emotions. ACT "conceives of person in a context, examines how a society's culture and social structures influence the arousal, flow, and display of emotions and how people use emotions to constitute culture and maintain structures" (Turner & Stets, 2006, pp. 1-2). ACT's assumptive foundation differs from theoretical languages that assume emotions are primitive biological reflexes, indicative primarily of individual processes, independent of context, automatic, rather than constructed, and private (Francis, 2003; Heise & Weir, 1999).

Pepper (1942), a philosopher, brought direction to the decoding of complicated theoretical architectonics. He argued that each framework of thought is built on a root metaphor. Affect control theorists rely on several root metaphors. Borrowing from Mead, the person is compared to a control system (Francis, 2006; Heise, 1979;

MacKinnon, 1994). The person uses cybernetic processes, such as those in a house's cooling system. The person seeks to maintain an ideal state defined in terms of standards or reference settings stored in memory; fundamental sentiments are our thermostat settings. Like a cybernetic system, the person obtains input (perceptions and information) by monitoring the environment (situations). Fluctuations in perceptual signals (transitory impressions) are compared to reference settings (fundamental EPAs for the situational elements) to determine whether conditions are at variance with the system's standards. There is continuous comparison. If errors occur, the person takes restorative actions, similar to the thermostat activating the air conditioning to cool the house after a blast of hot air. The desired equilibrium is again realized; transient impressions are realigned with fundamental sentiments. In the human system, emotionality is the critical signaling process. Emotions signal the degree to which events confirm or disconfirm the actor's identity meanings as a good teacher, a trustworthy friend, or a competent social worker. Turner and Stets (2006) remark, "emotions are thus the gyroscopes of human behavior, keeping it on track in diverse situations, so that individuals can experience positive and avoid negative emotions" (p. 22).

Affect control theorists borrow interactionist imagery for their environment metaphor. A social environment is like a warehouse of symbols. It provides members with the names to designate all forms of social stimuli: identities, identity modifiers, and emotions. The warehouse contains dictionaries for cultural and subcultural groups. Each dictionary records the group's essential concepts and their meanings. These dictionaries accumulate across generations through members' experiences with others, public interactions, and the mass media. Different institutions, such as religion and academia, use different subsets of the society's dictionary: the nouns, adjectives, and verbs necessary for institutional action (Heise, 2007). From these dictionaries, individuals select relevant symbols to quickly orient themselves to a variety of situations. Affect control theorists inspired by this root metaphor have studied the United States and compiled its dictionary with EPA ratings for 500 social identities, 500 social behaviors, 300 emotion and trait terms, and 300 social settings (Francis, 2006).

Affect control theorists also compare the theoretical notion, "assignment of meaning," to a three-dimensional space. Meaning occurs, in this comparison, in a room containing all possible sentiments. Any particular EPA rating, a foster parent, for instance, is at a point in this room. Very good identities are near the ceiling, and very bad identities are near the floor. Very powerful identities are near the front wall. Very powerless identities are near the back wall. Very active identities are near the right wall, while very quiet or inactive identities are near the left. The foster parent identity is located in this room, similar to the way a star is located in the cosmos, by its rating on all three dimensions. The meaning of any emotion (love directed to a foster parent) is also found in this three-dimensional EPA space (MacKinnon & Keating, 1989). As a person moves through this space, the comparison continues; her emotional experience is determined by the absolute position in the room and by the direction of movement (Smith-Lovin & Douglas, 1992).

Theoretical explanations are like paragraphs. Translation by explanations interprets deductive, propositional paragraphs, and inductive paragraphs. Affect con-

trol theorists have deduced propositions about the basic characteristic of the relation between identity and emotions. Regarding intensity, ACT contends emotional intensity signals the degree to which an identity has been disconfirmed by an event (Francis, 2006). Specifically, the greater the degree of discordance between fundamental sentiments and impressions, the more intense is the arousal of emotion (Turner & Stets, 2006). Regarding identity modifiers, Smith Lovin (1990) contends that the more stigma associated with an identity, the more negative the emotions. Additionally, the more power associated with the identity, the more likely the person experiences deep high-potency emotions, such as pride and fury, while the less powerful the positional identity, the more likely the person will experience emotions of impotency, such as fear, anxiety, and depression. Regarding situation variables, ACT theorists propose predictable relationships between situation type and the type of emotional arousal (Smith-Lovin, 1990). First, the greater the disagreement about the definition of a situation (I see myself as therapist, a client sees me as boyfriend), the more likely there will be a disconfirmation of identities and the arousal of emotions. Second, the greater the difference between cultural backgrounds, the greater the likelihood of emotional arousal due to disconfirmation of event elements. Finally, the more identities that a person enacts in a situation, the more likely that identity conflict will occur, some identities in the identity set will not be confirmed, and, consequently, the greater certainty of emotional arousal.

ACT theorists have theorized about and studied emotional displays (Heise, 1989, 2007). People judge each other on the basis of observable conduct, including the expressive signaling of subjective emotional states. The more that the actor displays culturally appropriate affect, the greater the likelihood that the actor's status will be enhanced. Conversely, the more often the actor displays inappropriate affect, the more likely the actor will be stigmatized. The proposal has been extended to courtroom judgments of culpability and punishment. A malicious action accompanied by emotions indicating remorse and guilt helps an actor more than malicious action accompanied by displays of satisfaction or glee (Smith-Lovin & Robinson 2006).

In an example of intertextuality, ACT theorists have referred to Hochschild's (1983) work on emotion norms and work (Heise & Calhan, 1995). Emotion norms prescribe a range of permitted feelings, given particular circumstances. Persons engage in emotion work in an effort to bring automatic emotional reactions in line with cultural expectations. Based on a study of college students, several propositions emerged. Influential people can more successfully shape emotional norms to reflect their ideological preferences and create resources for personal gain than minimally influential people. Moreover, there is a relationship between gender and emotions. Gender has minimal effect on the emotion norms that actors associate with particular events. However, women are more likely to report negative emotions, embarrassment, and vulnerability to events than men. Finally, the greater the discrepancy between emotion norms and emotion reactions (and the researchers found discrepancies in almost 50% of the 128 events), the greater the demands for emotion work, such as masking or overriding reactions.

Thanks to the ACT theoretical research program, there are testable propositions about specific emotions. For ambivalence, Smith-Lovin (2003) proposes that, if an actor occupies more that one identity simultaneously and experiences events from these multiple perspectives, it is likely that events will evoke a mixture of emotions and the feeling of ambivalence. For example, an action supporting the identity of "judge" might produce negative deflection on the evaluation (likeability) and positive deflection on the potency dimensions of "women," resulting in a troubling mixture of feelings. In the case of anger as related to justice considerations, Scher and Heise (1993) propose that the more often a person who is involved in a transaction feels anger and the emotion is not ameliorated, the more likely that he will decide that the transaction is unjust. This relationship is conditioned by justice importance. so that the more one cares about justice, the greater the emotional impact of an incongruence. Regarding depression, McKinnon and Goulborne (2006) propose a relationship between the emotion and perceptions of one's situational identity. Those events that create transient identity impressions with a negative valence on evaluation, potency, and activity produce bad, powerless, and unlively emotions; that is, depression. Furthermore, people who often enact social disvalued identities more typically experience depressed emotions compared to those who enact non-stigmatized identities. Finally, the more that positively evaluated identities are disconfirmed in interaction or stigmatized identities are continuously confirmed, the more likely depression will become an enduring mood. For surprise, Smith-Lovin (2003) suggests that the greater the disconfirmation's unexpectedness, the more the emotional experience of surprise, unreality, and confusion. Regarding stress, to the extent that a deflection is experienced psychologically as a sense that the world is unpredictable, not right, or disturbing, the greater the likelihood of stress. Smith-Lovin adds that the more frequent the experience of stress, the greater the probability that the disconfirmed actor will attempt to leave the interaction. Affect control theorists build on each other's work. Empirical studies translating these propositions into testable format and seeking verification are likely to follow.

Theoretical translation must also consider inductive work identifying processes, typologies, or themes. Affect control theorists explain the typical social process, an encounter, inductively (Francis, 2006; Scher & Heise, 1993). First, the actors comprehend and define the social situation (a work meeting in an agency's office). Second, the actors anticipate, perceive, and interpret the elements of the event: identities, objects of actors' behavior, behaviors, and setting features. Third, the actors behave to confirm their pre-existing sentiments about these elements. Fourth, the actors appraise behavioral and emotional displays to determine how each participant is faring in the social interaction (good, potent, lively, or otherwise). Fifth, when unanticipated events occur (a senior social worker harshly criticizes a novice worker), the actors attempt to create subsequent events that fit within their frame of expected behaviors and confirm fundamental sentiments (other workers help the manager show consideration or workers redefine the manager's identity to be inept or cruel). The balancing or restorative actions for failed event confirmations can be one of three types. An actor can reconceptualize the role behavior of self or other, leaving identities intact: the supervisor is teaching a lesson not criticizing. An actor can reconceptualize the setting: the supervisor is

critical, because it is a personnel evaluative session. An actor can reconceptualize the other's identity by adding a modifier: a mood, trait, or moral condition (senior social worker is grumpy, arrogant, unprofessional), or by assigning a new identity (the supervisor is a corporate hatchet man initiating a dismissal process).

TRANSLATION FOR THEORY APPRAISAL

Semiotics can assist us in appraising the ACT and identifying its strengths and limitations. Three types of standards must be used: universal standards (parsimony, testability, explanatory power, scope, predictive power, and so on), social work standards (strengths orientation, appreciation of social justice, sensitivity to diversity, biopsychosocial explanations, ethical and values integrity, attention to varied size-systems and life stages, and empirical support), and semiotic standards (degree of articulation of theory elements and their relationships, communicability) (Forte, 2006).

I will illustrate each. First, ACT is a parsimonious theory. "ACT = predictions for ANBOS based on EPA profiles" is my summary of the theory's ingredients. ACT theorizes that "humans try to manage experiences so that immediate feelings about people, actions, and settings affirm long-term sentiments" (Heise, in MacKinnon, 1994, p. xi). Each event is composed of predictable elements: an actor (A) performing an act, including nonverbal (N) and verbal behavior (B) on an object (O) in a setting (S). The EPA profile summarizes the fundamental sentiment on three dimensions (Francis, 2006). If we know the EPA for four of the five elements of an event, the affect control theorists can predict the sentiments for the fifth element. All ACT's theoretical models, middle-range theories, theoretical elaborations, and applications build on this foundation. This single integrated theory explains much about social life, the normal social actor, and what motivates and shapes behavior (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006).

Second, from the perspective of social work's preference for biopsychosocial theories, ACT is lacking. The theory gives minimal attention to the biological processes central to emotion and overemphasizes situational cues, cultural norms, and social structures (Turner & Stets, 2006). Affect control theorists have responded to social work's appreciation for diversity. Meaning universally involves three dimensions. This has been confirmed in studies of more than 20 cultures (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006), and the affect control process applies cross-culturally. All people use the same psychological processes, but cultural dictionaries (the specific meanings for identities, emotions, behaviors, and settings) vary. Within a culture, there is consensus among persons integrated into the culture about the meanings of event elements. Cultures tend to be fairly stable in sentiments, too (Heise, 2007). But, there are identifiable variations across cultures and subcultures in the particular EPAS for event elements. By comparing the fundamental sentiments of more than six countries, affect control theorists have documented how members of different cultures perceive elements of events differently (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006). Robinson and Smith-Lovin also review how ACT documents the specific dictionaries endorsed by males, females, and by subcultural groups, including Internet networks, gay members of a religious community, people aligned with different political ideologies, psychiatric patients, and Alcoholics Anonymous

members. Extending the ACT knowledge base to increase understanding of diverse groups is a priority of the theoretical research program.

ACT meets that standard of scientific rigor. Fararo (1997), one of sociology's theory experts, regards ACT as one of the "best developed empirically applicable models" (Fararo, in Heise, 2007, p. 4). Its measurement tools and mathematical model of meaning prediction have been carefully developed, tested, and improved continuously (Francis, 2006). Many of the theory's basic assertions and predictions have been validated. Heise and Weir (1999), for example, compared ACT predictions about emotions with what people reported they will experience in imagined situations. Their findings generally confirmed the theory. The emotions experienced were close to those predicted by ACT. Emotions predicted to be unlikely by ACT were rarely experienced. Lively and Heise's two studies (2004) of 2,904 English speakers supported the ACT assertion of the three-dimensional structure of emotions and ACT propositions about the intentional transformation of emotions and the specific pathways for change.

Third, theories are semiotic resources for communicating and meeting challenges encountered by theory users. ACT successfully carries out theory's communicative functions (Heise, 2007; Scher & Heise, 1993). It describes well. EPA profiles have been collected as large data sets for numerous countries and subcultures. It predicts behavior. Interact, ACT computer software, can be used to predict the unknown element of an event, based on known elements. It has explanatory power. Act provides theoretical models to explain health outcomes, social movement transformations, support group dynamics, courtroom processes, and many other social experiences. It has reference use and serves as a highly developed and specialized language for collaborative inquiry by large a group of scientists. Affect control theorists have done an excellent job of transforming the theory into communicable form. Translation has been relatively easy. Root metaphors and propositions are explicitly identified. Concepts are defined conceptually and operationally. Historical exemplars and classical texts have been identified. The theory has even been presented in a comprehensive, plain English format (Heise, 2007).

TRANSLATION FOR APPLICATION

Scientists and social workers often use visual aids and words to depict highlighted aspects of a theory as a theoretical or practice model (Forte, 2006). Francis (1997) carried out a participant observational study of two different support groups: one for divorcees (spiritually-oriented) and one for bereaved persons. Based on her research and grounded theory method, Francis developed a useful ACT conceptual model of mutual aid processes. Support groups are focused on emotions and emotional behavior and are directed towards helping members with "interpersonal emotion management" (p. 153). Group leaders and members work to "shape, work, or manage emotions" (p. 153). Her model includes the following components. Each support group identified three actors with identities of consequence: self-ex-God for the divorce group. The group leader facilitated a process of redefining the meanings for each of these identities and for the traumatic event during three phases. First, the worker helped members examine their initial self-definitions, generally an EPA characterizing self as bad, weak, and inactive. The coun-

selor challenged the negative self-label, argued that the sufferer is a good person with a "bad experience," and promised that the negative identities (failure, victim) and emotions (powerlessness, stunned, futility) resulting from the deep deflection could be resolved. In the second phase, the leader and members embrace new self-definitions. In the divorce group, the sufferer is redefined as good, strong, and active. The ex-spouse is defined as bad, weak, and active, and God is introduced as a resource. In the third phase, there is further definitional and emotion work. The sufferer's identity as good, strong, and active is reaffirmed, and God is identified as a very good, very strong, and very active ally in the healing process. With changes of identity meanings, new emotions are experienced, labeled, and discussed. These include determination, rejoicing, and trust. During the process of affective resocialization, members learned to redefine elements of the difficult event, reduce the event-caused deflection between fundamental sentiments and transient impressions, and replace negative identities with positive ones. Members confirmed each other's new identities, and these positive identities generated behaviors and emotions considered healthy by the leaders and members.

ACT also provides theoretical models relating identity, emotion, and interaction to health outcomes (Francis, 2003), showing how gay rights social movement leaders use emotion management techniques to transform members' emotions from fear, to anger, to pride (Britt & Heise, 2000); diagramming the relationship between situational factors, emotional arousal, and cognitive deliberations about justice (Scher & Heise, 1993); profiling a gay-friendly church and how it uses rituals to change the religious and gay identities of its members from stigmatized to positive meanings (Smith-Lovin & Douglas, 1992); and identifying the conditions necessary to build "empathic solidarity" (Heise, 1998). These should be adapted for social work use.

A theoretical language must be translated from abstractions into strategies for practical use during the helping process (Forte, 2006). Specifically, a theory translator must interpret theoretical knowledge to direct every phase of the planned change process, including engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluative activities. For the engagement phase, Francis (2006) hints at a root metaphor for "social worker," when she characterizes the support group leader as a facilitator of "assisted deflection resolution." Expanding on this kernel, we can imagine the ideal engagement of the client from the ACT perspective. The client has been deflected or set off course by a disconfirmation. The worker reaches out to identify the original course settings (EPA profiles on situational elements), communicate respect for and validation of these sentiments, and most importantly, convey the conviction that the client, with assistance, can again take control of affect and return to course settings (Francis, 2006). Imagery and concepts associated with guide and guidance, sailing and navigating following a disorienting storm, revalidation, and reconfirmation might embellish the root metaphor.

For the data gathering and assessment phases, ACT can be translated into the verbal and visual language of the eco-map. The focal system would be the actor enacting an identity in a social situation (MacKinnon, 1994). The identity can be described concisely with modifiers, including mood, trait, and moral characteristics, and the actor's behavior can be described with quantitative modifiers, includ-

ing always, sometimes, or rarely. Heise (2007) has researched the range of possible focal identities. In the United States, actors can enact between 500 and 1000 identities. These are related to socioeconomic and work systems; kinship, political systems, and religious organizations; categorical memberships, such as age, sex, and race; ethnic and ancestral heritage other than race; global identities associated with personality traits; leisure time and hobbies, sexual orientation, and sexual style. The systems surrounding the focal system are social institutions. Institutions are "constellations of roles, identities, settings, and actions related to some elementary concern" (Heise, 2007, p. 28). Surrounding circles would then include the family (marriage, child care, and caregiving); the realm of sexual encounters; business (working at a job and buying and selling in markets); religion (organizations and divine beings); education at all levels; medical; legal (judicial and law enforcement); political (executive and electoral government at all levels); leisure, including travel and entertainment; military; and science. The total environment on the eco-map would be a society's entire social structure of institutions and identities. Connections between the focal actor and actors in various institutions involve identity-relevant actions. Positive connections are those that confirm the person's identity. Stressful or negative connections are those that disconfirm the identity (Smith-Lovin, 2003).

Theory-based assessment tool can also be built from the operational definitions of theory variables. The procedure for assessing evaluation-potency-activity profiles is based on Osgood's semantic differential research (Smith-Lovin & Robinson, 2006). The procedures are clear and specific. The measurement approach can be used to assess identities, behaviors, objects, emotions, and settings, and the measurement procedure allows for adjustment for institutional domains and cultures. Each of the three dimensions is placed on a nine-point scale from the extremes. Evaluation, for example, uses a good/bad and positive/negative valence for its continuum (Scher & Heise, 1993). The measurement procedure can be used in either paper-and-pencil format or as a computerized software program. A social worker might collect information on the meanings assigned by a client to all elements of an event, then compare this to the shared cultural meanings documented by affect control theorists. EPA profiles can also be used to assess current meanings and predict likely emotions or behaviors based on those meanings. ACT researchers have used the measurement procedures in dozens of studies. Unfortunately, there is no example of its use for helping purposes.

During the intervention phase, social workers might use ACT by applying its if-then statements (Forte, 2006). The "if" part of the clause refers to personal and membership processes and structures where intervention is possible, and the "then" part refers to the probable outcomes of intervention for the quality of biopsychosocial functioning. Several translations follow. Regarding consistent disconfirmation, to the degree that a person is in a relationship characterized by the repeated disconfirmation of a positive identity (wife abused by a spouse), then depression will result. If the worker can help the person avoid or exit the situation, or if the worker can help the person participate in support groups where others validate positively evaluated, powerful, and lively identities, then there will be a reduction of deflection and emotions maximally distant from depression will be

generated (MacKinnon & Goulbourne, 2006). Regarding event characteristics, if the client is in a situation where expectations are violated and identities are disconfirmed, then socially undesirable emotions will be evoked (Heise, 2007). If the worker can implement a new event that replaces the unwanted emotion with a different emotion, or if the worker can help the client reinterpret the past event so that the emotion produced by the original interpretation is replaced by another emotion, then equilibrium will be achieved again (Heise & O'Brien, 1993).

Translation by exemplar is another strategy for translating a theory for intervention purposes. This sense-making task requires the practitioner to imagine that he or she could ask a theory's exemplars for intervention advice and then use this advice to increase professional effectiveness. "What would David Heise and other affect control theorists do in this situation?" Unfortunately, the ACT literature provides few clues about how David Heise or any affect control theorist or researcher would engage in service or answer specific social work practice questions. One piece of advice comes from Lively and Heise (2004). Social workers should use ACT-based emotional shortcuts to help people move between positive and negative emotions.

CONCLUSION: FUTURE WORK ON ACT AND SEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

Social workers need theory translation for many reasons. Theories are often stated in obscure, unclear ways. Theorists use abstract, general terms that are hard to apply to the particulars of social work situations. Some theorists use ill-defined terms. Some use well-defined terms in unusual ways. Some use specialized terms that are very unlike words from natural languages. Theory translation is necessary, because there are so many theoretical languages and because the major theoretical languages are alive and changing continually. Theory translation can make communication possible between theory specialists (theorists), theory users (practitioners), theory testers (researchers), and the beneficiaries of theories (clients). Theory translation is necessary, because theoretical explanations must be adjusted for different contexts, including team meetings, sessions with clients, and discussions with family members. Translators who specialize in particular languages can help (Forte, 2006).

This article has been an exercise in theory translation. A semiotic metatheory was offered as a framework for understanding science and scientific theories. Affect control theorists ponder and investigate how actors, identities, actions, objects, emotions, and social settings are interrelated during social interaction. ACT has been interpreted in terms of its value in increasing our understanding of human behavior in the social environment, for its suitability to social work, and for its applicability. A variety of theory translation tools were used to translate ACT technical words into simpler language, ACT displays into words and ACT's interactionist language into the language and imagery of ecosystems theory.

Semiotic metatheorizing about ACT can be taken further. ACT uses the language of mathematics in its formal theory statements and prediction equations. I am not fluent in mathematics and am unable to translate these statements. Additionally, semioticians are concerned about "polysemy," the notion that any sign has multiple meanings and translators focus selectively and differently on the sign's mean-

ing (Colapietro, 1993). My translation needs to be compared to that of theory experts. Finally, this paper has addressed the linguistic aspects of text analysis. Future communication-oriented theory appraisal should consider the ideological positions embedded in ACT texts and ACT's use of rhetoric to persuade readers.

This article represents an exploratory effort in the use of semiotics as a metatheory for translating theories. At this point, social work lacks a semiotic pedagogy for theory learning. Pedagogical principles, lessons, drills, and vocabulary tests based on this foundation have not been developed. Additionally, the semiotic translation skills for the mastery of ACT and other theories have not yet been codified. Further work might specify the principles and procedures associated with profiling exemplars, creating and reading theoretical models, comparing target and source domains to generate root metaphors, deconstructing a theory's architectonic, and identifying plain English equivalents for theoretical keywords.

While ACT provides useful root metaphors for the person and the environment, its theory-based root metaphor for the social work helper is too sketchy. Social work has not yet established evidence-based links between particular theoretical languages, such as ACT, and the fields and practice settings in which the languages are most useful. Affect control theorists make some claims about applicable situations. Social workers need to validate these claims. Conceptual models developed by ACT to guide emotion work are based on studies of the planned change activities conducted by non-ACT practitioners. These conceptual models have not been based on the direct application of ACT to practice situations. Social workers must develop ACT models related to our practice efforts and begin to incorporate ACT concepts, propositions, models, and findings into our own personal practice models.

A translator specializes in providing equivalent terms in a target language for terms in a source language (Sarukkai, 2002). The translator serves practitioners who are eager to learn new theoretical languages by making sense out of some text, discourse, or other semiotic system (Colapietro, 1993). Science is a sign system. Scientists use symbols, icons, and indexes that seem like an unbreakable code and a foreign language. Translators can help social workers develop the theoretical competencies necessary for multi-modal literacy and fluency so that we can better understand, appraise, and use powerful theories like Affect Control Theory.

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Motivational Interviewing: A Theoretical Framework
for the Study of Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Katherine van Wormer

Abstract: *This article provides a critical analysis of motivational interviewing-stages of change model. Although rarely included in textbooks on human behavior and the social environment, this model has much to teach us about that aspect of human behavior most germane to social work practice—personal motivation for change of behaviors that are dysfunctional. The basic concepts that underlie motivational interviewing are derived from empirically-based principles from the science of social psychology. This article provides a historical and comparative approach to theory development, argues for the utility of this perspective as a guide to practice, and provides suggestions for further theory development.*

Keywords: Motivation, motivational interviewing, stages of change, human behavior and the social environment, cognitive approach, harm reduction

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a brief treatment model designed to help clients who are low on motivation change—to help them wakeup to the need to change certain problematic behaviors—those that are health-threatening. MI may seem simple on the surface, but it is a very sophisticated modality based on advanced research knowledge from social psychology. MI is based on knowledge about how an individual's motivation to change can be enhanced by a practitioner, even when the client is reluctant to make any changes in his or her behavior (Gance-Cleveland, 2005). MI offers specific reinforcing maneuvers for every step of the way as the client advances, often in a spiraling fashion, toward change. Closely paralleling the strengths perspective in its underlying premises, motivational interviewing can be viewed as a developmental model in the spirit of the work of Erik Erikson (1950) and Carol Gilligan (1982). Like theirs, this model is stage-based or sequential. Unlike their formulations, however, MI is geared to direct practice; it is at once a theory and a therapy. The concern of this paper is with the theory dimension.

Motivational interviewing is defined by William Miller (2006) as "a person-centered, goal-oriented approach for facilitating change through exploring and resolving ambivalence" (p. 138). This term is most commonly used to represent a

series of pragmatic strategies tailored to the client's level of willingness to adjust his or her behavior (for example, to comply with a medical regimen, reduce criminality, or for smoking cessation (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). These strategies have also been applied with favorable results in batterer intervention programming (Bennett, Stoops et al., 2007).

This paper provides a critical analysis of motivational theory and discusses the theoretical assumptions that underlie this approach. Where do these assumptions come from, and what are the research findings regarding its treatment effectiveness? Beginning with a historical analysis of the development of motivational theory, this paper demonstrates that the roots of this approach are found in the teachings of social psychology. That MI should be taught along with other developmental theories in HBSE courses is a further and related argument. Uniquely, this paper analyzes motivational concepts and insights that parallel empirically-based truths from the science of social psychology. Comparisons between this approach and its direct opposite—Samenow's confrontational cognitive approach—are drawn. This discussion leads into an overview of evidence-based research pertaining to this theoretical model. Finally, we explore some ideas for theory progression and implications for social work education.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The concept of MI was first described by William R. Miller (1983) in the literature and elaborated by Miller and Rollnick (1991). Miller (1996) credited the formulation of MI to the relentless, spirited questioning by his student interns in Norway as he demonstrated how he would work with clients in various settings. The kind of questioning that ensued, ("Why have you taken this approach rather than another?"), according to Miller, required him to "make explicit the approach I had learned from my clients" (p. 835). The result was a beginning conceptual model (Miller, 1983) that was followed by years of testing and refinements, which culminated in the groundbreaking text *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People to Change Addictive Behavior* (Miller, 1991).

With characteristic modesty, Miller and Rollnick later stated, "There is little that is highly original in motivation interviewing" (2002, p. xvi). For their inspiration, Miller and Rollnick credit the theoretical contributions of Carl Rogers and his students who developed the principles on which client-centered psychotherapy was based. The development of motivational theory took a major leap forward when it absorbed the notion that behavior change occurs in increments or stages and that it involves specific tasks related to the degree of an individual's willingness to change (DiClemente & Velasquez, 2002). The impetus for theoretical advance came with the publication of the research on smoking cessation conducted by Prochaska and DiClemente (1982). Called the transtheoretical model, because it was interdisciplinary, the stages-of-change approach revealed the thinking patterns of smokers who eventually were able to quit. Their thinking was found to progress from *precontemplation*, before they were ready to change, to *contemplation* to quit, to *preparation* for action, to *action*, to *maintenance*, to possible *relapse*, and so on. Specific interventions have now been spelled out to match the client's stage of readiness to move from a refusal to cooperate to a decision to work on his or her problems.

The trail for the wide acceptance of these conjoined models leads from the United States to Europe and back to this side of the Atlantic. Motivational concepts about instituting change were seen as compatible with the Western European goals of harm reduction or public health. Preventing drug users from contracting HIV-AIDS through the use of contaminated needles was the impetus here. The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland were among the nations that, in the 1980s, were at the forefront of this paradigm shift. The shift was away from a focus on punishment for drug use towards an emphasis on safety and persuasion.

Two developments in the United States promoted the advocacy of motivational therapy. The first was cross-fertilization of knowledge through international conferences on substance misuse. Through such exchanges, American social scientists began to grow familiar with principles of motivation and teach these concepts to their students. A second major development came with one of the most massive and best-publicized research experiments in substance abuse treatment history—Project MATCH. This research project is discussed in a later section of this paper.

MOTIVATIONAL THEORY

Motivational strategies, to reiterate, are built on sophisticated understandings of human behavior in the social environment (HBSE), most of which have been confirmed through real-life experimentation. The theoretical foundation of MI is first and foremost the knowledge that people often modify their behavior as a result of their interaction with others. A related assumption is that therapists who possess critical counseling skills can help facilitate personal change in their clients. Research indicates, for example, that one such skill, counselor empathy, can be a significant determinant of clients' response to treatment (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). The four basic principles of enhancing motivation, as singled out by Miller and Rollnick, are: 1) expressing empathy; 2) developing discrepancy between one's long-term goals and one's behavior; 3) rolling with resistance (avoid arguing for change, which increases resistance); and 4) supporting *self-efficacy*—this refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to change.

Note that the first of these four principles is derived from Rogers' (1951) work in the area of empathic understanding of a client's previous behavior. As defined by Rogers, *accurate empathy* involves skillful reflective listening that clarifies and amplifies a person's presentation of reality. Unlike Rogers' extensive use of reflective listening, however, Miller and Rollnick's practice is to offer advice in terms of providing "a menu" of options. Also, in contrast to Rogers, motivational therapists use a cognitive approach to help clients see the discrepancy between their goals and present behavior (developing discrepancy is the second principle above).

Miller and Rollnick's reinforcement of their clients sense of confidence in their ability to overcome difficulty (fourth principle above) is a combination of the use of positive listening skills and reframing thoughts in a healthier direction, a cognitive-based strategy (van Wormer & Davis, 2003). Through establishing a close therapeutic relationship, the counselor can help a person develop a commitment to change.

The way motivational theory works, simply put: If the therapist can get the client to do something, *anything*, to get better, this client will have a chance at success. This is a basic principle of social psychology. Such tasks that William Miller (1998) pinpoints as predictors of recovery include: going to AA meetings, coming to sessions, completing homework assignments, and taking medication (even if a placebo pill). The question, according to Miller, then becomes, "How can I help my clients do something to take action on their own behalf?"

A related principle of social psychology is that, in defending a position aloud, as in a debate, we become committed to it. One would predict, according to motivational enhancement theory, that, if the therapist elicits defensive statements from the client, the client would become more committed to the status quo and less willing to change. For this reason, explains Miller, confrontational approaches have a poor track record. Research has shown that people are more likely to grow and change in a positive direction on their own than if they get caught up in a battle of wills.

The effectiveness of motivational strategies in eliciting change in even the most recalcitrant of people is worthy of closer analysis. Actually, the effectiveness of this model of person-centered counseling should come as no surprise, as each of the basic principles is derived from strategies that have been shown to be effective in social psychology laboratory situations. The overall technique of eliciting in the client self-motivating statement is perhaps the most basic of these scientific insights. I have filtered from one of the most popular books on social psychology, *The Social Animal*, by Elliot Aronson (2003), the basic principles of persuasion. The ones that most closely parallel the principles of motivational enhancement are:

- If we're encouraged to state a position, we become motivated to defend that position (p. 85).

- When individuals commit themselves in a small way, the likelihood that they will commit themselves further is increased. The behavior needs to be justified, so attitudes are changed (p. 158).

- People with high self-esteem are more likely to resist the temptation to commit immoral acts (p. 186).

- A person can become committed to a situation by making a decision, working hard to attain a goal (p. 186).

- Dissonance theory predicts that people will change their attitudes to bring them in line with the evidence (p. 189).

- Changing one's attitudes in order to justify one's behavior can initiate the processes that are persistent over time (p. 193).

- People desire dissonance-reducing behavior (p. 198).

Note that dissonance theory is comparable to this developing-discrepancy idea as enunciated by Aronson. In fact, as stated by Miller and Rollnick (2002), this idea was derived from classic sociological research on people's discontent with a discrepancy between their personal belief and the facts. A state of tension is thereby

built-up and, out of this tension, comes the desire to end the dissonance. The therapist can take advantage of this state of ambivalence to lead the client in the direction of desirable change.

Also note that, when using motivational interviewing, practitioners are attempting to assist clients in talking themselves into changing, rather than using direct persuasion (Corcoran & Springer, 2005). Resistance is sidestepped, so that it is not reinforced through "a battle of wills."

To gain an appreciation of how these theoretical premises are played out in practice and to learn how the development sequence works, let us consider the situation of an adolescent mandated to treatment for substance use problems. Following the formulation set forth by Miller and Rollnick (2002) and Wallen (1993), major tasks for the adolescent's counselor at each stage of decision making directly parallel the client's state of mind. At the *precontemplation* stage, the goals are to establish rapport, ask rather than tell, and build trust. Eliciting the young person's definition of the situation, the counselor reinforces discrepancies between the client's and others' perceptions of the problem. During the *contemplation* stage, while helping to tip the decision towards reduced drug/alcohol use, the counselor emphasizes the client's freedom of choice. "No one can make this decision for you" is a typical way to phrase this sentiment. Information is presented in a neutral, "take-it-or-leave-it" manner. Typical questions are: "What do you get out of drinking?" "What is the down side?" and (to elicit strengths) "What makes your sister believe in your ability to do this?" At the *preparation* for change and *action* stages, questions such as "What do you think will work for you?" will help to guide the youth forward without pushing him or her too far too fast. When there is resistance, as there inevitably will be with young substance misusers, Miller and Rollnick advise rolling with the resistance instead of fighting it. The use of reflective summarizing statements is helpful; for example, "Let's see if I've got this right. You have a concern that I'm trying to get you to give up smoking and drinking all at once. We do seem to be moving along too fast. Why don't we look at some things people have done in this situation, some of the options you might want to consider?" Central to this whole treatment strategy is the belief that clients are amenable to change and that timing is crucial in persuading clients to take the steps that will free them from harm.

On the college campus, the most promising type of intervention to address high-risk alcohol use (and ultimately reduce harm) appears to be a brief intervention with motivational interviewing. In Britain, New Zealand, and Canada, such brief sessions that promoted reflection on substance use and the personal consequences, have been shown in randomized controlled trials of high-risk students to reduce drinking and drug use significantly (Poulin, 2006).

LINK TO HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Motivation is a key element in human (and much of non-human) behavior. Motivation drives us to get up in the morning, go to work, be productive, and control our impulses to do otherwise. Of course, there is motivation to engage in harmful, even criminal, practices as well. Motivation has to do with the human will to overcome daily obstacles and it is basic to our very survival. Accordingly,

much of the psychology of human behavior is concerned with the motivation of individuals, while other social and behavioral sciences are concerned with the motivation of aggregates of people (to organize a mass movement, for example, or to conform to group norms).

Social work textbooks on human behavior typically include theories of development, theories that are often associated with crucial life stages. Motivation, however, (especially motivation to change) is not usually a part of the presentation. Motivational interviewing is discussed as a cognitive approach and also as a developmental life model of human behavior in van Wormer's (2007) *Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, but this is an exception to the rule. Since a major purpose of social work education is to provide background knowledge about human behavior to prepare students for practice, attention to factors related to the change effort are vital. What are turning points in a person's life? When does crisis produce worthwhile change? Which empirical findings from social psychology can serve to inform social workers how to help people who are in trouble turn their lives around? These are all research questions pertinent to those aspects of human behavior most relevant to social work practice. (They bear on policy issues as well, for example, in making a case for policy change, but that is a topic for another day.)

In any case, for HBSE textbooks to fail to cover such content, which directly links knowledge about modifying problematic behavior and how people get motivated to change, is a serious omission. In summary, motivational interviewing theory is highly relevant to the study of human behavior and should be covered as a developmental, stage-based model as a grounding for effective social work practice.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Hester and Miller's (2003) *Handbook of Alcohol Treatment Approaches* is a research book that has been widely cited in the research field of alcoholism treatment in terms of the large scale comparisons of treatment outcomes. The first edition of this book was published in the 1980s. What these researchers learned was that the treatment methods with the strongest support of efficacy were virtually unknown and unused in U.S. standard practice. After their most recent review of hundreds of empirically-based clinical trials, the authors reached two major conclusions—there is no single superior approach to treatment for all individuals and treatment programs and systems should be constructed to include a variety of approaches, inasmuch as different individuals respond best to different approaches.

Of the 47 different treatment modalities that were tested in the literature, the top scores for measurable effectiveness were received for:

- brief intervention

- motivational enhancement

- the medications Acamprosate and Naltrexone

- self-control and social skills training

- aversion therapy
- cognitive therapy
- acupuncture

The lowest rankings were received from worst to least bad by:

- education tapes, lectures, and films
- confrontational counseling
- relaxation training
- 12-step facilitation

The central message of this comparative study is that the widely used confrontational modalities are among those of little proven effectiveness. We should take into account, however, as Hester and Miller caution, the fact that some modalities, such as brief intervention and motivational enhancement, generally have been conducted with less seriously addicted populations than some of the others.

Directed by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the $28 million multi-site, eight-year comparison study of 1997, known as Project MATCH, involved nearly 2,000 patients in the largest trial of psychotherapies ever undertaken. The three treatment designs chosen for this extensive study were based on the principles of the three most popular treatment designs—conventional Twelve-Step-based treatment, cognitive strategies, and motivational enhancement therapy (MET).

Although Project MATCH was designed to test the general assumption that matching could improve treatment outcomes, individuals were randomly assigned to three varieties of treatment, so that researchers could determine which modality worked best for whom. The results showed that one year and three years after treatment, former clients demonstrated substantial improvement, regardless of the modality used.

To the surprise of the research team, outcome evaluations showed that patient-treatment matching is not necessary for satisfactory results and that participants in the intensive Twelve-Step format did as well on follow-up as those in the cognitive-behavioral therapy and motivational enhancement designs. Treatments were provided over eight- and nine-week periods, with motivational therapy being offered only four times and the other two designs offering 12 sessions. All of the participants showed significant and sustained improvements in the increased percentage of days they remained abstinent and the decreased number of drinks per drinking day, the researchers said. However, the researchers noted that outpatients who received the Twelve-Step facilitation program were more likely to remain completely abstinent in the year following treatment compared to outpatients who received the other treatments. Individuals high on religiosity and those who indicated that they were seeking meaning in life generally did better with the Twelve-Step, disease-model focus, while clients with high levels of psychopathology did not do better with this approach. Clients low in motivation did best ultimately with the design geared for their level of motivation.

In aftercare, in the subjects who were studied, less successful outcomes were associated with male gender, psychiatric problems, and peer group support for drinking. Because there was no control group who was deprived of treatment, generalizations concerning the efficacy of treatment cannot be made, a fact that has brought this massive project in for considerable criticism (Wallace, 2005). Another major criticism is that of selection bias in study recruitment. Clients who were dependent on heroin, cocaine, used IV drugs, and were suicidal or had acute psychoses were barred from the experimental treatment. Since the clients that counselors typically see are not as homogeneous and carefully screened, such restrictions affect generalization of the findings (Wallace, 2005). What this extensive, long-term study does show, however, is that all three individually delivered treatment approaches are relatively comparable in their results—that treatment that is not abstinence-based (motivational enhancement) is as helpful in getting clients to reduce their alcohol consumption as the more intensive treatment designs. These findings provide support for the guiding principle of this paper, which is to find what works in seemingly diverse treatment designs.

Project MATCH results showed that, for clients who scored high on measurements of anger, the motivational approach worked best, while for persons of a strong religious bent, the Twelve-Step approach was most effective. The MET sessions were fewer in number than were the cognitive or AA facilitation sessions; therefore, MET emerged as the most cost-effective, a fact that has not been lost by treatment centers or their sources for reimbursement, such as insurance companies (van Wormer & Davis, 2008).

Burke, Arkowitz, and Menchola's (2003) meta-analysis of the efficacy of motivational interviewing clinical trials is also relevant for our purposes. Data were gathered from the literature of 30 controlled clinical trials that compared an adaptation of motivational techniques to another treatment format. The overall finding was that motivational adaptations showed equivalent benefits to other strategies but that they achieved the same results in far less time. The results were positive for problems involving alcohol, drugs, and diet, but less so for smoking and HIV-risk behaviors.

SAMENOW'S CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH

Even as insurance companies favor brief motivational-based interventions for persons with substance abuse problems, correctional counselors and substance abuse treatment providers are often trained in techniques derived from Yochelson and Samenow (1977) and further elaborated by Samenow (2004). In common with motivational philosophy, Samenow and Yochelson's goal is the promotion of new ways of thinking in clients with behavioral problems. Both approaches draw on a cognitive approach to elicit behavioral change. Whereas Miller and Rollnick work in collaboration with clients to help them tap into latent strengths, Samenow's approach is decidedly negative, as the title of his most recent book, *Inside the Criminal Mind*, would indicate.

Based on his extensive work with psychopathic males who were institutionalized in a prison for the criminally insane, *Inside the Criminal Mind* tears down the theories of psychologists and sociologists and draws on multiple anecdotes in

support of his position that the criminal uses addiction or a rotten childhood as an excuse to manipulate people, that he (there is no mention of females except as victims) is a victimizer who constantly seeks out people to exploit and cheat. Counseling is useless, because "any knowledge the criminal gleans from depth psychology he converts into excuses" (2004, p. 102). The recommended method is to show the client basically what a rotten person he is, then to force him to list his thinking errors and to correct them. The criminal is to identify himself as a criminal and use such self-talk as, "I am a criminal by nature and must control these natural tendencies." Unfortunately, workbooks based on this harsh confrontation approach are widely used in the substance abuse treatment field and by correctional counselors who work with both men and women, people who variously have been victims of others and/or themselves, and/or of cruel circumstances. Yet, research has consistently shown that harsh confrontational techniques are of limited effectiveness. As Miller and Rollnick (2002) indicate, "Counsel in a directive, confrontational manner, and client resistance goes up. Counsel in a reflective, supportive manner, and resistance goes down while change talk increases" (p. 9).

Contrast Samenow's accusatory style with the much more positive approach of motivational interviewing: In their seven-part professional training videotape series, W.R. Miller and Rollnick (1998) provide guidance in the art and science of motivational enhancement. In this series, the don'ts are as revealing as the do's. According to this therapy team, the don'ts, or traps for therapists to avoid, are:

- A premature focus, such as on one's addictive behavior

- The confrontational/denial round between therapist and client

- The labeling trap—forcing the individual to accept a label, such as alcoholic or addict

- The blaming trap, a fallacy that is especially pronounced in couples counseling

- The question/answer habit, characterized by asking several questions in a row and reliance on closed, yes-or-no responses; this exchange paves the way for the expert trap

- The expert trap, whereby the client is put down (the opposite of a collaborative exchange of information)

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

For favorable results in the change effort that is the essence of social work, knowledge of the fundamentals of motivation enhancement is crucial. The HBSE curriculum can promote such understanding through an inclusion of the principles of motivational interviewing theory—a developmental, stages-of-change model that could be studied alongside the stage models of Erikson and Gilligan.

The motivational stages-of-change model is rich with possibility of theoretical development. Barbara Wallace (2005), for example, has integrated this developmental model into a proposed training anti-racist scheme. When used with historically oppressed populations, (racial or sexual minorities), the focus is on pro-

moting healthy identity development, and ethnic pride. For members of dominant groups, the focus at the pre-contemplation level is on motivating people who have a sense of racial superiority to work toward more mature feelings of self-pride and respect for diversity. Work to develop ethnic pride among minorities is probably less problematic (more likely to be well received by the client) than helping clients reduce their feelings of grandeur, homophobia, or racism. In either case, the focus is on maladaptive affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses and their replacement by less offensive and adaptive responses.

The flexible, client-centered, brief counseling approach of MI is consistent with social work's strengths perspective and the theme of harm reduction, "first do no harm." "Meet the client where the client is" is another commonly heard social work theme, one that can serve to summarize MI philosophy, as well. Motivational theory, finally, is consistent with NASW's policy statement that "adopting a comprehensive public health approach will enable social workers to focus on prevention and treatment of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems. This focus will prevent unnecessary stigma and will combat substance-related illnesses, disabilities, and premature death" (NASW, 2000, p. 23)

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Attachment Theory and the Social Work Curriculum

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Abstract: *Attachment theory, as developed by Bowlby and Ainsworth, represented a major departure from the current theories of human development of the time, particularly in its rejection of the major tenets of psychoanalytic theory and its integration of core ideas from evolution theory and cybernetics (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Attachment theory posits that a foundational human instinct, the desire to achieve safety and protection through proximity to a protective figure, is responsible for the formation of a special class of life-long affectional bonds, referred to as "attachments." Emotional security is derived to a great extent, according to the theory, from experience with caregivers who are consistently responsive to the developing infant's expression of attachment behavior toward them. Forty years of empirical research has shown that attachment is a universal characteristic that predicts children's development of cognitive and social competence, emotional regulation, and positive self-image (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999). Social work educators are currently challenged to better integrate the findings of attachment research into their curricula to reflect more the current state of developmental science.*

Keywords: Attachment theory, social work theory

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATTACHMENT THEORY

The creation of attachment theory, beginning with the work of John Bowlby (1907-1990) and, later, Mary Ainsworth (1913-1999), was, like all great ideas, as much a product of new intellectual currents as it was an explicit rejection of the old ideas it was intended to replace. Bowlby, a British practicing psychiatrist at the Tavistock Clinic in London, was the originator and major theorist, while his colleague, Ainsworth, an American developmental psychologist, extended and provided the first empirical support for the theory with her observational studies in Uganda and later in the U.S. Bowlby developed his ideas about infant development within the intellectual context of mid-20th century London, where current ideas about child development were dominated by Freudian thought. He diverged from Freudian theory in many important ways, none more so than in his emphasis on the importance of actual experience to human development (Bowlby, 1982). The classical psychoanalytic model was based on a concept of a unique form of internal psychic

energy, distinguished from physical energy, as the motivating force for human development, conceived of primarily as psycho-sexual drive energy (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). This conceptualization of internal psychic development, the so-called "hydraulic model," was derived from ideas current in 19th century physics concerning the process of accumulation and discharge of energy within closed systems, the goal of which is a state of relative quiescence. In Freud's view, through the process of build-up and discharge of psychic energy, and especially the pleasures and frustrations associated with it, internal fantasy is created, characterized by the sexual nature of drive energy. These fantasies were presumed to be (especially as expressed in Freud's earlier works) even more important to the course of human development than the infant's actual experience. The classical Freudian view, then, is one that stresses the importance of *internally* derived developmental processes (Bowlby, 1982).

Bowlby replaced the Freudian notion of instinct as psycho-sexual drive with a model of instinct that depended on the interaction of organism and environment, among the earliest and most fundamental of which is the instinct to achieve and maintain physical proximity to a known individual perceived to be protective in times of distress, the foundation for attachment. The motivations associated with attachment, therefore, were seen as fundamentally social in nature, oriented toward building and maintaining close relationships from the time of birth. In this respect, Bowlby's ideas reflected the revisionist school of psychoanalytic theory, object relations theory. He differed from these theorists, however, in several important ways, beginning with his assertion that the instincts and motivations most important for human development are those having to do with the need for safety and protection.

Bowlby also took exception to the theories postulated by some of the most prominent object relations theorists, in particular, those of Melanie Klein and Margaret Mahler, who represented very diverse views within the larger object relations school. He rejected Kleinian theory primarily because of her emphasis on the importance of aggressive and destructive impulses, and the primary significance for the course of development of the child's internal mental representations produced by these impulses. He also rejected Mahler's theory of separation-individuation, starting with her postulation of a phase of "symbiosis," where the infant has no sense of differentiation from the caregiver, as well as the notion that object permanence is acquired only in the third or fourth year. These ideas were not then and, especially as seen in the light of contemporary research, are not now reflective of what is known about the developing infant's perceptions and capabilities (see National Research Council, 2000).

Also, unlike Freudian theory, Bowlby created attachment theory on a foundation of systematic observations of children in their interactions with caregivers. One of the strongest influences on the thinking of Bowlby and Ainsworth was their colleague at the Tavistock Clinic, social worker James Robertson. In several influential films, Robertson observed children in hospitals and orphanages, recording their protest and grief reactions in conditions of confinement, separated from their parents (Robertson & Robertson, 1959). This early work helped to establish some of the central tenets of attachment theory, that children's intense reactions to pro-

longed separation from or loss of their primary caregivers indicate that a strong emotional bond exists between them, which begins in infancy, and that even young children experience mourning when they suffer prolonged separation from or loss of their primary caregivers (Bowlby, 1960). As common as these ideas seem today, they were not widely accepted in his time. In attachment theory, the growing child's actual life experience, therefore, in particular, the child's early experiences with adequate care and, in unfortunate circumstances, the loss of a caregiver, are regarded as the most important determinants of development (Bowlby, 1982).

Bowlby also founded his theory on the evidence provided by comprehensive analyses and syntheses of scores of diverse ethological studies, with a particular concentration on primate studies, which he used to establish attachment theory within the larger theory of evolution. Attachment theory has been called a "major middle level" evolutionary theory (Simpson, 1999), because of its foundation in and refinement of Darwinian theory. Evolution theory became increasingly established as the dominant paradigm of the natural sciences in the 20th century, though it had not, until Bowlby, had a significant place in our understanding of human psychosocial development. One of the great achievements, therefore, of Bowlby's attachment theory is that it represents the first time that a major theory of human psychosocial development became integrated into the dominant paradigm of modern biological sciences.

LINKAGES OF ATTACHMENT THEORY
TO HBSE CURRICULA IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Attachment theory is a theory of human behavior within the social environment that incorporates the basic ideas of goal direction, exchange, and systemic integration characteristic of social systems theories. (See the summer 2004 issue of *Development and Psychopathology* for discussions of interfaces between attachment and social systems theories.) As Bowlby's basic notion of behavioral systems indicates (see discussion below), human behavior can only be understood as it becomes expressed in social relationship transactions. This view is thus representative of the contemporary view in developmental science that the old nature-nurture dichotomy is a false one (National Research Council, 2000). What was formerly thought of as "nature" and "nurture" is now understood as component parts of one process; the one has no meaning without the other.

Attachment theory should be a cornerstone of theories presented in social work HBSE courses, because of its roots in human biology, its theoretical grounding in evolution theory, its explanatory power in addressing fundamental aspects of human experience, its reflection of social system dynamics, its widespread current acceptance among developmental scientists, and the vast empirical literature that supports it. While attachment theory has received notice in some HBSE texts, its presentation in them, with the notable exception of Haight and Taylor's recent text (2007), is often superficial. There are several current HBSE texts, however, that make no mention of attachment theory or of Bowlby. Surprisingly, many of the current HBSE texts still prominently feature detailed presentations of Freudian theory and its derivatives, despite the absence of empirical support for

these and the view shared among the great majority of developmental scientists that, while of historical importance, as contemporary developmental theories they are obsolete. That the profession of social work, as judged by our HBSE texts, has taken so long to join the majority view of developmental scientists in this regard is puzzling.

There is a particular imperative for social workers and social work educators to be thoroughly grounded in attachment theory and research. As a profession, we have a unique responsibility to provide services to the most vulnerable of our society's children in our child welfare systems. Making the best-informed decisions about the well-being of these children requires thorough knowledge of the processes through which children form attachments to their caregivers. Unless we address these issues in depth in our curricula, reflecting the current state of knowledge in the field, we are neither honoring our professional responsibilities nor practicing ethically.

COMPONENT PARTS OF ATTACHMENT THEORY

Theory of Instinctive Behavior: The Goal-Corrected Behavioral System Paradigm

Attachment theory was first and foremost a new theory of human instinct and, thus, basic motivation. According to Bowlby, instinctive behavior necessarily involves the following four components: It is shared by a species; it contributes to individual or species survival; it is not dependent on learning; and it is characterized by a behavioral sequence, "not a simple response to a single stimulus" (1982, pg. 38). Despite the fact that his work to a great degree was concerned with the essential human instincts, he was wary toward the use of this term, concerned that it might communicate a view of inherited behavior operating in isolation from environmental conditions. Instead, borrowing a concept from cybernetics and control systems, Bowlby created the construct of the "goal-corrected behavioral system" to reflect the essential components of instinctive behavior as inherited *capacities* that are always dependent on the nature of the social context for their expression. Thus, the activation of behavioral systems in developing children always involves instinctive expression and the social learning associated with this in a feedback loop. The child influences this process through a capacity for "goal correction", that is, modification of behavior directed toward the social goal vis-à-vis the caregiver, based on feedback received regarding the effectiveness of pursuit of the goal.

Attachment Behavior

Bowlby's main interest was the formation, beginning in infancy, of the behaviors that collectively compose the attachment behavioral system. Similar to the way in which the neonate responds to tactile stimulation of the lips and hard palate with reflexive grasping and sucking (elements of the feeding behavioral system), Bowlby proposed that the infant responds to conditions of vulnerability, such as fear, pain, cold, hunger, fatigue, and illness with reflexive behaviors, including crying, clinging, smiling, visually following the caregiver, signaling, and later, movement toward the caregiver. He proposed that the explanation for the genet-

ic inheritance of these capacities lies specifically in their function in maintaining physical proximity to a caregiver. Beginning around the age of six months, these early behaviors become increasingly organized and incorporated into the attachment behavioral system (Bowlby, 1982). Proximity-seeking directed to a specific caregiver in distressing circumstances, the fundamental component of attachment behavior, serves the proximate purpose of calming feelings of insecurity and the evolutionary function to heighten the infant's odds of survival and, thus, the ultimate reproductive success of the species (Bowlby, 1982). The caregiver's sensitive response to the infant's activated attachment behavior produces, under favorable conditions, calming and a growing sense of emotional security.

Attachment Behavior and Attachment

Although Bowlby adapted terminology from cybernetics and control systems for his theory of instinct, the functioning of the attachment system is conceptualized primarily as an affective process, the chief consequence of which is the formation of a special class of affective bonds (what we think of as the attachment proper), which is a particular expression of love for a specific attachment figure and which tends to be relatively enduring across the lifespan. Because the formation of attachments is a life-long developmental theme (Ainsworth [1989] pointed out, for example, that successful marriages are those where the partners are able to alternate their reliance on each other as attachment figures), attachment theory recast what it means to need another person in times of distress. Anxiety and longing, as responses to separation from loved ones, could now be seen as normal indicators of strong bonds, not immaturity or insufficient autonomy.

Attachment, Fear, and Exploration

The attachment behavioral system functions directly in relation to two other major behavioral systems within the child (Bowlby, 1982), the fear/wariness and exploratory behavioral systems, representing, respectively, the instinct to withdraw from frightening circumstances and the instinct to explore novel situations. Bowlby proposed that the attachment and fear/wariness behavioral systems operate in close, but not absolute, synchrony. Very frequently, but not always, Bowlby argued, attachment behavior is activated by fear-inducing conditions that simultaneously activate withdrawal from the feared object. Attachment behavior may also be activated, however, according to Bowlby, in conditions not directly associated with an instinct to withdraw, such as fatigue and illness.

The exploratory behavioral system, in contrast to the fear/wariness system, plays a role fully equal in importance to the attachment system in determining how attachment behavior ultimately becomes expressed and, thus, how the attachment bond is formed. A natural, instinctive desire to explore the social and physical environment is normally activated in conditions where the child is relatively stress-free. Through this process, the child learns about the world, taking in new information and developing perceptual, analytical, and motor skills that provide opportunities for the child's development of mastery and autonomy. Inevitably, however, the child experiences depletion in energy or becomes distressed by encounters with unfamiliar objects or events, or from the separation from an attachment figure which produce felt vulnerability, activating the attach-

ment behavioral system. In this way, exploratory and attachment systems are regarded as polar dimensions of a larger process, whereby the activation of one normally involves the relative deactivation of the other. In order for the child to be able to explore the world with confidence, s/he must be able to trust in the availability of the "secure base" of the attachment relationship, as described by Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991), where the child can return for care and protection when needed. The way in which the attachment figure accurately perceives and responds to the child's alternating needs for exploration and attachment will determine the nature of the attachment bond that the child will form with the attachment figure. As Ainsworth (1989) later demonstrated, the transactions associated with exploration and proximity-seeking provide the infant with opportunities to learn an array of communication and social skills that become a foundation for social relatedness in ever widening social spheres as the infant matures into childhood. Essential relational styles of communication of need, and the expectations of others' responses to expressions of need, are therefore first learned in infancy in the first attachment relationships.

Cognition and Development

Through repeated experiences with the attachment figure in times of distress, the child learns about the responsiveness and reliability of the caregiving environment. These early experiences become increasingly organized in memory in structures Bowlby (1973, 1982) referred to as "internal working models", a term first used by the philosopher and cognitive psychologist Kenneth Craik. Bowlby preferred this term over more static representations of cognitive structures, because it communicates a sense of patterned responses to the social environment and, at the same time, the capacity for ongoing revision, based on learning from new social experiences. Internal working models, thus, can account for continuity of individual development as well as individual change. Internal working models become increasingly established and resistant to major revisions as the child grows, however. (The conceptualization of stability and change in cognition is one of several areas where Bowlby [1973] acknowledged the influence of Piaget on his thinking.) Early and consistent inadequate caregiving is especially associated with rigidly defensive representational models that are relatively impervious to change (Bowlby, 1980). Positive caregiving experiences tend to promote relatively flexible internal working models that serve a protective function for children: According to Bowlby, the primary adaptive function of internal working models is to provide the developing child with the capacity to predict the likely responses of potentially protective figures in situations where the child experiences vulnerability. Expectations of responsive care from others become associated with emotional security, which can provide a buffer against future negative interpersonal experiences (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999).

From the initial period at age six months until approximately 18 months, Bowlby viewed the child's development of internal working models as embryonic. At this latter age, the child, under favorable conditions, is able to apply the representation of attachment figure(s) in a new capacity. The child now has the more complex mental organization of the internal working model of attachment figure increasingly available for the purpose of executing increasingly complex behav-

ioral plans, especially those that involve venturing farther away from the proximity of the caregiver, *using* the internal representation of the caregiver to make predictions about his/her availability (Bowlby, 1980).

As most children approach the end of the third year, the internal representation of the caregiver begins to carry with it the security-providing functions which, for the infant, were previously associated only with the actual presence of the attachment figure. At this point, the child can increasingly "turn to" the internal working model of the attachment figure when experiencing vulnerability when s/he is away from the attachment figure. Bowlby thought that this period is one in which the child is highly susceptible to external influences upon the formation of internal working models (Bowlby, 1980), reflecting their, as yet, formative nature.

While approximate developmental age-markers are useful for tracking these changes, it is important to note that Bowlby disliked the use of "watershed"-type age markers. He saw the development of internal working models as a gradual life process that changes qualitatively over time and is susceptible to revision. At the same time, however, according to his theory, it is the formation of internal working models in infancy that account for the enduring quality of early attachment relationships throughout life (Bowlby, 1982).

The Formation of Internal Working Models in Unfortunate Conditions and Defensive Processes

In optimal conditions, attachment figures respond adequately and consistently to children's experiences of vulnerability, and corresponding internal working models of attachment figures as reliable and trustworthy are formed. When a child consistently encounters behavior on the part of an attachment figure that does not adequately address conditions of vulnerability, however, the child is likely to form conflicting internal working models of the same attachment figure, a conscious internal working model that preserves a sense of the caregiver as good and one that is defensively excluded from consciousness containing the information regarding inadequate responses (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby asserted that this sort of defensive exclusion is necessary for the child to preserve mental stability. Attempts to consciously integrate the experience of threat and persistent insecurity associated with an attachment figure would be likely to overwhelm the child. In order to preserve some sense of safety and security, the child maintains an illusory mental model of an adequate caregiver.

Effects of Prolonged Separations from Caregivers

Unlike nearly all other psychoanalysts of his time, Bowlby was especially interested in loss and the reactions of grief and mourning that young children between the ages of six months and three years experience when separated from their caregivers, the time of life when, as noted previously, attachment is especially sensitive to environmental changes. Relying to a great extent on Robertson's observational studies, Bowlby and Robertson (Bowlby, 1980; Robertson & Bowlby, 1952) proposed that young children normally react to prolonged separation from their attachment figures in phases characterized by protest, despair, and (if the separation is not addressed) detachment. His theory of grief and mourning, influenced by the work of Colin Murray Parkes (Bowlby, 1980), involves a normative

progression through four major phases of adjustment: a) numbing and shock; b) yearning and searching, accompanied by anger and disbelief; c) disorganization and despair, including the dismantling of internal working models of the relationships; and d) reorganization and redefinition. This theory proved to be very influential on the work of others in the field, including that of Kubler-Ross. In his theories of separation and loss, the phases of adjustment are characterized by initial activation and subsequent deactivation of attachment behavior for the missing or lost figure, thus the meaning and function of these events were recast as expressions of attachment behavior. He also emphasized that the course taken in childhood in reaction to separation or loss may well affect a person throughout the entire lifespan, depending to a great extent on the way in which attachment behavior was expressed in the relationship and the nature of response received from the caregiving environment.

The Contribution to Attachment Theory of Mary Ainsworth and Colleagues

In contrast to the comprehensive analytical syntheses and elegance of his theory, Bowlby directly participated to a lesser degree in empirical research. The application of his ideas about human development to empirical research was left by and large to his followers, the first and most notable of whom was Mary Ainsworth.

First in Uganda, and later in her landmark Baltimore study (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, l978), home observations of mother and child interactions were coded for various aspects of the mother's sensitivity to the child and the child's autonomous and responsive behavior in relation to the mother. Patterns of secure and insecure attachment (described below) emerged from these observations, providing an empirical basis for Bowlby's theoretical construction of attachment in humans and expanding the theory of how individual differences occur with respect to the organization of attachment.

A major methodological innovation created by Ainsworth and colleagues in the Baltimore study was the so-called Strange Situation Procedure, a laboratory protocol containing several progressive steps designed to directly observe how infants react to separation from their attachment figures in an unfamiliar setting (see Solomon & George, 1999, for more detail). Significant relationships were found between the home observations of the quality of mother-child interactions and the laboratory attachment patterns observed in the Strange Situation, suggesting that the laboratory observations were valid indicators of interactive behavioral patterns between mother and child.

The observations of mothers and children led to the construction of three main categories (composed of eight subgroups) reflecting what Ainsworth referred to as patterns of attachment. These categories are: Insecure-Avoidant (A); secure (B); and insecure-ambivalent (resistant) (C). In the Strange Situation, avoidant babies tended to avoid their mothers upon her return following separation by turning their backs or snubbing maternal overtures, and their communication styles were marked by affective restriction. Secure babies generally approached their mothers following separation and returned to exploration after having brief contact with her. Their communication styles were characterized by affective openness and mutuality, with clear modulation and regulation of extremes.

Ambivalent babies tended to approach their mothers upon the mother's return following separations but remained dissatisfied and angry, not soothed by her presence. Their affective communication was typically disregulated and hostile.

Ainsworth's findings supported and elucidated several important aspects of Bowlby's theory of attachment, especially the notion that attachment behavior will look different for children depending on their life experiences. She made it clear, however, that these variations in attachment styles were not equivalent to variations in the *strength* of attachments (Ainsworth, 1972). Avoidant children, for example, are just as strongly attached to their caregivers as secure children; they differ in the strategies they have learned to express their attachment needs in relation to their specific caregivers.

The Strange Situation was important, first, because it provided a standard behavioral measure of attachment for infants up to approximately two years of age (it is typically used for infants between the ages of 12 and 18 months). It also came to be viewed as essentially a "shortcut" in the assessment of parent and child interaction that normally would be done in the naturalistic setting of the home (Ainsworth & Marvin, 1995). Assessment in the Strange Situation, then, has become a standard against which other measures of attachment, especially those taking place later in childhood, are compared.

The work of Mary Main (Main & Solomon, 1990), one of Ainsworth's many distinguished students, has contributed an additional fourth category of attachment behavior to Ainsworth's original formulation, the disorganized/disoriented category. Characteristics observed in the Strange Situation reunion behavior of children assigned to this group are immobilization and disorientation upon the mother's return, contradiction in physical movement, and, inferred from the contradictory physical movements, contradictions in intended or planned behavior. The disorganized/disoriented attachment pattern is considered a more severe adaptation to inadequate caregiving circumstances, distinguished by the absence of any coherent strategy for engagement and interaction, and has been shown to be prevalent among maltreated children (as high as 82% reported in Carlson, Cicchetti, Barnett, & Braunwald, 1989).

THE GOALS AND BOUNDARIES OF ATTACHMENT THEORY

Bowlby clearly intended the attachment behavioral system to be understood as instinct-based behavior of at least equal importance to feeding and reproduction for lifespan development. This is not to say, however, that he viewed attachment in the same deterministic sense that Freudian theory reduced development to internal psychosexual drives. Instead, Bowlby conceptualized the formation of attachment in terms of dynamic systems that provide a foundation for the trajectory of lifespan development, which is modified through maturation and many other developmental influences, including subsequent relational interactions in the social ecology.

Other Important Influences on the Child-Parent Relationship and the Child's Personality

Attachment and Temperament

In the early years of attachment research, there was some speculation that the individual differences that Ainsworth reported in attachment styles were actually temperamental differences (e.g., Kagan, 1982) and that, therefore, the theoretical edifice created by Bowlby was unnecessary to explain child development. Since then, however, several studies of attachment and temperament have concluded that these are independent processes (Belsky, 2005; Vaughn & Bost, 1999) and that, while the child's temperament appears to exert some influence on the nature of the interaction that evolves between the child and his/her caregiver, the relational basis of the organization of individual differences in attachment has been shown to be robust over time and across cultures (van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999).

Attachment and Social Learning

Another area of early criticism of Bowlby's ideas came from adherents of social learning theories. From this viewpoint, of course, personality is regarded as the sum total of learning experiences, with essentially no allowance for any innate predispositions in the developing child beyond the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Attachments form to caregivers, according to this viewpoint, as a secondary result of the gratification associated with meeting physiological needs. Attachment theory does not contradict the learning mechanisms associated with social learning theories, but it goes beyond them in its core emphasis on instinctive inheritance. Bowlby pointed out, for example, that children (as well as adults) form attachments to people who have nothing to do with providing sustenance or meeting other physiological needs, and he cited Harlow's primate studies, among many others, in support of his view (Bowlby, 1982). Likewise, as Ainsworth and Bowlby wrote, in circumstances where an infant is distressed, "timely and appropriate close bodily contact does not 'spoil' babies, making them fussy and clingy" (1991, pg. 7), a cautionary concern often voiced by traditional behaviorists.

Attachment and Culture

Like much of developmental research, many of the early studies of attachment, including Ainsworth's early Baltimore study, were done on white, middle-class samples in the U.S., with intact marriages. (The notable exception to this, as indicated above, was Ainsworth's very first fieldwork and the first empirical examination of attachment, which was done in Ugandan villages.) Since these early days, however, attachment has been studied in numerous cultures on every continent and across a wide diversity of environmental risk conditions. In general, the basic three attachment categories have proven to be robust indicators of children's development (van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999). Culture, however, does appear to exert an influence on the ways in which children come to express attachment and exploration in relation to their caregivers and, therefore, may influence the assessment of attachment in the Strange Situation. For example, in North American normative samples, approximately two-thirds of children are classified as secure and approximately one-fourth are classified as avoidant (the remainder

are either insecure-ambivalent or disorganized). In contrast, research in Israel has found similar or higher percentages of secure children, more insecure-ambivalent children, and extremely few insecure-avoidant children. Despite variations such as these, the accumulated research has shown that attachment is a universal, normative phenomenon and that the major distinguishing factors among children's attachment classifications, as obtained in the SSP and other attachment assessments, relate to the quality of care and responsiveness provided by the caregiver and the social context within which this is provided (van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999).

An Attachment Framework for Intervention

Bowlby's original intention in constructing attachment theory was primarily to elucidate a practice theory that "fit the facts" better than Freudian theory. His ideas, however, were soon adopted by developmental research psychologists, who found in them powerful explanations for early childhood development. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest among many to return to Bowlby's original intention to apply the theory to problems associated with clinical intervention. In his later work, Bowlby (1988) described a set of guidelines for therapeutic intervention informed by attachment theory. Among these, he included the therapist's sensitivity to the primacy of safety and protection in the developmental experience of the client. Interpretations and analysis of the client's relational experience, including within the therapeutic relationship, should be based on an understanding of the centrality of the expression of attachment behavior to social experience and the creation of personal identity. Several evidenced-based interventions founded on attachment theory that incorporate these guidelines have recently been developed. These approaches focus first and foremost on systematic observations of parent-child interactions, many of which use videotape to document relationship qualities as well as teach parents how to strengthen their observational skills toward their children (Cohen et al., 2002; Lieberman, Silverman, & Pawl, 2000; Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman, & Powell, 2002; McDonough, 2004).

It is also important to note, however, that the construct of attachment and related concepts, unfortunately, have been distorted and misapplied to illegitimate interventions, often referred to as "attachment therapies." Part of this confusion of terms involves the notorious "holding therapy", variations of which have been responsible for serious injury and death (Boris, 2003; Mercer, 2001). Illegitimate uses of the concepts of attachment theory, which are perhaps inevitable, can only be avoided through true understanding of its tenets and related research findings.

Emerging Ideas: Attachment and Developmental Psychopathology

Recent advances in the field of developmental psychopathology have contributed to a new understanding of psychopathology more as adaptation than illness, and attachment theory has made a substantial contribution to this new direction of inquiry (Sroufe, 2005). Highlights of these new applications include recent work on Reactive Attachment Disorder (Lieberman & Zeanah, 1995), new insights into the processes associated with traumatization and post-traumatic stress (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 1999; Main & Hesse, 1990), and early attempts to discover developmental foundations for Axis II disorders based on attachment theory (Crittenden, 1997; Page, 2001a; Sroufe, 2005).

SELECTED MAJOR EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Attachment theory created a virtual explosion of empirical research in developmental science over the past 40 years that continues to bring new discoveries in ever-increasing areas of inquiry. Due to space limitations, only a selection of this literature is reviewed here. For more detailed analyses, the reader is referred to Cassidy and Shaver's (1999) compendium.

The first and most important methodological contribution to the study of attachment remains the Ainsworth and Wittig Strange Situation Procedure (SSP) (see above), which is considered the "gold standard" of attachment research. Two of Ainsworth's students, Jude Cassidy and Robert Marvin, adapted the original SSP for use with preschool children up to age 5 (Cassidy & Marvin, 1992). Since Ainsworth's landmark work, researchers following her trail have studied attachment in varied conditions with the SSP and newer methodologies, including various high-risk samples (Cicchetti & Barnett, 1991; Crittenden, 1988; Maslin-Cole & Spieker, 1990); culturally diverse samples (noted above); and in increasingly older samples, beyond infancy, the preschool and school years, and into adulthood (Bretherton, Prentiss, & Ridgeway, 1990; Cassidy, 1988; Elicker, Englund, & Sroufe, 1992; Feeney, 1999; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Sroufe, 1983; Sroufe, 2005). Children's attachment organization has been found to predict individual characteristics, such as self-esteem, emotional regulation, and cognitive and social competence (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999; van Ijzendoorn & Sagi, 1999), and it has been found to be predicted by qualities of the wider social ecology and history of the family, including mothers' sensitive responsiveness (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978); mothers' social support (Crockenberg, 1981); parent-child communication qualities (Stewart & Marvin, 1984; Sroufe, 1983; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985); and violence, maltreatment, and trauma (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 1999).

Representational Research

Most of the early studies of attachment relied on observed behavioral interactions of the child-caregiver dyads to determine how differences in security of attachment at one point in time relate to past dyadic interactions, concurrent social characteristics, or to future development or behavior. An important shift in the study of attachment occurred, however, when Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy (1985) suggested that the study of attachment should also be conducted at the representational level, directly assessing qualities of internal working models, especially as these are revealed in discourse qualities. In a pivotal longitudinal study, Main et al. (1985) examined the discourse qualities between 6 year-old children and their parents following a separation, as well as the parents' state of mind with respect to attachment as assessed with the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1984). The AAI is a semi-structured interview that probes for adults' memories, thoughts, and perceptions regarding their relationships with their own parents or attachment figures and how those relationships have affected their adult personalities and relationships with their own children. The interviews are scored on the basis of coherency of the discourse, involving qualities such as consistency, flow, truthfulness, and richness of supporting memories offered in responses, as well as the succinctness, completion, relevancy, and clar-

ity of responses (Hesse, 1999). Of particular importance, these qualities of discourse, in contrast to the interview content, are the dimensions of most importance to the assessment of attachment organization with the AAI, because they reveal the ways in which significant memories of early experience are organized and stored (for more detail of the theory and method of the AAI, see Hesse, 1999). The interviews are classified into four categories, reflecting attachment styles, corresponding to the same attachment styles identified in children: autonomous/secure, dismissing/avoidant, preoccupied/ambivalent, and unresolved/disorganized. In the Main et al. study, secure parents were more likely to value attachment relationships, believe that attachment related experiences were influential on their own personality, and tell coherent, objective narratives, whereas dismissing parents minimized the value and importance of attachment relationships, preoccupied parents seemed confused or preoccupied with particular relationships, and unresolved/disorganized parents demonstrated lapses in discourse when discussing traumatic events or losses, indicating that they had not yet successfully resolved their mourning. Analyses indicated that these classifications of the parents' states of mind with respect to attachment were associated with their children's corresponding attachment classifications obtained in infancy (Main et al., 1985). Most impressively, adult attachment styles obtained with the AAI with expectant mothers in the third trimester of pregnancy have been found in subsequent studies to predict their children's attachment styles longitudinally when the children are 12 months old (Fonagy, Steele, & Steele, 1991). The AAI has led to a new understanding of the significance of discourse qualities in speech and has spawned a new generation of interview protocols that reflect these insights (Oppenheim & Koren-Karie, 2002; Zeanah & Benoit, 1995).

Recent studies of attachment with foster parents and children using the AAI are of particular importance to social work. Among the salient findings of these studies, adoptive or foster parents' states of mind with respect to attachment are associated with the degree to which their foster homes provide developmentally corrective environments for maltreated children (Dozier, Higley, Albus, & Nutter, 2002; Dozier, Stoval, Albus & Bates, 2001).

Children's Representations

Several representational measures of young children's attachment organization have also been developed in recent years using semi-projective techniques. For example, George, Kaplan, & Main (1985) used the Separation Anxiety Test (SAT) to elicit children's narratives about drawings illustrating child-parent separations and derived coded attachment categories that were found to be associated with their infant attachment classifications obtained from Strange Situations.

Narrative Story Stem Techniques (NSST; Bretherton, Ridgeway, & Cassidy, 1990; Emde, Wolf, & Oppenheim, 2003) are similar to the SAT in their projective natures but use play props to facilitate the child's narrations and increase the interpretability of the child's representations. In 20 years of research, the NSST has been found to relate to several dimensions of children's and parents' psychological and social functioning, including infant attachment, child social competence, child maltreatment, and parent psychological distress (see Page, 2001b for a review). Recently (Toth, Maughan, Todd-Manly, Spagnola, & Cicchetti, 2002), the

NSST has also been used as an outcome variable for a parenting intervention, showing that clinical improvement on the part of parents is associated with children's attachment representations of children in relation to parents in predicted ways.

Attachment and Development Over the Lifespan

Attachment research has also been conducted in the lives of participants in several longitudinal studies over the course of several years (see Grossmann, Grossmann, & Waters, 2005). The first of these, the Minnesota Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, merits special consideration, however brief, because of its unique contribution to our understanding of the linkages between infant-caregiver relationships and child development. This study began in 1975 with the recruitment of 267 low-income, first-time mothers in their third trimester of pregnancy and continues today with the children now in their 30s. Numerous assessments have been made, including representational and observational, across home, laboratory, and school settings, to examine the predictive power of attachment across the lifespan. In brief, the quality of attachment relationships established in infancy, especially when combined with other conditions in the family social ecology, have been shown to be predictive of children's developmental outcomes, particularly in the areas of self-reliance, emotional self-regulation, cognitive and social competence, and in particular for disorganized attachments, psychopathology (Sroufe, 2005). This and other longitudinal studies provide support for Bowlby's notion that the "trajectories" of development, once established, are relatively difficult to alter (Vaughn, 2005, p. 378).

NEXT STEPS FOR THEORY PROGRESSION
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

In 1999, Mary Main contributed an essay for the *Handbook of Attachment* entitled, Attachment Theory: Eighteen Points with Suggestions for Future Studies, in which she provided a comprehensive discussion of current issues in theory and research development. Using this as a foundation, we identify here a selection of four issues that we consider important for future exploration and application of theory.

Integration of Multiple Attachments/Attachment Hierarchies

Bretherton (1985), in expanding on Bowlby's original ideas, proposed that internal working models eventually become organized in hierarchical structures, where, in some instances, the model derived from one attachment relationship supersedes others in providing guidance and direction and, in other instances, syntheses of internal working model qualities are formed. Bowlby used the term "monotropy" to describe the tendency for a developing child to regard one attachment figure above all others as primary. There has been little direct empirical investigation of these ideas, and much more needs to be learned, especially in circumstances where children live with multiple attachment figures.

The Critical Period for Attachment Formation

Bowlby's original theory posited that the first three years mark the critical period for the initial formation of attachment in normal circumstances and subsequent research has supported this (Main, 1999). Despite some recent groundbreaking studies of previously institutionalized children (see Zeanah, Smyke, Koga, &

Carlson, 2005), little is yet known about how children cope with the most extreme adversity in caregiving environments and their capacity for the formation of attachments relatively later in childhood. Consequently, more needs to be known about how children form so-called "second" attachments, as in the case of placement in foster homes. A child's capacity to form an attachment after suffering severe deprivation is likely to be the single most important developmental event in the child's life, setting the stage for future social relatedness.

Brain Chemistry

Main pointed out that a more precise understanding of the function of fear in relation to attachment must include a better understanding of the neurochemical processes and brain functions, in particular the role of the amygdala involved in the activation of the attachment behavioral system. Bowlby posited that attachment behavior is founded in a genetically inherited capacity controlled by the central nervous system. An as yet unknown portion of variation in the way in which attachment becomes expressed may be associated with differences in brain chemistry and functions.

Assessment and Intervention

Perhaps most important to social work, far more work must be done to integrate attachment theory and research methods into social work practice. We believe that there are, in particular, four important areas where this can be accomplished: Assessments with children, especially adapting representational measures such as the NSST to clinical settings; adult interviewing, using the insights of research with the AAI on the significance of discourse qualities to attachment organization; the use of videotape, using the technical achievements from the history of observational attachment research; and education for parents and foster parents, applying our developmental knowledge about the significance of attachment to development to problems in parenting. In particular, many commonly observed problems encountered in clinical interventions concerning family violence and child maltreatment, such as the strong, instinctive desire to seek and maintain proximity to an abuser, are illuminated with an understanding of attachment behavioral dynamics and the imperative for survival associated with violent circumstances (Bowlby, 1982; Page, 1999). In general, much more needs to be learned, and what is currently known disseminated more broadly, about the centrality of the human need for safety and security as central organizing concepts in clinical assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and intervention. The understanding of basic needs as embodied in attachment theory, in our view, should be core to the conceptualization of treatment approaches.

The past 40 years have brought us considerable new knowledge about the importance for lifespan development of the processes associated with attachment organization. We in the profession of social work are now challenged to take this knowledge and effectively incorporate it into our educational and practice methods to better respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families.

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A Critique of Feminist Theory

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Abstract: *Objective: Feminism has grown rapidly in the last 40 years as both a multi-disciplinary voice advocating for change and an area of scholarship and theory-building. A review of empirical articles describes 17 studies that indicate a wide range of applications of feminist theory, but theory is applied primarily as a lens for other issues, rather than to expand theory development. Advocacy and philosophical views seem to overshadow theory development. Suggestions for improving feminist theory are offered.*

Keywords: Feminism, theory, social work

INTRODUCTION

Feminist theory has developed as a small part of a very large feminist movement striving to challenge traditions, methodologies, and priorities in all aspects of life. The movement "began a widespread call for a major reassessment of concepts, theories, and methods employed within and across the academic disciplines (Hesse-Biber, 2002, p. 57). The feminist lens was applied to many areas of research. Hesse-Biber and colleagues assert that, "research conducted within a feminist framework is attentive to issues of difference, the questioning of social power, resistance to scientific oppression, and a commitment to political activism and social justice" (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004, p. 3).

Many authors have focused on feminist theory and how the conceptualization of the feminist perspective evolved (e.g., Duran, 1998; Donovan, 2000; Evans, 1995) and some authors have emphasized the methodology of feminist theory (e.g., Fonow & Cook, 1991; Hesse-Biber, Gilmartin, & Lydenberg, 1999; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004). An explosion of articles, books, and conferences has produced a very credible area of scholarship. The next section describes the historical development of feminist theory and how complex the perspective is.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Feminist Theory: An Overview

Feminist theory offers a perspective for understanding human behavior in the social environment by centering women and issues that women face in contem-

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porary society. Feminism reflects "a world view that values women and that confronts systematic injustices based on gender" (Chinn & Wheeler, 1985, p. 74). A feminist lens asks us to see individuals, groups, family, and organizations in their social, political, economic, ethnic, and cultural contexts. The intersection of these contexts produces the potential for oppression that is rooted in gendered relationships.

Feminist theory is most often associated with the rights of women. This is both simplistic and reductionistic. Many of the human behavior texts offer a precursory review of feminist theory; however, for a comprehensive understanding and application, a broader study is required. There are encompassing concerns inclusive of the discipline's particular epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions; however, there is no one monolithic feminist perspective; instead, there are many perspectives, with various theoretical groundings (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997).

Theory is about understanding our world and everyday experiences. Flax (1999) stated that we all engage in a "systematic analytic approach to everyday experience" (p. 9) and it is done unconsciously. "To theorize, then, is to bring this unconscious process to a conscious level so it can be developed and refined" (p. 9). It is paramount to make theorizing explicit and inclusive of feminist concerns. There are several assumptions associated with feminist theory. Flax (1999) delineated three, with the first being that "men and women have different experiences" (p. 10) in that their worlds are not the same. Some see the goal of feminism as equality, which would include having the same choices and opportunities as men. Feminist theories attempt to explain differences between men and women, call for centering gender and consideration for how gender differences effect human behavior in the context of historical, political, social, and cultural concerns, as well as oppressions that are gender based.

The oppression of women is not simply related to some other social relationship such as a class system. Flax (1999) explained that instead, feminist theory views women's oppression as "a unique constellation of social problems and has to be understood in itself . . . " (p. 10). Oppression is seen as a part of the way the world is structured and is not due to pockets of "bad attitudes" (p. 10) or backward traditions, but oppression is embedded in the very socio-economic and political organization of our society. The structure is the patriarchy, which has deep roots in the culture at large (Flax, 1999).

Flax also associated specific goals with feminist theory. These goals include understanding "power differentials between men and women" (p. 10) and power in relationship to the evolution of oppression as well as to bring about social change to end oppression. A central purpose of feminist theory is a "commitment to change oppressive structures and to connect abstract ideas with concrete problems for political action" (p. 11).

Oppression has been defined as the "absence of choices" (Hooks, 1984, p. 5). Women in Western society have choices with regard to everyday human experiences, which include production of resources, reproduction, and the merger of the biological and psychological (Flax, 1999). It is for this reason that some women do not name oppression as a concern or identify as feminists. "The

absence of extreme restrictions leads many women to ignore the areas in which they are exploited or discriminated against; it may even lead them to imagine that no women are oppressed" (Hooks, 1984, p. 5).

Types of Feminism

The understanding and analysis of oppression are central to feminist theories. Much of the work in the second wave of feminism focused on attempts to identify the nature of women's oppression. Theories may identify the lack of education, economic dependence, unequal political rights, or the need for control over sexuality as related to the nature of oppression. Theories address the causes of oppression as the cultural order, labor and economic relations, biological differences, political institutions, and women's own self-understanding. Feminist theory requires us to critically analyze what is happening in our social world from multiple contexts and provide strategies for the amelioration of adverse conditions that effect the lives of women (Kolmar & Bartkowski, 2000). Though one central feminist theory has not evolved, basic principles are commonly given when describing feminism, including such concepts as valuing women and their experiences, identifying conditions that oppress women, changing society through advocacy, and recognizing that many factors, not just gender, impact a woman's actions and views (McCormick & Bunting, 2002). The progress in feminism has been more focused on different types of feminism.

Feminism has evolved in different arenas rather than as one unified concept. The labels that define those arenas have varied. The most commonly used are eight separate feminist theories: black feminism, radical feminism, cultural feminism, lesbian feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, materialist feminism, and socialist feminism (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997; Evans, 1995). Some theories can be grouped due to similarities, but distinctions offer a broader critical lens of a myriad of political, social, economic, ethnic, and cultural contexts.

Black feminism focuses not only on women, but specifically on the struggles of black women (Kanneh, 1998). Collins (2000) saw the concern of black feminism as resisting oppression through empowerment, which entails understanding the intersection of racism and sexism. Black feminist thought insists "that both the changed consciousness of individuals and the social transformation of political and economic institutions constitute essential ingredients for social change" (Collins, 1991, p. 221). Black women face social practices within a historical context that represent a "unique matrix of domination characterized by intersecting oppressions" (Collins, 2000, p. 23).

Individual transformation involves acknowledging the historical structure of institutions of domination. The result of this understanding is a changed consciousness, which Collins (1991) believed necessary for social change. Black feminist analysis insists on understanding what it means to be a black woman in a racist patriarchy (Johnson, 1983).

Differences due to race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion are of distinct importance in many cultures and are "visible and palpable" (Collins, 1991, p. 23) for black women. Knowledge and consciousness as to how race, class, and gender

represent interlocking systems and a sociohistorical context for that analysis is seen as absent in other feminisms (Collins, 1991).

Radical feminism attributes the oppression of women to men. Male power must be analyzed and understood and not reduced to other explanations, such as labor relations. Cultural feminism has been critiqued, because it provides moral grounding for men to make claims that they cannot help being oppressive. This logic takes a further turn, in that it is then likewise natural for women to be submissive (Ferguson, 1996).

Lesbian feminism focuses on establishing lesbians as a distinct group. Much like radical feminism, lesbian feminism sees the male agenda as dominant in the culture at-large (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997). Compulsory heterosexuality is challenged by lesbian feminism (Rich, 1986). It must be challenged, because compulsory heterosexuality is linked to the oppression of all women. Heterosexuality benefits men, in that it reflects male needs and fantasies, it controls women, and is linked to capitalism.

Liberal feminism focuses on rights for women, as in access to education, the right to vote, and economic independence, citizenship, and other issues of equality (Saulnier, 1996). Prescribed roles are challenged in that prescriptions lead to inequality. Many women benefit from the strategies of liberal feminism and its focus on the public lives of women; however, it has been critiqued for this very reason, in that it does not adequately address private issues, such as child care and poverty, to name a few (Saulnier).

Marxist feminism is focused on the emancipation of women via a concern for the production of labor in family life, as it is concerned with capitalism (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997). MacKinnon (1997) stated that, "Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism: that which is most one's own, yet most take away" (p. 65). Marxist theory sees work as creating our social lives and creating what is of value: work creates who we are.

Material feminism relies on Marxist theory. The focus is on the material conditions of women's lives and their transformation. A central concern is for women to maintain a socialized and professional household. This could include adequate pay for professional labor related to childcare, cooking, cleaning, and other domestic labors that are often relegated to women (Donovan, 1993).

Socialist feminism is closely related to Marxist feminism, radical feminism, and materialist feminism (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997). Perhaps a distinguishing point is that socialism distinguishes between groups with regard to oppression and acknowledges that it takes different forms, depending on the context and particulars. Socialist feminism in the extreme demands the end of capitalism, property ownership, the emancipation of workers, and the ending of all forms of oppression (Evans, 1995).

Feminists seem to have a love/hate relationship with postmodernism. Postmodern feminism is perhaps the most difficult to characterize or define, because it is a story that is incomplete. Because postmodernism claims the end of grand narratives and totalizing truths, it is seen as problematic in that it appears blind to the affects of gender in relationship to oppression and the total-

izing of women (Evans, 1995). At the same time, the rejection of grand narratives opens space for women to redefine "woman."

This discussion of feminist theories is not meant to be complete or serve as a conclusive explanation for any of the theories represented. Instead, it is meant to acknowledge the diversity and similarities among feminist theories.

The authors also sought to understand feminist theory as explored within the research literature. Besides the wide range of authors describing and conceptualizing feminist theory, some authors have strived to apply feminist theory to research agendas or even explore the basic components of feminist theory. We wanted to capture the research activity within our discussion. The next section of the article provides a review of the empirical studies conducted that involve feminist theory

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON FEMINIST THEORY DEVELOPMENT

A systematic search of the literature was conducted using social science databases of abstracts (**PsycINFO, social service abstracts, sociological abstracts, social work abstracts**). The search used the words "feminist theory" and "research" as keywords or as words found in the abstract of an article. There were 1,174 citations listed using **PsycINFO, social service abstracts**, and **sociological abstracts** and 12 citations found in **social work abstracts**. A search was also done using the words: radical feminism, cultural feminism, lesbian feminism, liberal feminism, and Marxist feminism. Only empirical or theory-focused articles were included; articles that were on the general topic or did not strive to examine feminist theory were not included in this analysis. Book chapters and dissertations were not included, as they were not juried materials.

Of the 1,186 citations, there were only 17 articles that focused on empirical research that applied feminist theory to various settings and three articles that strived to summarize research on feminist theory and an area of practice. Table 1 summarizes the 17 articles. The three summary articles were on a feminist perspective on cardiovascular research (McCormick & Bunting, 2002), feminist engagement with restorative justice (Daly & Stubbs, 2006), and the application of feminist principles to therapy (Israeli & Santor, 2000). The authors found numerous articles that speculated on applications and integration of feminist concepts, but these three articles strived to link empirical work with the feminist principles.

We wanted to develop a table that divided the articles according to the eight feminisms described earlier in this article, but the database searches found few or no studies identifying themselves by one of these types of feminism. Therefore, Table 1 is an alphabetical listing of studies, and any identification by type of feminism is included. The 17 articles show a diversity of applications of feminism. There were no articles found that described a feminist meta-theory. Snelling (1999) did strive, using Q-sort, to develop different perspectives on feminism but did not discuss the central components of a feminist theory. Most articles focused on applying a feminist lens to the various research agendas. For example, chemical dependence recovery (Pursley-Crotteau, 2001), heterosexist harassment (Szymanski, 2006), relationships facing dementia (Ward-Griffin et al., 2007), the relationship between sisters (Mize & Pinjala, 2002), or inter-sibling violence

Table 1: *Research Studies on Feminist Theory*			
Author	**Sample**	**Method**	**Findings**
Barns, 2003	Six 14 to 15-year-old young women	Feminist interpretive research to capture how women negotiate, construct, and resist "the feminine."	Women described how femininity occurs within the family, within them selves, through mass media, and through what they wear.
Ciclitira, 2004	34 women age 23 to 52 years	A semi-structured, taped interview with discourse analysis of transcripts; the focus of study was on porn-ography and feminist politics.	A range of diverging views was given, with advocacy, sexual free dom, and politics as the key issues discussed.
Cook, 2006	Observed 12 diversionary conferences and interviewed 16 conference coordinators	Observational field notes during or after each conference.	Four themes emerged: offenders' claims about self and motive, mothers as responsible and vul-nerable, fathers as silent partners, and community representatives and facil-itators challenging or reinforcing hierarchies.
Denny, 1994	Ten women (seven women alone and three couples)	A semi-focused interview of seven women alone and three women with partners; the focus was on understanding and interpreting their experiences with *in-vitro* fertilization (IVF).	Women had diverse views of pro-natalism, their experience, power, and control while going through IVF, and how these views conform or diverge from radical feminism.
Gentry et al., 2005	45 African American women at risk for HIV infection	Ethnographic interviews aimed at understanding the context of women applying HIV risk-reduction strategies. Participant observation and geographical mapping were also done. Coding was done using black feminist themes.	Four groups were identi-fied (*street women* [sub-groups of absolute homeless, hustling homeless, and rooming housed] and *house women*) as the women felt their living arrange-ments were key to HIV risk.
Harnois, 2005	1,619 women from a 1996 general social survey	Focused on multi-racial feminist theory using key survey questions answered by white and black women in structural equation modeling.	Factor analysis showed more educated white wom-en embraced feminism and gay/lesbian issues; weaker predictors for black women embracing femin-ism or gay/lesbian issues.

Table 1:	*Research Studies on Feminist Theory (cont.)*		
Author	**Sample**	**Method**	**Findings**
Hoffman et al., 2005	651 college students residing with a sibling in his or her senior year of high school and both parents	Survey assessing sibling violence, parent-child interaction, gender, and gender inequalities.	70% had at least one episode of sibling violence, males were more violent, males favored a gendered division of chores more than females.
Mize & Pinjala, 2002	36 sister teams ranging in age from 24 to 85 years of age	With a combined feminist/narrative theoretical approach in a qualitative format, the researchers asked a series of conversational questions to biological/adoptive adult sisters, together, regarding their various perspectives on interactions in their original families.	The results showed that interviewing sisters together provides a powerful, creative process that allows for an important understanding of the potent mix of anger, love, competitiveness, and protectiveness that sisters reflect in their historical views as well as in the the current research interview interaction.
Pearson, 2007	24 women of color in New York City or Los Angeles	Ethnographic interviews focused on support or denial of multicultural feminism as dialogue and communication among women of color.	Women of color did not see that multicultural feminism was helpful as a dialogue; a specific reason to talk is more important, especially when focus is on power and dominance issues.
Prindville, 2000	30 women holding public office in New Mexico	Qualitative data from field interviews focused on whether they identify themselves or their policy goals as feminist.	33% identified self as feminist, 40% rejected outright the label "feminist," but most favor policies and programs promoting equality.
Pursley-Crotteau, 2001	19 women	Using the feminist perspective and grounded theory method, women who were participating or interfacing with a psychiatric-obstetrical clinic within a maternal and infant project in a large Southeastern city were interviewed.	Staying clean was the social-psychological problem generated from the data. Becoming temperant was identified as the process by which the women managed to stay clean.

Table 1:	*Research Studies on Feminist Theory (cont.)*		
Author	**Sample**	**Method**	**Findings**
Skelton, 2005	22 academic women (10 ages 40-50; 12 ages 29-34) in English and Welsh universities	Semi-structured one-hour interviews later recorded with data reviewed for patterns and themes; themes were linked to material-ist feminism. Partici-pants sent ahead a list of proposed areas of discussion that focused on what factors shaped and developed their careers.	Both generations of aca-demics experienced mas-culinized, organizational structures that marginal-ized or subordinated them whether the super-visor was male or female.
Snelling, 1999	59 women ages 17-73 (85% white, 85% heterosexual)	Q-methodological study with 50 Q-sort items reflecting per-spectives on feminism; women sorted four cards into extreme pos-itions, five cards into middle positions, and six cards in neutral pos-itions. Nine women had follow-up telephone interviews. Factor analysis was done on data from Q-sort.	Six factors were derived from the factor analysis: radical/lesbian/liberal antiracist perspective, feminist perspective, humanist perspective, conservative position with some anti-feminist elements, post-feminist viewpoint, and non-labeled position. Many women had Q-sorts loaded on more than one factor. Thus, the taxo-nomic system of femin-nism was not yet ready, but the Q-sort research was promising.
Szymanski, 2006	143 lesbian women	This survey included several scales on heterosexist harassment and rejection.	Harassment and rejec-tion connected to dis-tress in lesbians.
Wang et al., 1996	62 Chinese women age 18-56 years	These women taught photo novella (using cameras to show condi-tions and issues in their villages; this program was part of larger com-munity empowerment program. No research methodology was used in this article, just anecdotes.	Women used photo-graphs to show condi-tions and advocate for health improvements. The main points were to empower women, increase knowledge on health status in rural communities and influ-ence policymakers on the greatest needs. These authors advocated that the program reflects a feminist approach to change.

Table 1:	*Research Studies on Feminist Theory (cont.)*		
Author	**Sample**	**Method**	**Findings**
Ward-Griffin et al., 2007	15 mother-daughter dyads facing dementia	Two individual interviews "guided by socialist-feminist theory."	Four types of relationships (custodial, combative, cooperative, cohesive) connected with emotion focus and resource provision.
Wilson, 2004	4 social workers	Single, indepth interviews with each worker, and *feminist* discourse analysis was chosen as the method of text interpretation.	Three dominant themes emerged from the interviews. They were "control and perfection," "femininity," and "self-destruction/self-preservation."

(Hoffman et al., 2005) were foci of articles cited in this review. The articles seemed to acknowledge feminist theory as important, but mainly as a lens to explore their topic of interest. Thirteen studies used qualitative methodology, while four studies used quantitative methodology.

The most intriguing part of our review was the findings of the studies. Oppression, power and control, harassment, and masculinized environments still occur (Denny, 1994; Gentry et al., 2005; Hoffman et al., 2005; Pearson, 2007; Skelton, 2005; Szymanski, 2006; Wang et al., 1996). Sometimes oppression is not gender-specific but occurs regardless of gender in supervisory positions (Skelton, 2005). Many women do not identify themselves as feminist but still advocate feminist principles (Prindville, 2000). Some women of color do not embrace feminism to be as important as focusing on power and dominance issues (Harnois, 2005; Pearson, 2007). Using feminism as a lens to conduct research allows researchers to explore a better understanding of women's views and experiences when they face a wide range of issues (pornography, incarceration, *in-vitro* fertilization, homelessness, family violence, child rearing, academia, rural communities, dementia). In other words, the use of feminism as a guide in research is a tool that has wide-ranging utility.

The greatest disappointment was the dearth of research actually focusing on refining feminist theory. Where were the studies that asserted the crucial components of feminist theory or sought to empirically test those components? Where were the studies that sought to add the additional confirmation of existing feminist theory? We recognize that there are strong voices of post-modernist view that would say that empirical research is not required to value a theoretical discussion. We readily acknowledge that there is utility to the numerous articles that discuss feminism. However, we recognize that post-positivist advocates are also valuable and that empirical research is a part of a collective discussion of feminist theory. We were surprised by the absence of critical scholarship on feminist theory development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Feminist Theory and Social Work Practice

Bergh, 1995). Feminist principles are presented as a challenge to privilege. Who benefits from privileges that serve as barriers to quality of life for certain groups who bear social cost is a question that feminist social workers raise as an affront to dominance. Feminist theories are presented as a threat to the dominant social order (Saulnier, 1996).

Feminist social work practitioners rely on theory to challenge the pathologizing discourses about women, inequalities, and oppression. Practitioners are asked to critically examine feminist theory in order to provide a suitable fit for a broad range of problems experienced by women (Saulnier, 1996).

Van Den Bergh (1995) identified principles or ideas for feminist social work practices that are specifically related to postmodernism. She views postmodernism as an epistemological framework.

First is "partnerships rather than domination" (p. xv). This calls for relationships that build community. Practices that support hierarchy give rise to false dichotomies—a practice "inherent in sex role stereotyping" (p. xvi). Second, "Local rather than universal truths" (p. xvii) foster partnerships in knowledge construction. Knowledge production is the result of reflection and collaboration. Third, the local construction of knowledge has specific implications for social work interventions. Cultural meanings provide the context for social work practice. Fourth, feminist social work calls for a "critical mass" (p. xvii) around situations requiring social change. "Establishing community meanings" (p. xviii) or a group of people who share similar realities constitutes a critical mass in order to address social concerns within a network of support. And, fifth, Van Den Bergh (1995) identified the deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge. Deconstruction is utilized to uncover knowledge "phallacies" (p. xix) by recovering knowledge that has been decentered by grand theories. Reconstruction refers to a restorying of knowledge that allows for the inclusion of marginalized voices, resulting in a more inclusive story.

Next, Van Den Bergh (1995) asserted the importance of socially constructed knowledge. She pointed to feminists' concern with consciousness-raising as a form of knowledge production, which includes the life experiences of women. Voice—naming reality is empowering, which brings forward the importance of her last identified idea for social work practitioners—the "link between knowledge and power" (p. xxiii). She linked those who control society with those who are privileged to establish what is known. It is crucial for social workers to make space for voices that have been marginalized by hierarchies of expertness in order to have a voice.

The challenge of third-wave feminism claims is to go beyond rights and equity, although these are notable challenges in a global world. The post-structuralist agenda, articulated 10 years ago, is to "remain aware of the complex ways that power, oppression, and resistance work in a media-saturated global economy so that what at first glance looks like progress might not be the change we most need, and what looks like regression might be progressive" (Heywood & Drake, 1997, p. 23).

Pollio (2000) advocates for three principles of practice: understand the social context of the individual as including personal, political, and historical factors; include the strengths and experiences that women in oppressed populations have, and recognize that political correctness can be a form of oppression. Pollio cautions against focusing on labels rather than respecting each person's individual uniqueness.

Israeli and Santor (2000) review the basic components of feminist therapy, including empirical evidence of the effectiveness of each component. They see the basic components as consciousness raising, social and gender role analysis, resocialization, and social activism.

Promoting feminist principles for social work practice is a critical priority for the future. Women face issues of equity related to economics, poverty, healthcare, childcare, and so forth. The analysis of these issues must also include race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and how these play out on a global landscape. Strategies to create a practice framework that empowers and honors women are the challenge for the future. The research reviewed in the article indicates that oppression and masculinized environments still occur. Social work must take the lead in the advocacy and service needed for these issues.

Feminist Theory and Research Initiatives

Social work scholarship often feeds advances in social work practice technology. Currently, there are many scholars discussing and conceptualizing feminist theory as it applies to practice principles, policy initiatives, and as a lens when conducting research. Virtually no scholars are testing feminist theory to move the theory from *discussed theory* to *confirmed theory*. No scholars are refining feminist theory, describing the components of the theory, and showing empirical evidence that demonstrates that the components fit together as hypothesized. No scholars are either advocating for one meta-theory of feminism or showing why multi-cultural feminist theory is different from radical feminist theory. In summary, the absence of theory development work is stunning.

What should happen? Journals that specialize in feminist issues should begin a series of special issues on feminist theory development. Perhaps a special issue for each type of feminism would be helpful. Scholars with expertise in theory development should prioritize feminist theory. Methodology critics should apply the same scientific rigor to feminist theory as they would any other theory. Scholars should collaborate, by developing multi-site projects with diverse populations and central research agendas. Debates should rage about how to honor the feminist view while still demanding scientific rigor. The attention, energy, and findings of these multiple efforts would prompt significant advances and clarity to feminist theory. Advocacy work and practice guidelines would continue and be informed by the scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored the diversity of views on feminism and how researchers have applied feminist theory as a lens to conduct their research. Our review of the feminist literature uncovered more than a dozen textbooks and more than a thou-

sand literature citations. Much discussion and conceptualization about feminist issues appears in the literature, especially on the importance of advocacy and empowerment. However, there is scant empirical research on feminist theory and only one article focusing on feminist theory itself. No articles were found that sought to define feminist theory, then tested the components of the theory.

Feminism as a movement and advocacy issue is vibrant, diverse, and wide-ranging. Feminism as a focus within social work practice is often discussed and a complex issue to incorporate into practice principles. With the conditions of oppression, lack of power, or lack of control, a male-dominated culture still exists. Projects that identify, expose, and remove those conditions are still being developed (see for example, the creative use of photographs in the hands of poor rural Chinese women as collating evidence of conditions and advocating for change as described in Wang et al. [1996]). Research informed by feminist views continues to enlighten us on a very diverse set of conditions from pornography, to dementia, to diversionary conferences.

The challenge for the reader is to be a discontent consumer. There are many avenues for learning about feminism, and the importance of advocating for feminist principles is more important today than 10 years ago. The mission for social workers is increasingly vital to the welfare of women and society in general. However, the reader should also be discontent, as scholars need to prioritize basic theory development research on feminist theory and ensure that our research leads to evidence-based practice guidelines. The lack of scholarship hampers getting the best answers to the reader regarding applying feminist theory to practice. We only hope that the next 10 years show a renaissance of academic rigor with scholarly articles as outcomes. Time will tell.

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A Critical Review of Theory in Social Work Journals:
A Replication Study

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is multifold. Key aspects discussed include exploring the extent of theory discussion and progression in social work journals for the year 2004; discussing the necessity of theory in social work research and practice; reviewing previous research literature regarding evaluation of theory discussion and progression; proposing criteria for defining theory in social work journals; and presenting findings from the current study concerning theory discussion and progression in social work journals. Results: Of the 1,168 articles reviewed from 37 journals, 71 (approximately 6%) met the criteria for theory development with empirical base. Thus, a minimal number of articles (3 out of 71 or 4.2%) evaluated, based on the criteria in the theory quality scale (Table 1), received high quality ratings. Conclusion: Based on the results yielded by the analysis, we assert that social workers need to make a conscious effort to include theory in practice decisions.*

Keywords: Theory, social work theory, empirical assessment of theory, social work practice, theory progression, human behavior, and the social environment (HBSE)

Theories provide a lens to help us frame the complex interplay between humans and their environment. A large part of this understanding occurs within the context of practice, specifically social work practice. Bartlett (2003) and Pinderhughes (1996) define this practice as one that endeavors to define a roadmap of a myriad of methods, knowledge, sanctions, values, and purposes for social workers. This practice, the habitual actions of

actors, and the rules that govern their field (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997), enables social workers, retrospectively and prospectively, to explain and forecast relationships and actions of human behavior (Thyer, 2001). Nestled neatly within the purposes of social work, social work practice provide skills "to identify, analyze, implement empirically based interventions to achieve client goals; apply empirical knowledge; evaluate program outcomes and provide leadership in the promotion of social and economic justice" (Schriver, 2004, p. 5). There are still questions about social work practice and what it is expected to do. For instance, what actually helps to frame social work practice? How do social workers justify practice approaches utilized to attain their goals? Answers to these questions help to shape the current discussion. The authors purport that theory and theory progression is what ties these questions together.

The question concerning how theory is disseminated among social work professionals is raised. Journals serve as a major source for theory dissemination (Lindsey & Kirk, 1992). For this reason, theory development and discussion is an important component for researchers to address, as well as for journals to publish. The purpose of this paper is multifold:

1. To explore the extent of theory discussion and progression in social work journals for the year 2004;

2. To discuss the necessity of theory in social work research and practice;

3. To review pertinent literature concerning previous research conducted regarding evaluation of theory discussion and progression in social work journals;

4. To propose criteria for defining theory in social work journals;

5. To present findings from the current study concerning theory discussion and progression in social work journals.

DEFINING THEORY

Social work practice is framed by theory and its modus operandi. Theory, Turner (1996) outlines, "emerges from the process of ordering facts in a meaningful way" (p. 3). He highlights that theory spotlights notable patterns and relationships that bring homeostasis and stability to the intricacies of practice. Failure to do this leaves practice to "guesswork" and "impressionistic responses" to client situations (Turner, 1996). A key limitation of theory for practice, Turner (1996) warns, is when it becomes "overly cerebral and mechanistic, stressing labeling and classifying, rather than on the individuality of each client and situation it can become an end in itself" (p. 13). A great limitation of bridging theory to practice is that it <u>has</u> become too cerebral. On a whole, the result is that direct and indirect practitioners do not see its relevance to their daily work (Rosen, Proctor, & Staudt, 2003; Thyer, 2001).

Theory may also be defined as "a reasoned set of propositions, derived from and supported by established evidence, which serves to explain a group of phenomena" (Schriver, 2001, p. 119). On the other hand, Robbins and colleagues suggest

that theories "consist of a series of relatively abstract and general statements that collectively purport to explain (answer the question "why?") some aspect of the empirical world (the "reality" known to us directly or indirectly through our senses)" (p. 5). Theory provides practitioners with a systematic method to conceptualize information about individuals, their behavior, and the contexts in which they interact and live. The importance of theory is often emphasized (Payne, 2005; Robbins et al., 1999; Schriver, 2001; Turner, 1996) and, realizing that social work is at a critical juncture (Finn & Jacobson, 2003), there is a current call for theory to play a more integral part in practice—a part that takes the "guesswork" from practice, allowing relationships to be defined via patterns and a specific theoretical lens (Turner, 1996), while also empowering social workers to validate their chosen methods of intervention.

IMPORTANCE OF THEORY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Rightly so, there has been much debate about the importance of theory in social work practice (Gomory, 2001; Thyer, 1994). The preceding paragraphs give a brief overview of such a debate. For instance, Thyer adopts the stance that teaching and the utilization of theory among undergraduate and master's level social work students is "largely a waste of time" (p. 148). Thyer provides the following three explanations for this stance. First, social work educators lack skills to adequately teach social work theory. Second, the majority of theories taught in the social work profession are incorrect. Teaching incorrect theories may lead to ineffective methods used in social work. Third, while theory attempts to explain outcomes for treatment effectiveness, many outcomes may be explained by other theories or factors. Thyer asserts that, recognizing that outcomes may be explained by various theoretical explanations, is unnecessarily complicated.

Conversely, Gomory (2001) refutes Thyer's (1994) stance regarding the importance of teaching theory in social work, as he feels that the use of theory to guide social work research and practice is of major importance. Gomory emphasizes the use of "trial and error" among social work professionals (p. 47) to develop educated and autonomous opinions of how theory should guide research and be applied to practice interventions.

Specifically, the use of theory in social work practice is essential; it provides many more reasons, irrespective of the debate. These reasons may include but are not be limited to the provision of guidelines for practice and policy, treatment and intervention development, and direct social work research. General guidelines provided by social work theory may be useful in providing information about what policies are necessary to change conditions for target groups and vulnerable populations (Robbins et al., 1999). The framework provided by theory may be useful by social workers to develop treatment and intervention plans to enhance the functioning of individuals and society (Robbins et al., 1999; Schriver, 2001). Lastly, theory may be used to direct social work research (Robbins et al., 1999). Research provides a foundation to explain how and why certain conditions and behaviors occur and provides an approach to effectively guide interventions.

EVALUATION OF THEORY QUALITY AND PROGRESSION

While there is debate as to whether the use of theory is essential in the profession of social work (Gomory, 2001; Robbins et al., 1999; Thyer, 1994), it may be asserted that theory is important to knowledge development. The use of theory to guide research and inform practice is not infallible. However, when examined under a critical lens, theory provides social workers with guidelines to explain and predict outcomes (Schriver, 2001).

Journals are one of the primary means of knowledge development and dissemination among social work professionals. Because journals are the primary means through which knowledge of theory is disseminated, these questions are posed: How do social work professionals define the value and credibility of a particular theory? How does one evaluate the quality of a particular journal in which a theory is published? When evaluating the value and credibility of a theory, it is necessary to discuss two topics: theory discussion and theory progression. Theory discussion may be simply stated as that discussion of theory within the context of a journal article. Discussion of theory may range from merely mentioning a particular theory to discussing the basic premises of that theoretical construct. Including discussion of theory in a journal article does not indicate an in-depth examination of the theory. Rather, theory discussion may be defined as a superficial description of the theory that does not include exploration of the components or empirical base of the theory. Theory progression takes theory discussion further—to explore the components of the theory, examine the empirical basis and supporting arguments, and provide knowledge concerning future development of the theory.

A number of authors have developed criteria for evaluating theory quality and development (Fischer, 1973; Payne, 2005; Robbins et al., 1999; Witkin & Gottschalk, 1988). These authors propose a set of criteria that they believe is adequate for evaluating theory quality and development. Payne (2005) provides a critique of five authors' framework for evaluating theory quality and development. However, he does not propose a synthesizing rating system to evaluate theory, but merely a critique (Payne, 2005).

Fischer (1973) proposed a framework for analysis of theories of therapy. Fischer's main goals for the development of this framework were twofold. One goal of the framework was to serve as a guide for addressing questions raised by clinical therapies. A second goal was to provide guidance in evaluating these theories based upon the questions raised. Fischer provided five basic areas in which clinical theories may be analyzed: 1) structural characteristics, 2) characteristics as a theory of therapy, 3) empirical status, 4) assumptions about the nature of man and moral implications, and 5) applicability to social work. Fischer also provided a four-point criterion scale for theory rating.

Robbins and others (1999) proposed criteria for evaluating theory in social work practice. These authors offer three criteria for theory evaluation: 1) theories for social work practice should be consistent with social work values and ethics; 2) theories for social work practice should be subjected to scientific scrutiny, methodologically sound research, and be verifiable, and 3) theories for social

work practice should do no harm. Each criterion and the application of the criterion to social work practice are discussed in detail.

Witkin and Gottschalk (1988) state that the traditional criteria often utilized to evaluate social work theory are inadequate. The authors propose the utilization of four additional criteria for theory evaluation. Criterion one states that theory should be explicitly critical. Criterion two states that the theory should recognize humans as active agents. Criterion three states that the theory should account for the life experiences of the client. Criterion four states that the theory should promote social justice. The authors provide an explanation for each criterion and its application. Using this framework, the authors assert that theories that correspond to these criteria are preferable to theories that do not meet them.

While several authors (Fischer, 1973; Payne, 2005; Robbins et al., 1999; Witkin & Gottschalk, 1988) have proposed criteria for theory evaluation, the researchers have found these criteria to be inadequate. The researchers developed criteria to ensure that the journals selected for review would reflect social work content. After selecting journals for review, the researchers reviewed articles in the selected journals based on criteria to determine if the article contained theory discussion. If theory discussion was present to a certain extent, the researchers further evaluated the theory discussion in that article against a second set of criteria. The following methods section provides an explication of the procedures that guided our inquiry. Admittedly, this statement could also use some work.

METHOD

Two-hundred and sixty-eight social work journals from 2004 were selected for review. These journals were selected based on social work journals available at the Indiana University Purdue University (IUPUI) University Library and from the website http://cosw.sc,edu/swan/media.html. These journals were considered "social work" journals by the IUPUI library. Seventeen theory progression team members reviewed the two lists for repetition and condensed the list to 220 journals. These 220 journals were cross-referenced with *The Authors Guide to Social Work Journals* (NASW, 1997) for congruence with the social work profession. This process further narrowed the list to 54 social work journals. Theory progression team members developed a list of criteria to ensure that the journals would reflect social work content. The criteria were as follows: the journal must be peer-reviewed and meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Published by a school of social work or a professional social work organization.

2. The mission statement places primary emphasis on social work or social workers.

3. "Social Work" appears in title of the journal.

To ensure inter-rater reliability, team members independently reviewed three articles for theory quality. An inter-rater reliability (kappa) of .85 was obtained from all raters prior to starting the review process. The Theory Quality Scale included nine criteria. Each criterion was a statement regarding the article's fulfillment of a specific characteristic and received a rating from 1 to 5 (Table 1). If the article fully satisfied the purpose of the specific criterion in question, that arti-

Table 1: *Criteria for Theory Quality*	
Criteria	**Score**
Components of theory are described in a tight, internally consistent framework	
Clearly describes each variable within the theory	
Clearly operationalizes the relationship between the variables within the theory	
Clearly describes goals or outcomes intended with theory	
Clearly describes the boundaries or limitations of the theory	
Clearly describes the empirical data that support the premises of theory	
Clearly builds upon previous studies that demonstrate the efficacy of the theory	
Clearly concludes with specific next steps for theory progression	
Clearly expresses the framework for exploring and/or responding to issues of social justice	
Scoring: 5 = strongly agree 4 = moderately agree 3 = slightly agree 2 = moderately disagree 1 = strongly disagree	

cle received a score of 5, which indicates full credit for that criterion. If an article completely failed to satisfy the criterion in question, that article was given a score of 1. Subsequent to determining inter-rater reliability, team members reviewed the 54 journals against criteria put forth by the theory progression team. This narrowed the list to 41 journals. These 41 journals were divided among seven team members. The team members reviewed each journal and its respective articles for the year 2004. Due to pragmatic reasons such as inability to access journals electronically or manually, and due to some journals no longer being in publication, four journals could not be accessed.

One-thousand one-hundred and sixty-eight articles were reviewed for inclusion of theory. All of the articles in each of the journals were rated according to the Journal Inclusion of Theories Scale. The articles were searched via online databases, including Ebso Host, Expanded Academic, ASAP, and via the library of IUPUI catalog of electronic journals. When journals were not available for review electronically but were accessible manually, hard copies of the journals were obtained and their subsequent articles reviewed. Articles were evaluated according to the overall role that theory played in the article, the extent to which the theory was included in the article, and the presence or absence of empirical evidence in the article. This rating scale ranged from 0 to 6 to indicate articles that had no empirical or theoretical links all the way to articles whose purpose was theory development and analyzed empirical data to support its development (Table 2). Articles that received a rating of 5 or 6 on the Journal Inclusion of Theories Scale were further reviewed utilizing the Theory Quality Scale. Subsequent to reviewing each article, a sum score for the number of articles that received a particular score on the Inclusion of Theories Scale was calculated.

All of the journals with articles that were included in the final analysis were classified according to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)

Table 2:	*Theory Evaluation Criteria*			
Score	**Rating**	**# of Articles**	**Sum Score**	**% of Total**
6	Theory development with empirical base as the focus of the article (TDE)			
5	Theory development/explanation as the focus of the article (TDF)			
4	Empirical study that has theory links (ET)			
3	non-empirical article with theory links (NETL)			
2	Empirical study with brief theory links (EBT)			
1	Empirical study with no theory links (ENT)			
0	Studies with no empirical or theory links (NET)			
TOTAL				100%
Scoring: Sum score divided by the number of articles				

content areas. These content areas include Values and Ethics, Diversity, Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice, Human Behavior and Social Environment, Social Welfare Policy and Services, Social Work Practice, Research, and Field Education. The publishers' descriptions of their respective journals were used to classify the journals according to the EPAS content areas. The descriptions of each of the respective journals were found online, most via publisher websites. The journal classification process involved treating the content areas as if they were mutually exclusive and exhaustive; therefore, all of the journals were classified according to only one of the eight content areas. All journal descriptions referenced more than one EPAS content area; therefore, the content area classification was based on the journal's primary purpose and title. Admittedly, due to each journal referencing several of the EPAS content areas, the process of classification was somewhat subjective. This subjectivity was decreased by using the journals' mission and other key descriptive traits as the primary determinants that guided the classification process. The results suggest, however, that practice journals are much more theory-driven than any other journal, despite the fact that the number one rated article was a research journal.

RESULTS

Of the 1,168 articles that were reviewed, 71 (approximately 6%) met the criteria for theory development with empirical base (TDE) or theory development/explanation as the focus of the article (TDF). Table 3 includes a breakdown of journal ratings by degree of discussion of theory (based on journal and theory evaluation criteria, Table 2) for each of the 1,168 articles reviewed. Given that the purpose of this study was to explore the extent of overall theory discussion and progression in social work journals for the year 2004, the names of the journals that were reviewed are not disclosed, rather, the journals are represented by numerical codes, as it was not our intent to identify which journals support the importance of theory discussion as indicated by articles chosen for publication. Overall, the results illustrate minimal focus on theory within the 37 journals selected for

Table 3:   *Journal Ratings by Degree of Discussion of Theory*

Journal	Journal Type	TDE	TDF	ET	NETL	EBT	ENT	Net	Total Articles	% TDE or TDF
22	Research	1	3	0	0	2	3	0	9	44.44
7	Practice	10	7	5	1	9	14	1	46	36.96
36	Social Service & Social Welfare Policy	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	6	33.33
6	Practice	0	6	1	11	1	2	3	24	25.00
12	Population At-risk	0	3	0	0	5	2	5	15	20.00
15	HBSE	2	4	8	3	8	7	3	35	20.00
30	HBSE	5	2	0	4	1	11	15	38	18.42
26	Practice	0	2	0	2	1	9	7	21	9.52
20	Practice	0	2	1	0	3	16	1	23	8.70
33	Field Education	0	2	1	3	2	5	11	24	8.33
3	Practice	0	4	3	14	16	18	7	62	6.45
14	Practice	1	0	1	2	0	8	4	16	6.25
13	Practice	1	1	1	3	4	17	6	33	6.06
2	HBSE	0	1	0	6	3	5	3	18	5.55
10	Practice	0	2	0	0	1	14	21	38	5.26
24	Practice	0	3	4	8	11	22	10	58	5.17
5	Research	0	1	1	14	0	0	4	20	5.0
4	Research	1	0	3	2	7	8	2	23	4.35
11	Practice	1	0	3	0	2	18	0	24	4.17
29	Practice	1	0	4	7	2	10	5	29	3.45
25	Social Services & Social Welfare Policy	0	1	1	0	4	17	7	30	3.33
23	Practice	0	1	2	1	7	30	2	43	2.33
32	Social Services & Social Welfare Policy	1	0	3	3	2	37	23	69	1.45
1	HBSE	0	0	4	9	0	2	63	78	0.0
19	Practice	0	0	0	1	4	10	0	15	0.0
21	Diversity	0	0	0	0	3	9	0	12	0.0
27	Practice	0	0	0	10	2	2	20	34	0.0

Table 3:   *Journal Ratings by Degree of Discussion of Theory (cont.)*

Journal	Journal Type	TDE	TDF	ET	NETL	EBT	ENT	Net	Total Articles	% TDE or TDF
28	Social Services & Social Welfare Policy	0	0	1	4	1	13	14	33	0.0
17	Field Education	0	0	0	1	1	3	9	14	0.0
8	HBSE	0	0	0	11	0	0	13	24	0.0
31	Field Education	0	0	0	5	1	11	26	43	0.0
9	Social Services & Welfare Social Policy	0	0	0	6	9	9	13	37	0.0
16	Social Services & Welfare Social Policy	0	0	0	5	0	4	10	19	0.0
34	Practice	0	0	0	1	1	0	13	15	0.0
35	Field Education	0	0	2	1	2	4	15	24	0.0
18	Practice	0	0	1	1	0	21	10	33	0.0
37	Practice	0	0	3	5	27	22	26	83	0.0
TOTAL:		**24**	**47**						**1,168**	

TDE=Theory discussion with empirical base as the focus of the article; TDF=Theory discussion as the focus of the article; ET=Empirical study that has theory links; NETL=Non-Empirical article with theory links; EBT=Empirical study with brief theory links; ENT=Empirical study with no theory links; NET=Studies with no empirical or theory links.

review. Twelve of the 37 journals, or 32%, contained no articles with TDE or TDF, while three of the 37 journals, or 8%, contained 30% or more articles with TDE or TDF.

Articles containing TDE or TDF were further evaluated for theory quality using the criteria in the theory quality scale (Table 1). The purpose of this two-step evaluation process was to identify articles that focused on theory development with empirical base or theory development/explanation (TDE or TDF) as a first step followed by a second assessment of the quality of theory discussion. Factors considered in assessing the quality of theory discussion, included a tight internally consistent framework, operationalization of variables, limitations of theory, identification of steps for theory progression, or consideration of theory with regard to social justice. The theory quality scale (Table 1) was developed based on the work of Daley and others (2005) and factors blended from the models described

in the "evaluation of theory quality and progression" section. Table 2 presents the discussion of theory quality scores for those articles containing TDE or TDF.

Each theory progression team member reviewed articles containing TDE or TDF using the nine criteria are listed in Table 4. Each of the 71 articles containing TDE or TDF were evaluated by one team member and was assigned a rating ranging from 5 to 1 (strongly agree to strongly disagree, respectively) for each of the nine criteria in Table 1. The rater then computed the mean score for the article (total divided by nine). The mean score for the 71 articles was 3.7, with three articles scoring 5, 21 articles scoring 4 or higher, and nine articles scoring 3 or less. Thus, a minimal number of articles (3 out of 71 or 4.2%), which were evaluated based on the criteria in Table 1, received high quality ratings.

Table 4: *Theory Listing of 2004 Journal Review*

Theory	Rating	Author & Year of Publication
Queer Theory	45	McPhail, 2004
Housework Theory	45	Kroska, 2004
Feminist Theory	45	Chafetz, 2004a
ABCX Model and Resiliency	44	Vandsburger & Biggerstaff, 2004
Role Theory	44	Landry-Meyer & Newman, 2004
Feminist Theory	43	Mack-Canty & Wright, 2004
Feminist Theory	43	Walker, 2004
Feminist Theory	43	Baber, 2004
Gender Construction Theory	43	Zuo, 2004
Feminist Theory	43	Chafetz, 2004b
Social Capital Theory	42	Anguiano, 2004
Feminist Theory	42	Allen, 2004
Nested Ecological Theory	41	Cottrell & Monk, 2004
Transtheoretical Model	40	Corden & Somerton, 2004
The Theory of Mindful Space	40	Burlae, 2004
Family Systems Theory	40	Vandervalk et al., 2004
Risk and Resilience	39	Corcoran & Nichols-Casebolt, 2004
Feminist Theory - Queer Theory, - Gender Theory - Social Theory, - Queer Body Theory - Disability Theory	39	Wood, 2004
Responsive Regulation	39	Pennell, 2004
Teaching Family Life Cycle	38	Richman & Cook, 2004
Social-Psychological Attitude Theory	37	Kahng & Mowbray, 2004

Table 4:   *Theory Listing of 2004 Journal Review (cont.)*

Theory	Rating	Author & Year of Publication
Attachment Theory	37	Applegate, 2004
- Object Relations Theory		
- Psychoanalytic Theory		
- Cognitive Theory		
- Generalized Event Theory		
- Systems Theory		
- Non-linear Dynamic Systems Theory (also known as Complexity or Chaos Theory)		
Restorative Justice	36	Crampton, 2004
Decision-making Theory	36	Smith & Moen, 2004
Life Course Theory	36	Crosnoe & Elder, 2004
Marx Alienation Theory	35	Ferguson & Lavalette, 2004
Procedural Justice	35	Neff, 2004
Field Instruction	35	Fox, 2004
Trauma Theory	35	Mohr, 2004
Psychoanalytic	34	Jones, 2004
Transtheoretical Model of Change	34	McGuire, 2004
Capitol Theory	34	Ferguson, 2004
Psychoanalytic Theory	33	Bright, 2004
Family Stress Theory	33	Abbott et al., 2004
Responsive Regulation	33	Burford & Adams, 2004
Social Constructionism	33	Montgomery, 2004
Health Belief Model	33	Sullivan et al., 2004
Trauma	33	Regehr, Hemsworth, Leslie, Howe & Chau, 2004
Attachment Theory	32	Bennett, 2004
Personal Authority in Family System	32	Lawson & Brossart, 2004
Relational Theory	32	Dietz & Thompson, 2004
Self-in-Relation Theory	31	Lesser, O'Neil, Burke, Scanlon, Hollis, & Miller, 2004
Stigma Theory, Feminist Theory	31	Lipton, 2004
Lacanian Analytic Theory	31	Baylis, 2004
Theory of Control Mastery	31	Nol, 2004
Social Learning Theory		
- Self-Psychological Theory	31	Dick, 2004
Psychodynamic Theory	31	Brandell & Ringol, 2004
Triangle of Political Space	31	Kelly, 2004
- Restorative Justice		

Table 4: *Theory Listing of 2004 Journal Review (cont.)*

Theory	Rating	Author & Year of Publication
Community Family Therapy	31	Rojano, 2004
Meta-theory	30	Houston, 2004
Grief Theory	30	Brownlee & Oikonen, 2004
Psychoanalytic Theory	30	Alperin, 2004
Gender Entrapment Theory	30	Bent-Goodley, 2004
Ethnic Identity Theory	30	Margaret O'Donoghue
- Racial Identity Theory		
- Black Racial Identity Development (BRID)		
- *White Racial Identity Development (WRID)		
Gender-role Androgyny Theory	30	Utz et al., 2004
Imposter Phenomenon	29	Castro et al., 2004
Empowerment Theory) (Afrocentric Perspective	28	Manning, Cornelius, & Okundaye, 2004
Political Economy Theory	28	Mulroy & Tamburo, 2004
Emancipatory Disability Theory	27	O'Connor et al., 2004
Attachment Theory	27	Wampler, Riggs & Kimball, 2004
Critical Theory	26	Keenan, 2004
Organization in Environment	26	Mulroy, 2004
Attachment Theory	26	Allen & Baucom, 2004
Attachment Theory	25	Gubman, 2004
Attachment Theory	25	Ringel, 2004
- Object Relations Theory		
- Intersubjective Theory		
Psychoanalytic Theory	24	Steger, 2004
Role Model Theory	24	Baum, 2004
Theory of Change	23	Little & Girvin, 2004
Ecosystemic	23	Coffey, 2004
Psychoanalytic Theory	22	Sanville, 2004
Feminist Theory	20	Blume, 2004

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations inherent to this type of study. It is necessary to consider differences in editorial policy and practice regarding the level of importance placed on theory discussion, which undoubtedly varies from journal to journal. These differences in editorial policy and practice represent numerous potential biases that would directly affect our results. One possibility to consider is that authors may limit their discussion of theory due to the restrictions placed on manuscript length, often 20 pages or less, by peer-reviewed journals. An alternative explanation is that authors are submitting articles that incorporate theory

discussion, and these articles are being rejected for publication. Consideration of articles that are rejected for publication would be an interesting addition to future studies of this nature.

Some additional limitations of this study that necessitate consideration prior to any conclusions drawn about theory progression based on our data are numerous. First, while the authors obtained inter-rater reliability scores at two points in this study, the ratings were subjective in nature. Thus, there is most likely some variability in scores assigned during TDE and TDF classification (Table 2), as well as during evaluation of theory quality (Table 1). Second, the criteria included in Tables 1 and 2 were developed by Daley and others (2005). Although these scales were developed based on the previous work of Daley et al., 2005 and factors blended from the models described in the "evaluation of theory quality and progression" section, it is necessary to recognize biases inherent to this type of process. Third, our data reports on only 37 journals reviewed for this study. There are numerous social work journals, as evidenced by the reduction process in this study, which decreased the original 268 journals selected for review to the 37 journals ultimately reviewed. Related to this limitation is the fact that we limited our review to peer-reviewed journal articles and did not consider other types of publications. Fourth, it is highly likely, given the interdisciplinary nature of the profession, that many social work theorists publish articles containing more extensive theoretical discussion in non-social work journals.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Studies of this nature are limited. While reviews of the literature resulted in the identification of articles relating studies of a similar nature (Cnaan, Caputo, & Shmuely, 1994; Furr, 1995; Gomory, 2001; Lindsey & Kirk, 1992; Sellers, Mathiesen, Perry, & Smith, 2004), these authors did not evaluate the quality of theory discussion or progression within social work journals. Rather, the focus of these authors was more relevant to the role of theory in social work research and practice (Gomory, 2001), prestige of journals (Cnaan et al., 1994), the role of social work journals in the development of the profession (Lindsey & Kirk, 1992) and assessing journal quality based on citation counts (Furr, 1995; Lindsey & Kirk, 1992). To the best of our knowledge, Daley and others' pilot study (2005) was the first of its kind; the current study is a follow-up to that work.

Considering this was a pilot study, there were many lessons learned, and the authors offer several suggestions for future studies of this nature. First, while Table 3 represents the immense diversity of theories identified within the articles reviewed and evaluated for this study, it is difficult to discern from our results the contribution that these articles make to the progression of a particular theory. A review of the theories listed in Table 3 indicate a discussion of micro, mezzo, and macro level theories, incorporating the inclusion of well-known theories (attachment theory, systems theory, feminist theory, psychoanalytic theory) as well as highly focused theories (gender-role androgyny theory, grief theory, queer theory, theory of mindful space). Thus, the development of methodology to ascertain the progression of a particular theory would be a beneficial addition to future studies of this nature.

Second, as noted in the "limitations" section, interpretations based on our results are limited to articles published in 2004 that appeared in the 37 journals reviewed for this study. Therefore, the consideration of alternative methods of journal/article selection represents the potential for increasing the knowledge base with regard to theory discussion and progression in social work journals. As mentioned previously, it would be interesting to obtain articles submitted and subsequently rejected for publication by various social work journals. Evaluating articles rejected for publication based on the criteria utilized in the current study would provide additional information pertaining to the level of importance placed on theory discussion and progression by social work journal editorial boards. An additional alternative method of selection would be to review journals classified by Baker (1992) as the "core of the social work journal network" (p. 160). Baker (1992) identified five journals considered the "core of the social work journal network," including *Social Work, Social Service Review, Families in Society, the Journal of Social Work Education, and Social Work Research and Abstracts* (now two separate journals, *Social Work Research* and *Social Work Abstracts*) (p. 160). Future studies could compare theory discussion and progression as found in articles published in these journals and classified by Baker (1992) as central to the social work profession to other "non-core" social work journals.

Lastly, the authors recommend that follow-up to this study be conducted in a quasi longitudinal manner to assess the consistency or lack thereof of the degree of theory discussion and progression in social work journals from one year to the next. An alternative to considering undertaking concurrent with future studies that attempt to ascertain the degree of consistency of theoretical discussion in social work journals would be to add the component of comparing social work journals with other professions' journals. The purpose of this additional component would be to determine whether social work journals contain more or less theory discussion than the profession chosen for the comparison.

DISCUSSION

According to Sellers and colleagues (2004), for numerous reasons, evaluating the quality of social work journals is an important aspect of professional social work. Explanations offered by the authors (Sellers et al., 2004) in support of this contention include:

1. the tremendous increase in the number of social work journals makes it nearly impossible for professionals to read or evaluate all available publications.

2. as a multidisciplinary profession, social work professionals face the additional challenge of reading, evaluating, and writing for journals across diverse fields.

3. the assessment of journals that are considered to be of high quality offers guidance and direction to researchers, writers, and readers, because these publications would presumably model strong research methods, conceptual rigor, and valuable techniques of presentation.

4. for many faculty, being published in prestigious journals may increase the likelihood of pay raises, promotions, and recognition from colleagues (p. 143).

While Sellers and colleagues are referring to the quality of social work journals in general, rather that specifically addressing the quality of theory discussion within social work journals, we contend that evaluation of the quality of theory discussion is imperative for the same reason as well as additional reasons. Marsh (2002) suggests that the role and function of social work journals is a long-standing disparity among social work professionals, especially in consideration of those academic publications whose focus is limited with regard to practice application. Given that theory provides practitioners with a systematic method to conceptualize information about individuals, their behavior, and the contexts in which they interact and live, we assert that social workers need to make a conscious effort to critically analyze and consider the counterevidence to the theoretical assumptions upon which practitioners' base clinical decisions and actions (Lindsey & Kirk, 1992).

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Analysis of Social Work Theory Progression Published in 2004

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Abstract: *The authors reviewed 67 articles that discussed and/or tested human behavior theories from social work journals published in 2004 in order to assess the level and quality of theory progression. The articles were further sorted into Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Foundation Curriculum content areas of HBSE, practice, policy, field education, values & ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk/social and economic justice, and research for purposes of categorization. Results indicated that HBSE and practice were by far the largest group of articles reviewed. Also found was that social work has a limited amount of theory discussion in the content areas of field, values and ethics, diversity, and populations-at-risk/social and economic justice. Thirty-three articles were found to demonstrate theory progression, eight articles presented new/emerging theories, and 26 articles discussed or critiqued theories without presenting evidence of theory progression.*

Keywords: *Human behavior in social environment (HBSE) evaluation, social work theory, theory progression, social work education, social work practice, social work policy*

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, scholars have attempted to articulate the implication of theory, to establish a meaningful framework for evaluation of a theory's merit, and to document progression of a theory through the evolutionary stages of concep-

tualization, development, and empirical testing. Recently, some social work scholars have taken the stance of rejecting the need to teach theory, instead, advocating a focus on teaching practice skills without communicating the significance of the profession's theoretical foundation (Simon & Thyer, 1994). And, yet, researchers must have a starting point from which to begin their inquiries and a roadmap to enable them to recognize where each theory has been. This is essential to direct our scientific progress as a profession. Sherraden (2000) states, "theory has a great deal to do with asking questions well," (p. 1) and from that stance concludes that "certain structures of inquiry may lead to theories that are more productive than others" (p. 2). It is from this perspective that we have attempted to develop a framework to evaluate the discussion and progression of theories of human behavior in the social environment (HBSE) in primary social work journals published in the calendar year 2004.

In order to begin our discussion of theory quality, an operational definition of theory is necessary. Payne (2005) defines theory succinctly as "an organized statement of ideas about the world" (p. 5). Turner (1996) offers a similar definition: "a model of reality appropriate to a particular discipline" (p. 2), and Sherraden (2000) conceptualizes it as "theory is what explains why an intervention causes an outcome" (p. 3). Since we have limited our discussion to HBSE theory in social work, all of these theories seem valid and complementary.

Previous authors have attempted to establish criteria in order to evaluate the merits of human behavior theories (e.g., Fischer, 1973; Payne, 2005; Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1999; Turner, 1996; Witkin & Gottschalk, 1988), yet these did not seem to adequately encapsulate the full dimensions of theory discussion in the literature. The concept of theory progression was absent in all of these frameworks. By theory progression, we mean whether the practical application of the theory was solidified, more thoroughly understood, or extended into a broader explanation of behavior. In this article, we have attempted to develop a system of assessment for theory progression.

METHODS

The nine members of our research team sorted 67 articles (the pool of articles were drawn from a larger pool sorted by doctoral students and a faculty member (Gentle-Genitty et.al., 2007) based on theory review procedures cited in Daley et.al., 2005) with the sorting emerging from a discussion of theory from primary social work journals published in 2004. The articles were classified into the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Foundation Curriculum Content areas as defined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) (Council on Social Work Education, 2001). The articles were initially sorted by individual members of the research team, then reviewed collectively by the entire team, who consensually determined the final categorization of each article. The abstracts, authors' statements regarding the primary focus of the article, and general content guided the classification process. The articles reviewed included research-based studies, policy analysis, and editorials.

After sorting, the articles were distributed to seven individual team members (readers) to assess the quality of the theory discussion in each article. Each reader received approximately 10 articles. To the extent possible, each reader was assigned an entire Curriculum Content area. Areas with more than 10 articles were divided between two readers. The following instructions for summarizing the content of the articles were agreed upon by the team:

Describe each article briefly in terms of the author's discussion of theory including:

- Is it an established theory or emerging?

- In terms of the author's discussion, has the theory been empirically specified and has the historical context been addressed?

- Can a reader easily use the article to improve practice, teaching, or policy development?

If a reader discovered that an article had been incorrectly classified, he/she alerted the team via a listserv and justified the article's reclassification. This occurred in two cases. The readers returned their article summaries to be synthesized by two team members. The articles, theories, and status of theory progression are individually listed in the tables following each section of this paper dedicated to individual Curriculum Content areas. Also, a brief summary and specific information related to the featured articles will be found under the headings of each content area below.

The following categories were established based on summaries of the articles provided by individual team members: progressed, discussed without progression, and new/emerging. An article was classified as "progressed" if it provided the historical context of an existing theory as well as tested the theory empirically or applied the theory in a new context. Those articles that were "empirically tested" included both quantitative and qualitative studies. Articles that discussed or critiqued an existing theory without attempting to test it empirically were classified at "discussed without progression." Finally, articles that discussed new or emerging theories comprised the final category.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the articles by EPAS area. Subsequent tables give more detail by the EPAS categories.

Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE)

Within the scope of social work research and practice, a plethora of theories explore the nature of human behavior and the social environment. These theories originate from a multitude of disciplines, including social work, sociology, psychology, and economics. Thirty-one theories of HBSE were published in 24 different articles in social work journals in the calendar year 2004 (Table 2). Twenty-one theories from 16 articles in this content area were judged as progressing, which is by far the largest group in this study. Four theories were presented as new/emerging and three existing theories were discussed or critiqued with little or no theory progression.

Table 1:   *Theory Progression by Content Area*

EPAS Area	Progressed (%)	Discussed Without Progression	New/ Emerging
HBSE	16 (66.7%)	4 (16.7%)	4 (16.7%)
Practice	7 (43.8%)	7 (43.8%)	2 (12.5%)
Policy	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.2%)	
Populations at Risk	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	-
Diversity	2 (33.3%)	3 (50%)	1 (16.7%)
Research	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	-
Values & Ethics	-	2 (100%)	-
Field	-	1 (100%)	-
Grand Total	33 (49.3%)	26 (38.8%)	8 (11.9%)

The theories progressed dealt with four categories: 1) family units, 2) couples, 3) adolescent academic performance, and 4) other. Seven articles progressed theories that dealt with the family unit. A theory of adult development and personal authority in the family system was used to explore intergenerational family relationships (Lawson & Brossart). Family development theory was used to explore the life cycle of a family (Richman & Cook). Family systems theory was used to demonstrate a link between divorce and adolescent emotional adjustment (Vandervalk Spruijt, DeGoede, Meeus, & Maas). Feminist theory (Mack-Canty & Wright) and role theory (Landry-Meyer & Newman) were used to discuss parenting. Lifecycle theory was used to explore the effect of consumer debt on the family (Baek & Hong). Finally, social construction theory was used to examine meaning making, empowerment, and narrative for families who have experienced torture (Montgomery).

Four articles progressed theories for working with couples at various life stages. Attachment theory was used to explore infidelity (Allen & Baucom). A theory of the division of household labor examined power relationships between husbands and wives (Zipp, Prohaska, & Bemiller). Gender construction was used to explore traditional gender roles and couples relationships (Zuo). Finally, life course theory was used to explore satisfaction of retired couples (Smith & Moen).

Three articles dealt with adolescents and their academic performance. Life course (Crosnoe & Elder), psychoanalytic (Jones), and role theories (Baum) were used to explore adolescent academic performance. The remaining two articles discussed trauma theory with respect to child welfare workers (Regehr, Hemsworth, Leslie, Howe, & Chau) and social capital theory to discuss children's street work in Mexico (Ferguson).

Table 2:	*Articles Summaries for HBSE Content*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Allen & Baucom	Progressed	Attachment	Article demonstrates the progression of attachment theory into the area of adult infidelity. Citing previous research briefly, they establish an empirical base and proceed to show how attachment style can be used to predict infidelity. Implications for practice are explored, including using an understanding of attachment style to create empowering narratives for couples dealing with infidelity.	Yes
Applegate	Discussed without progression	Psycho-analytic	Reviews the application of psychoanalytic theory to social work's theory base, education and practice. Discusses theory's decline over the past several decades. Findings from neuroscience on infant attachment have led to a paradigm shift within the theory. Incorporations of new understanding of gender and sexuality, and concern for the "person in situation" have reinvigorated the theory base, making it increasingly viable to social work practitioners, working with oppressed populations.	No
Baek & Hong	Progressed	Lifecycle	Utilizes life cycle theory to examine the effects of life stages on consumer debt. Does an effective job at establishing a link between consumer debt and the family's life-cycle stage with families in the empty nest, solitary house-hold, and single parent stages showing a lesser likelihood of having installment debt.	Yes

Table 2:   *Articles Summaries for HBSE Content (cont.)*

Author	Progression	Titles of Theories	Key Points	Tested Empirically
Baum	Progressed	Role/Role Model	Applied role theory to look at the effect of maternal employment on a child's academic achievement. Found that maternal employment could have a negative impact on a child's academic performance that is in contrast to what the theory would predict.	Yes
Castro, Jones & Mirsalimi	New/ Emerging	Parentification & Imposter Phenomenon	The study reflects that childhood parentification over an extended period of time in part can be explained by the imposter phenomenon. There is a moderate correlation between the two constructs. No significant differences for ethnicity and race and the parentification scores were found. Caucasians however scored higher on the imposter phenomenon score than African-Americans.	Yes
Cordon & Somerton	Critique with no progression	Trans-theoretical	Examined the application of the transtheoretical model of change to work with parents finding its assessment of parenting is viable when used critically and in particular situations.	No
Crosnoe & Elder	Progressed	Life Course	Advance life course theory by exploring the many factors that contribute to adolescent educational resilience during this one particular life stage.	No
Ferguson	Progressed	Social Capitol	Progressed social capital theory by applying it to a different culture and demonstrating its relevance to children's street work in Mexico.	No

Table 2:	*Articles Summaries for HBSE Content (cont.)*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Houston	Critique with no progression	Heuristic	Examined Gidden's heuristic theory and sought to expand on the theory and establish a position on the constructs of structure and agency.	No
Jones	Progressed	Psycho-analytic	Examined the effect of having a non-resident father on psychological separation and academic performance utilizing psychoanalytic theory as an explanatory model. The findings are consistent with numerous previous studies showing a tie between father involvement and academic performance, but failed to establish a clear link between the results and psychoanalytic theory.	Yes
Kroska	Critique with no progression	Division of Household Labor	Describes four theories and applies them to explaining the division of household chores in families. Specifically, the author uses gender ideology, relative resources, time availability, and doing gender. The author found these theories to be helpful in explaining the division of tasks but found that gender remains an important determining factor.	No
Landry-Meyer & Newman	Progressed	Role/Role Model	Applied role theory to explore the grandparent as a caregiver role respectively. Performed a qualitative study interviewing grandparents who were raising grandchildren. Concerns reported were consistent with those that would be predicted by role theory.	Yes

Table 2:   *Articles Summaries for HBSE Content (cont.)*

Author	Progression	Titles of Theories	Key Points	Tested Empirically
Lawson & Brossart	Progressed	Adult Development Personal Authority in Family System	This study explores differences among participants inter-generational family relationships. Results indicate that younger groups expressed more intimacy and intimidation with each parent and more triangulation with fathers than the older groups. Gender differences revealed that females have slightly stronger and healthier intergenerational relationships with parents.	Yes
Mack-Canty & Wright	Progressed	Feminist	Use a qualitative research design to demonstrate how a feminist parenting style can assist children to challenge hierarchy and oppression, thereby, assist in advancing feminist theory.	Yes
McPhail	New/ Emerging	Queer Feminist	Article questions ideas of gender binaries of (male/ female or homosexuality/ heterosexuality). Discusses post-modernist and queer theorists who have offered new insights on sexuality and social justice. Develops a queer theory critique on compulsory heterosexuality and calls for deinstitutionalization of the gender binaries, which create problems of oppression and social exclusion.	No
Montgomery	Progressed	Social Construction	Author applies the emerging theories to work with families who have experienced torture. Coordinated Management of Meaning model is supported by the findings of this qualitative study. The model suggests how to help families construct empowering and truthful narratives about torture histories.	Yes

Table 2:	*Articles Summaries for HBSE Content (cont.)*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Regehr, Hemsworth, Leslie, Howe, & Chau	Progressed	Trauma	Authors explore individual, incident and organizational factors that create post-traumatic stress distress among child welfare workers. Reports that individuals who develop healthy relationships with others and who exercise greater control on their lives report low levels of stress. Individuals who had fewer contacts with the issue also reported less stress. The organizational environment was the most effective predictor of stress.	Yes
Richman & Cook	Progressed	Family Development	Authors describe the Stairstep Framework–an alternative model of family development that encompasses different types of families. It has five life processes: 1) establishing a family, 2) addition of family members, 3) family members pursue inter/independence, 4) separation of family members, 5) adults develop dependence.	No
Smith & Moen	Progressed	Life Course	Analyzes retirement satisfaction among retirees and their spouses-individually and jointly. Results find differences among retirees and spouses in satisfaction level with retirement. Joint satisfaction among couples is lower than the individual levels. The most satisfied couples were retired wives and their husbands who reported that husbands did not exercise any influence in wives decisions.	Yes

Table 2:	*Articles Summaries for HBSE Content (cont.)*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Sullivan, Pasch, Cornelius & Cirigliano	New/ Emerging	Health Belief	Article enhances the legitimacy of the HBM model to predict couple's counseling decisions. Results indicate that the most effective predictors were couple's perceptive barriers and whether or not counseling was recommended to them through some source	Yes
Utz, Reidy, Carr, Nesse, & Wortman	New/ Emerging	Widowhood	Authors examine how widowhood affects daily household activities. Results indicate that children mediate the affect by helping with errands and housework and that the individual characteristics and intergenerational attributes have impact on the daily household activities in late-life widowhood.	Yes
Vandervalk Spruijt, DeGoede, Meeus, & Maas	Progressed	Family Systems	Advance family systems theory by demonstrating a link between divorce and adolescent emotional adjustment.	Yes
Zipp, Prohaska, & Bemiller	Progressed	Division of Household Labor	Asymmetric power relationships between husbands and wives are explored by examining decision-making, division of household labor, and childcare. Results find gender asymmetries in the household are reinforced through routine interactions. Study also reveals marital power, which is difficult to locate and is usually exercised covertly.	Yes

Author	Progression	Titles of Theories	Key Points	Tested Empirically
Zuo	Progressed	Gender construction	Seeks to advance gender construction theory by examining the link between men's bread-winner status and the presence or absence of an egalitarian ideology.	No

Table 2:   *Articles Summaries for HBSE Content (cont.)*

Practice

Twenty theories of practice were published in 16 different articles published in social work journals in the 2004 calendar year (Table 3). Seven theories from the articles in this content area were judged as progressing, which is the second largest group in this study. Two theories were presented as new/emerging, and seven existing theories were discussed or critiqued with little or no theory progression.

The theories progressed dealt with four categories: 1) the therapeutic relationship, 2) families, and 3) other. Three articles discussed the therapeutic relationship. Attachment theory was used by two authors to discuss working with clients individually (Bennett; Ringle). Control-mastery theory was used to discuss therapists who work with clients in a psychotherapy setting (Nol).   Two articles progressed theories dealing with the family unit. The family resilience model was used to explain how families adjust to economic pressures (Vandsburger & Biggerstaff). A theory of procedural justice was used to explore Family Group Conferencing in child welfare work (Neff). Finally, a theory of social justice was discussed for working on a macro level with activism and policy (Mulroy), and trauma theory was used to discuss social work education (McKenzie-Mohr).

Policy

Five theories dealing with policy were published in seven different articles in social work journals in the 2004 calendar year (Table 4). Three theories from the articles in this content area were judged as progressing. No theories were presented as new/emerging, and three existing theories were discussed or critiqued, with little or no theory progression. Responsive regulation appeared in three articles and was judged to be progressed by one (Burford & Adams) and discussed in two articles (Kelly; Pennell).

The three articles that progressed theories dealt with divergent topics. Ecosystem theory was used to study the impact of systems of care model on families and their therapeutic outcomes (Coffey). Responsive regulation was used to understand the dual roles (social control and empowerment) of most practitioners (Burford & Adams). Finally, transtheoretical theory is used to examine welfare-to-work (McGuire).

Table 3:   *Articles Summaries for Practice Content*

Author	Progression	Titles of Theories	Key Points	Tested Empirically
Alperin	Discussed without progression	Dream Analysis (Classical Object-Relations, Modern Psycho-analytic, Self-Psychology)	Identifies and compares four theories of dream analysis. Concludes that overall purpose of dreams is to develop, maintain, and restore self-object relationships	No
Bennett	Progressed	Attachment	Discusses attachment theory and infant research to understand the therapeutic relationship. Examines how clients who represent the four styles of attachment (secure, insecure ambivalent, insecure avoidant, and disorganized) respond to therapeutic telephone contact, or "disembodied communication." Patients with insecure avoidant or disorganized attachment did not respond to changes in treatment mode.	No
Brandell & Ringel	Discussed without progression	Psycho-dynamic Attachment	Traces the importance of the therapeutic relationship in clinical social work and case-work management. Identifies psychoanalytic concepts relevant to social work, including therapeutic alliance, the "holding environment," transitional objects, and phenomena. Argues that psychodynamic perspective on relationship should be taught in social work curricula.	No

Table 3:	*Articles Summaries for Practice Content (cont.)*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Brownlee & Oikonen	Discussed without progression	Bereavement Cycle	Explores perinatal loss and related issues of mourning/grief. Provides concise clinical and historical background of theory and family/parental stress during the loss of an unborn. Detailed discussion of empirical research studies with parents, extended family members, and primary care providers to support (attachment/loss/ grief). Also reports limitations for women in follow-up clinical services.	No
Burlae	New/ Emerging	Mindful Space	Uses theory to understand and suggest tools to prevent violence against women. Two forms of violence— invasion and captivity are experienced in subtle ways. Ones emotional energy alerts the receiver on a visceral level when a violation occurs. These cues can prevent destructive violence if the receiver acknowledges them and sets limits. If not, the repeated subtle acts of violence fragment the sense of self.	No
Corcoran & Nichols-Casebolt	Discussed without progression	Resiliency	Presents a "risk and resilience ecological framework" for client assessment and goal formulation on micro, mezzo, and macro levels. This framework, though comprehensive, is massive and may be overwhelming for some.	No
Gubman	Discussed without progression	Attachment	Discusses practical link between the theory and social work clinical settings using empirical and evidence-based studies about working with "difficult patients."	No

Table 3: *Articles Summaries for Practice Content (cont.)*				
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Kahng & Mowbray	Discussed without progression	Modified Labeling	Applies MLT to discuss the process of mental illness (MI) stigmatization. Identifies factors contributing to MI stigma(s): self-worth, rejection, and self-esteem. Empirical studies related to chronic/severe MI, social work settings, and family support systems are used in this paper to provide a better understanding and framework for MLT.	Yes
Manning, Cornelius & Okundaye	Discussed without progression	Afrocentric Egopsychology Spirituality	Identifies three primary theories recommended for practice with African American clients that incorporate accounts of racism, oppression, stress, mental, and general health issues.	No
McKenzie-Mohr	Progressed	Trauma	Discusses theory as an underutilized tool of knowledge in undergraduate and graduate schools of Social Work (SW). Provides in-depth discussion about integrating it into college level curriculum. Offers specific empirical studies that support the need to incorporate skills in SW practice and teaching settings. Also, discusses the possibility of traumatizing SW students who are not emotionally capable of processing first-hand trauma.	No
Mulroy	Progressed	Systems Social Justice	Provides in-depth look at macro social work practice by discussing several prominent theories (systems, social justice, social environment, and community). Examines three levels of social justice and applies them to social work community activism and administrative policy.	No

Table 3:	*Articles Summaries for Practice Content (cont.)*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Neff	Progressed	Procedural Justice	Integrates social exchange theory with equity theory to explain Family Group Conferencing (FGC). The primary concepts discussed regarding child protection are: restorative, retributive, and group value.	No
Nol	Progressed	Control-Mastery	Discusses theory as tool used primarily in psychotherapy settings. Author identifies two basic concepts essential in linking theory with practice, 1) clients are motivated to reveal unresolved emotional issues, and 2) therapists provide and develop a trusting relationship in order to allow clients to reveal unconscious materials.	No
Ringel	Progressed	Attachment	Author details a change in attachment style using a clinical case study with an adult. Asserts that the treatment relationship and process facilitate the change. Use of AT shifts focus of treatment away from medical model of diagnosis.	No
Rojano	New/ Emerging	Community Family	Community family therapy (CFT) in this conceptual article is a progressive theory of the ecosystemic model of therapy for economically oppressed populations. A primary goal is moving clients out of poverty and is achieved through three levels of intervention facilitated by a "citizen therapist." The "citizen therapist" is a new role for the therapist and includes coaching, advocacy, networking ability, community activism, and civic leadership.	No

Table 3:	*Articles Summaries for Practice Content (cont.)*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Vandsburger & Biggerstaff	Progressed	Family Resilience Model	Evaluates family resiliency model/theory to explain how families adjust when challenged with economic pressures. Authors provide discussion of poverty, family functioning, and resiliency. Uses the Stress Adjustment Adaptation Model (ABCX).	Yes

Populations at Risk

Eleven theories dealing with at-risk populations were published in seven different articles in social work journals in the 2004 calendar year (Table 5). Theories from articles in this content area were judged as progressing. No theories were presented as new/emerging and four existing theories were discussed or critiqued, with little or no theory progression.

As with policy, the three articles that progressed theories dealt with divergent topics. Critical constructionist and ecological theories were used to study parents who have been physically abused by their adolescent child (Cottrell & Monk). Marxist theory is used to discuss how alienation of labor, human nature, and humanity has an impact on clients and social workers (Ferguson & Lavalette). Finally, queer theory is used to discuss body image disturbances and psychosocial difficulties experienced by some gay men (Wood).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Several interesting trends related to theory discussion and progression in social work appeared as we reviewed these articles. Our primary purpose was to evaluate theory progression within the social work literature. Overwhelmingly, this occurred within the 24 articles in the HBSE category. Of the 24 articles reviewed, 16 demonstrated some level of theory progression. In the practice content area, seven articles demonstrated progression, while seven others showed minimal evolution. The populations-at-risk/social and economic justice and policy content areas both had three articles that suggested theory progression, while the research content area had two articles that showed progression, as did the diversity content area. There were no theories discussed that demonstrated progression in the content areas of field or values and ethics. It is reasonable to conclude that social workers are continuing to focus their work on the advancement of theories of human behavior and social work practice, while spending less time on the content areas of policy, populations-at-risk/social and economic justice, diversity, and research methods.

Across the Curriculum Content areas, eight new and emerging theories were presented in the literature. Among these, four were sorted into the HBSE content

Table 4:	*Articles Summaries for Policy Content*			
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Baylis	Discussed without progression	Lacanian Analytic	Attempts to analyze the development, or lack there of, of social work's identity as a profession. Provides reader with extensive description of complex theory from a historical context. Without showing any evolution of the theory, the author makes an argument for applying it to current debates regarding the nature of the social work profession. No empirical evidence is provided either in support of the theory or its application to social work's identity crisis.	No
Burford & Adams	Progressed	Responsive Regulation	In-depth description of theory that gives both historical context and development of the theory. Provides a way to understand the dual roles (social control and empowerment) of most practitioners. Suggests a framework to negotiate these roles in practice.	No
Coffey	Progressed	Ecosystem	Studies the impact of systems of care model on families and their therapeutic outcomes. Has comprehensive historical discussion of ecosystemic theory. Links resiliency theory to the model. Provides evidence that the belief that systems of care may have a negative impact on therapy outcomes.	No

Table 4:   *Articles Summaries for Policy Content (cont.)*

Author	Progression	Titles of Theories	Key Points	Tested Empirically
McGuire	Progressed	Trans-theoretical	Provides a thorough and clear historical description of the development, empirical study and evolution of the Transtheoretical model and welfare to work. Examines the change process that was initiated when welfare to work became the major method of moving people off of welfare toward self-sufficiency.	Yes
Mulroy & Tamburo	Discussed without progression	Political Economy	Looks at the changing climate of nonprofit organizations and welfare-to-work. Provides little discussion on historical evolution of political economy theory. Cites several studies that examine welfare reform programs and policies the political economy frame-work is used to analyze the impact of welfare-to-work on nonprofit organizations and their delivery of services.	No
Pennell	Discussed without progression	Responsive Regulation	Provides detailed description of the components and processes of Family Group Conferencing (FGC).	Yes

area, two were in the practice content area, and one each was classified in the policy and diversity content areas. This could suggest that social work scholars continue to develop new ways to understand human behavior but are not developing new theoretical frameworks to address issues of social justice, research methods, values and ethics, or field education.

Of the theories discussed in these articles, Psychoanalytic Theory and Feminist Theory appeared across the widest spectrum. Psychoanalytic Theory was found in articles sorted into the Curriculum Content areas of diversity, practice, HBSE and values, and ethics, while articles related to Feminist Theory were found in the categories of populations-at-risk/social and economic justice, research, values and ethics, and HBSE. Other theories that were examined multiple times include Attachment Theory in practice (three separate articles), and HBSE and research;

Table 5:		*Articles Summaries for Populations-at-Risk/Social and Economic Justice Content*		
Author	**Progression**	**Titles of Theories**	**Key Points**	**Tested Empirically**
Abbott, Sharma, & Verma	Discussed without progression	Family Stress	Authors use family stress theory to interpret the emotional climate within Indian families living in poverty. The authors operationalize the main constructs of family stress theory for the purposes of this study, but results fail to offer firm support of the theory. One possibly beneficial conclusion is the suggestion that poverty alone does not predict satisfaction with family or life in general.	Yes
Anguiano	Discussed without progression	Social Capitol Ecological	Studies minority students at-risk of dropping out of school using theories. Offer no explanations of previous studies that may have verified either theory. Primary components of each theory is explained. Little attention given to the historical context. They suggest that the types of parental involvement important for students' high school completion may vary by ethnicity.	Yes

Ecosystems or Ecosystemic Family Theory in policy, and populations-at-risk/social and economic justice; and Transtheoretical Change Theory in HBSE and policy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSION

As noted earlier in this paper, we categorized social work articles that discussed theory as either progressing the theory, proposing a new or emerging theory, or simply discussing or critiquing a theory without progression. For the purposes of this article, theory progression was defined as an empirical test (quantitative or qualitative) of the tenets of a theory or as a discussion of a theory that proposes innovative applications or examples. Most of this work continues to occur in studies focused on the CSWE Foundation Curricular Content areas of HBSE and practice. Given the current political climate and pending federal and state budget cuts for programming, social work would be well served to focus immediate

and future research efforts on issues of diversity or populations-at-risk/social, and economic justice. It will be necessary to develop new and empowering approaches to working with individuals and families who have been marginalized by restrictive social policies. Furthermore, social workers must continue to research the effects of social problems and to evolve theoretical explanations for human behavior in order to develop positive interventions and to assist people of all ethnic backgrounds and people representing diverse sexual orientations and evolving concepts of gender. Social work researchers must also do a better job of reviewing pertinent theories of research and developing theories of research methodology than they did in 2004.

Also sorely lacking is theory discussion or progression in the EPAS content areas of field education or policy. Field clearly is a bedrock content area in social work education, and yet, there is minimal evidence to suggest that any scholars researched its theoretical components in 2004. Similarly, policy remains an important content area, yet only seven articles were written in 2004 that included a significant volume of theory discussion and only three of those articles demonstrated theory progression. Social workers must do better at researching, refining, and developing a unique theoretical foundation for practice with diverse populations or we will face significant challenges in justifying our existence to political and scientific communities.

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A Lesson on Social Role Theory:
An Example of Human Behavior in the Social Environment Theory

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Abstract: *This paper discusses the social role theory, a theory of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE). Relevance of this topic is briefly discussed, as well as a definition of the theory and its historical background. Empirical research that employs this theory will be discussed. Recommendations will be made for future theory development and implications for social work education will conclude the discussion.*

Keywords: Social role theory, gender roles, gender stereotypes

Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HSBE) is part of the foundation curriculum for Social Work Education, according to The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (2004). According to the Accreditation and Policy Standards, "Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focuses on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. It includes theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development across the life span: the range of social systems in which people live, and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being" (p. 9).

Social Role Theory appears to fit nicely with the description of HBSE, in that it is a theory that focuses on interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems as developed by social systems in which people live. At times, these social systems sometimes promote or deter certain people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. This paper will attempt to demonstrate how Social Role Theory is appropriate to study in HBSE courses.

Historically, Social Role Theory developed during the 1980s as a gender-related theory. Earlier studies in the 1970s that covered differences between the sexes had been strongly criticized and progress on the topic was slow. Since the 1980s, Eagly has devoted considerable time to this topic and has published a book in 1987 on the theory: *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: a Social Role Interpretation*. Although earlier research had been conducted on

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sex differences, most had focused on areas, including biological differences and early childhood socialization. Eagly thought that "Explanations based on the social roles that regulate behavior in adult life" (p. 4) had not been explored and proceeded to show how a theory of sex-typed behavior could explain differences in men and women.

At this point, some definitions, as defined by Eagly, are needed in order to better understand her theory and reasoning. The term *sex* is defined, based on biology, as grouping of humans into two categories: male and female. *Gender* is described as meanings that people and society in general assign to female and male categories. Eagly used *gender roles* as a term for the social roles that a society designates to men and women. *Gender stereotypes* are stereotypes that people believe about men and women. *Sex differences*, as defined by some psychologists, make up biological differences, and *gender differences* embody environmental differences. However, Eagly used the term *sex differences* to denote the differences between males and females on several measures, not just biology. Her intent was mostly social psychological, but, at the same time, did not want to exclude biology entirely, since there is no clear consensus on the causes of differences between the sexes.

Eagly set out to determine whether biology or society determined our behaviors; the same old question: nature or nurture. Her thesis was that, "The contemporaneous influences arising from adult social roles are more directly relevant to sex differences in adult social behavior than is prior socialization or biology" (1987, p. 9). What she found was that there was not necessarily an either/or answer but determined that sex roles or social roles are indeed influenced by the society in which we live.

Social Role Theory uses a structural approach to sex differences, rather than a cultural approach, in that structural pressures (family, organizations, and communities) have caused men and women to behave in different ways. The perception is that people have a social role based solely on their gender. These stereotypic gender roles are formed by social norms that apply to people of a certain category or social position. Social norms, according to social psychologists, are shared expectations about appropriate qualities or behaviors (Eagly, 1987, p. 13). According to Eagly, "Social Role Theory of sex differences promotes a view of social life as fundamentally gendered, given current social arrangements" (p. 31). In other words, society has shared expectations about women, and these expectations form female gender roles, and shared expectations about men form male gender roles. Surprisingly, people tend to do what is expected of them or act the way that these roles imply and, as a result, men and women learn different skills, thus perpetuating sex differences.

Gender roles are more general and encompass a greater scope of definition of male and female roles. In contrast, social roles are more specific to roles in family and work life. Eagly believed that social roles guide our behaviors more than the gender we inhabit.

Earlier research has shown that most beliefs about the differences between men and women can be divided into two dimensions: communal and agen-

tic. The definitions of these dimensions, preferred by Eagly, were actually originated by Bakan (1966). Agentic qualities are manifested by self-assertion, self-expansion, and the urge to master. Agentic qualities are attributed to males more than females. Communal qualities are manifested by selflessness, concern for others, and a desire to be at one with others. In contrast, these qualities are attributed to females more than males. Eagly used these dimensions to differentiate between males and females in work and family life.

Eagly proposed that division of labor was the culprit that designated the differences between males and females. Division of labor induces gender role expectations and sex-typed skills and beliefs, therefore, producing sex differences in social behavior. For example, young people learn and emulate the roles they see played out by the adults in their lives. They deduce that males are more agentic and females are more communal and, in order to be successful, each conforms to the appropriate roles. Social roles are dictated by division of labor, and gender roles tend to reinforce the status quo. Eagly and Steffen (1984) tested the correlation between gender stereotype and division of labor and found that occupational role was a strong determinant of judgments of communal and agentic qualities. Results indicated that, when people did not know the job status (employee or homemaker), women were perceived as more communal and men as more agentic. However, when job status was known, employed men and women were perceived as more agentic and homemakers, both male and female, were perceived as communal. So, those who are in domestic roles were rated as more communal and less agentic than those in the employee role. With more and more women in the labor market since the 1970s and the feminist movement, it is surprising that studies continue to show that there is a tendency to view women with communal qualities and males with agentic qualities (Eagly & Steffen, 1984).

Conway, Pizzamiglio, and Mount (1996) conducted research to test Eagly and Steffen's study, comparing job status with agency and communality. They found that low status individuals were rated as more communal than agentic and high status individuals were rated as more agentic than communal, regardless of sex or occupation. These findings imply that communal, which is normally associated with females, is associated with low status positions, so that females are associated with low status jobs. The same implication represents males having agentic qualities, therefore, having high status positions.

To test her theory further, Eagly and her colleagues conducted research on aggression and helping behavior using Social Role Theory. Eagly and Steffen (1986) conducted extensive research on aggression by using meta-analysis and found that men are more aggressive than women and that the difference is greater for physical than psychological aggression. Results also indicated that men and women think differently about aggression, and this difference could be an important mediator in studying aggression.

Eagly and Crowley (1986) conducted a meta analysis to determine whether there were sex differences in helping behavior. Ways of defining "helping behavior" for women, according to Social Role Theory, was, for example, caring for the personal and emotional needs of others and helping others to

attain their goals. Ways of defining this behavior for men, according to Social Role Theory, might be heroic behavior, altruistic acts that may save others but put their own safety at risk. However, most research conducted on helping has been geared toward the male definition of helping and, as a result, the analysis did determine that men are more helpful than women. Eagly suggested more research using other definitions of helping to produce more valid outcomes.

More currently, Eagly and Johannesen-Schimidt (2001) presented new data concerning transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles using meta-analysis and the framework of Social Role Theory. Transformational style includes motivating workers to feel respect and pride, because of their association with the leader. Transactional style includes strategies of rewards and self-interests, while laissez-faire style uses a passive form of management until there is a problem. Results indicated that leadership style findings from experimental settings tend to be gender-stereotypic. Female leaders exceeded male leaders on the female-stereotypic transformational dimensions of motivating their workers to feel respect and pride because of their association with them, showing optimism and excitement about future goals, and tending to mentor and attend to individual needs. Females also exceeded males in the transactional dimension of contingent rewards. However, male leaders exceeded females on active and passive management-by-exception and laissez-faire styles, which means that males tend to pay attention to workers' problems and mistakes, wait until problems become severe before attempting to solve them, and become absent and uninvolved at critical times. The authors indicated that the greater effectiveness of females reflected the negative relationships of the passive management-by-exception and laissez-faire styles to the positive relationships of transformational and contingent reward styles.

Eagly, Karua, and Makhijani (1995) conducted an extensive meta-analysis on gender and the effectiveness of leaders. They found that, generally, male and female leaders were equally effective, which can be interpreted as a good thing. However, there was evidence that showed that male leaders were rated as more effective than females when the leadership role was defined in masculine terms, such as ability to direct and control people, and women were more effective when the roles were defined in less masculine roles, such as ability to get along with other people.

Eagly's research on Social Role Theory implies that conformity to gender-role expectations is a major source of the sexes' differing behavior (1987, p. 126). Eagly's intent was to introduce another facet to the mystery surrounding sex differences, to narrow the idea to a simple idea so that it would be possible to produce a "Coherent conceptual representation" (p. 4) of a theory about sex differences. Eagly intended, not so much to solve the mystery, but to open up another avenue for study on this topic. She hoped that the theory would induce others to test the theory; upholding her beliefs or dispelling them, she did not care. Her goal was to increase the knowledge of sex-typed behavior, using this theory and other interrelated theories.

An outcome of the social role theory is that social roles appear to be dynamic, which is encouraging for men and women alike. Diekman, Goodfriend, and Goodwin (2004), using Social Role Theory, tested whether gender stereotypes are dynamic in that, as women progress in the work world, certain stereotypes disappear or change. This study examined whether this dynamic aspect of gender stereotypes extends to beliefs about power, or whether the gender power hierarchy is perceived as being relatively immutable. The first study examined participants' beliefs about the power of men and women in the future. The majority of participants (98%) predicted that women would gain power by the year 2050. About half predicted that men's power would stabilize, and 45% predicted a decrease in power for men. The second study examined the relative gains or losses in power and explored the relationships among perceived power, perceived social roles of men and women, and gender stereotypes. The second study found that male power would decrease only relationally and would maintain power in other areas, such as economic, political, and occupational. The authors also perceived that women would gain in individual and relational power more than economic, political, and occupational power. It appears that stereotypes can be dynamic.

Others have conducted considerable research using Social Role Theory as a theoretical framework. For instance, Forsyth, Heiney, and Wright (1997) predicted that conservative subordinates would be less satisfied with a woman leader, regardless of her leadership style, compared to liberal subordinates. Results support Eagly's analysis that, those who possessed more traditional stereotypes about women, judged women more harshly than individuals whose attitudes about women were less stereotypical. Social Role Theory proposes that women in leadership roles face a dilemma in that, when they are effective leaders, they are judged more harshly and are usually evaluated more negatively than men in the same roles.

Another work-related study by Fuegen, Biernat, Haines, and Deaux (2004) used Social Role Theory to predict that the parenting role, rather than gender, would determine how parents are judged. They set out to determine the influence of gender and parental status on employment decisions. Participants evaluated applicants for a job, some being female, male, married, or single. They found that parents were judged less agentic and less committed to employment than non-parents, and those who were male parents were given more slack than female parents and childless males.

Franke, Crown, and Spake (1997) used meta-analysis to investigate the role gender plays in the perceptions of ethical decision-making and used Social Role Theory to rationalize gender differences. The authors predicted significant gender differences in the perceptions of what constituted ethical business practices, but these differences would decline with work experience. They found that differences were smaller in samples of individuals with more work experience. However, on average, women show higher ethical standards than men.

Harrison and Lynch (2005) used the theory to test several hypotheses concerning gender role and athletics. The first hypothesis predicted that an ath-

lete's gender would not singularly influence perceptions of agency and communality. The findings indicated that there were no significant differences in perceived agency and communality of both females and males. The second hypothesis predicted that the type of sport would singularly influence the perceptions of agency and communality because of the influence of athletic roles. Findings indicated that, for the communality index, there was a significant effect on the type of sport. An example being that cheerleaders were higher in communality than football players. The third hypothesis predicted that perceptions of agency and communality would be mutually influenced by an athlete's gender and the type of sport. Findings indicated that males and cheerleaders were high in communality, but the type of sport of females did not influence perceived communality. The fourth hypothesis predicted that there would be higher rates of approval for those who played gendered traditional sports. Findings indicated higher rates of approval for females who played in male-dominated sports. However, approval rates for males were the same for masculine and feminine type sports. The research consistently supported social role theory, that an athlete's gender did not significantly affect global perceptions of gender role orientation.

In their study, Vogel, Wester, Heesacke, and Madon (2003) proposed that emotional vulnerability causes people who are involved in close relationships to adhere to gender roles. Previous research had been conducted using participants who were not acquainted. The initial results of this study were consistent with the hypothesis. Women's behaviors stayed consistent, whereas, men exhibited fewer emotionally restrictive behaviors and more withdrawal behaviors when they talked about emotionally difficult topics, which would be consistent with Social Role Theory.

As demonstrated above, Social Role Theory has been used in theoretical frameworks for studies about sex differences addressing various issues, such as aggression, helping behaviors, the dynamics of stereotypes, leadership styles, attitudes and effectiveness, parenting, ethical decision-making, athletics, and emotional vulnerability. Most of the research upholds the theory's premise that, in certain social situations, males and females act according to the social norms that originate from a division of labor at work and in the home.

However, with any theory, there is always criticism. Archer (1996) examined Social Role Theory and evolutionary theory as explanations for sex differences. Evolutionary theory attributes most sex differences to the consequences of sexual selection and the conflict that arises with the different reproductive strategies of the sexes. Remember that Social Role Theory attributes the division of labor to sex differences. Archer concluded that, since evolutionary theory could explain other mammals' sex differences, that it was a better explanation. Eagly (1997) gave a rebuttal to Archer's criticism of Social Role Theory, stating that she never intended for the theory to be an ultimate answer to the puzzle of sex differences. Instead, she defended her theory as one of many interrelated theories that, "Social scientists have provided [as] an array of interrelated theories, each of which illuminates certain aspects of the

complex of psychological and social processes by which gendered behavior is produced" (p. 1382). Eagly intended for her theory to be used in conjunction with other theories to better understand the intricacies of males and females.

Several limitations exist concerning Social Role Theory. One limitation suggested by Eagly was that none of the research that she analyzed about sex differences was done in natural settings, and outcomes might have been different. Eagly suggested that further research be conducted in more natural settings so that males and females have the advantage of being in their natural roles. How people react to real life situations can be very different from controlled situations or when they are completing surveys.

Another limitation to Eagly's early research was the way in which she conducted the research, which was by using meta-analysis. There is always the effect-size dilemma of what size is considered to be effective. Although Eagly was able to review numerous studies on the various topics, there was usually considerable disparity between the outcomes, causing effect size to be less significant. However, more recent research has entailed other forms of statistical analysis.

A third limitation with the theory itself may be that it may not be as relevant to today's culture. Monk-Turner et al. (2002) conducted a study on altruistic behavior and found no differences between men and women. They suggested that, possibly Social Role Theory is not as relevant as it was in the 1980s, when Eagly formulated the theory in that gender roles are not as pronounced or defined as 20 years ago. This suggestion is strengthened by the study conducted by Diekman, Goodfriend, and Goodwin (2004) on the dynamics of gender stereotypes, which was discussed earlier.

The next steps for theory progression involve continuing to use it as a theory of sex differences, along with other interrelated theories, to help explain why and what the differences are. As we better learn the differences, then it is possible that conditions and expectations of certain roles will be defined in agentic and communal ways, not exclusively, but inclusively. This knowledge can add to equalizing opportunities for men and women, alike. An important tactic to strengthen Social Role Theory would be to find better measurements of constructs, such as aggression, helping behavior, and others that are difficult to measure accurately for both males and females. The research would be more salient if instruments measured what they were intended to measure.

Implications for social work education are positive, in that as we learn more about the differences between men and women, we will inadvertently discover more similarities than differences. In working with our clients, just being aware of expected social roles within their environment may help us to work more effectively with them. Being cognizant that stereotypes and social roles are powerful tools that most people tend to conform to, whether they realize it or not, is pertinent to all aspects of our lives—our families, our work, and our community.

The most powerful tool of this theory is to help us know there should be a continuum of role styles. Until we get away from agentic equaling masculine

and communal equaling female and lean more towards a continuum of agency to communality, stereotypes will not lessen or diminish. As seen in the research by Conway, Pizzamiglio, and Mount (1996), communal qualities are perceived to be characteristic of low status jobs. In other words, there cannot be a continuum if one dimension is perceived as better than another. It is important for social work educators to continue to stress the importance of using communal and agentic qualities in social work. Educators should help students find their own style so they can use it as a strength to better serve clients and manage agencies.

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Ecological Theory Origin from Natural to Social Science or Vice Versa? A Brief Conceptual History for Social Work

Karen Smith Rotabi

Abstract: *The origin of holistic social work and ecological theory was investigated. Emphasis was placed on Howard W. Odum, founding dean of the University of North Carolina School of Public Welfare, and subsequent scholarship by his sons, collaborators on the first American ecology text. Eugene and Howard Thomas Odum, internationally recognized ecological scholars, identified* holism *as a universal concept originating in social sciences, crediting their father's earlier sociological work, which later bridged to ecosystems ecology. A historical review of the influential sociologists, social workers, and ecologists is presented to build the case for ecological theory transfer across the three disciplines, beginning with sociology. Critique of the current use of the ecological perspective is discussed, specifically social work's tendency to target social systems and behavior while largely ignoring the natural environment.*

Keywords: Ecology, ecosystem, regionalism, science, history, Odum

INTRODUCTION

Social work theory is integrative by nature, pulling from a variety of disciplines (Payne, 1997; Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998). We typically think of sociology and psychology as two primary theory sources. However, other disciplines have also had an important influence on social work theory, especially natural science ecology. Because natural science ecology theory predates the formal use of the term *ecology* in social work (Germain, 1973; Golley, 1993; Tansley, 1935; Odum, 1953), a one-way transfer of theory from natural science to social work may be assumed. However, a longer-term historical view indicates otherwise—with social sciences directly influencing the development of natural science ecology in North America.

The foundation for the assertion that social sciences have informed theory development in natural science ecology is anchored in the work of two generations of theorists from the Odum family (Craige, 2001; Hagen, 1992; Kirby, 1991; Rotabi, 2004). The story begins with Howard W. Odum (1884-1954), a sociologist

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and founding dean of the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Public Welfare (Brazil, 1988). In addition to his innovations in social work education and important and progressive work in social reform in the South (Brazil, 1988; Odum, 1923a,b,c,d, 1926, 1932, 1934, 1936, 1939, 1945, 1947a, 1947b, 1997), H.W. Odum founded the science of regionalism (Brazil, 1988; Kirby, 1991; Odum, 1977; Odum, 1936, Odum & Moore, 1938) which is the forerunner of the current discipline of landscape ecology (Odum, 2004).

The next generation of scholars in the Odum family, his sons Eugene P. Odum (1913-2002) and Howard T. Odum (1924-2002), continued their father's theory building in natural systems ecology (Rotabi, 2004). Just as their father before them, both E.P. and H.T. Odum have written broadly on the subject of ecology, consistently bringing the reader back to questions about human problems and solutions (Craige, 2001; Odum, 1977, 1983, 1993, 1997, 2004; Odum, 1971, 1983, 1994; Odum, 2001). Between the two generations of scholars, approximately 75 books have been published and countless manuscripts. H.W. Odum's social sciences theory development was then transferred to his sons, who consistently referred to their father's work, especially regionalism, as an important influence to their own contributions in natural science ecology (Craige, 2001; Hagen, 1995; Kirby, 1991; Odum, 1977, 2004; Odum, 1971).

The family's contribution to ecological theory development has been extraordinary, and this foundation has had a significant impact on science and a number of disciplines, including social work. With the emergence of ecology as a unique science in North America, social work theorists, including Carel Germain, Alex Gitterman, and others, have built a substantial body of theory that is typically called the "ecological perspective" or "person-in-environment" (Germain, 1973, 1979a, 1979b; Germain & Gitterman, 1980, 1995, 1996; Grief & Lynch, 1983; Karls & Wandrei, 1994; Meyer, 1983; Siporin, 1980). Today, ecology is a fundamental conceptual framework for Human Behavior in the Social Environment curriculum in social work education (Anderson & Carter, 1974, 1984, 1990; Germain, 1991; Hutchinson, 1999). However, in social work, the origin of ecology is largely misunderstood, and its application has been limited to social environment rather than more holistically including natural environments. This limitation ultimately ignores the importance of natural science ecology (Rotabi, 2004).

This paper presents a brief history of ecological theory in sociology, ecology, and social work. It is part of a larger body of work that analyzes the legacy of the Odum family in the history of science (Rotabi, 2004). Focus will be the relevant work of both Odum generations and other scholars, which under gird the social work ecological perspective. More recent social work theory development will be presented. Finally, the strengths and weakness of the current use of ecology in social work will be discussed.

Sociology: Howard W. Odum

Just like Jane Addams (Deegan, 1988), the elder Odum considered himself a sociologist. As such, he took a holistic view of social systems, indicating that "society and nature are inseparable" (Odum, 1947b, p. 83). This perspective is found throughout his work, beginning in his earliest documentation of folk music in the

South (Odum, 1909), which is recognized to be the earliest publication of African American Blues music (Sanders, 2003). Documenting Blues music and folklore and its emergence from both natural and social environments was the beginning of Odum's research career, and this work remained a passion throughout his life (Sanders, 2003).

H.W. Odum started with folk documentation and expanded into questions about race and race relations. Some of this earliest work is considered, by today's standards, to be racist (Sanders, 2003). However, at the time, Odum was carrying out far more progressive research than his contemporaries. He actually entered African American communities and carried out ethnographic research in the South (Brazil, 1988), setting one of the first studies of its kind into motion. Odum described his reasons for selecting this topic of research as follows:

> The studies themselves grew out of the observation that there had been practically no scientific studies of the Negro in the South; that the South itself was amazingly ignorant about the Negro; that practically no one was interested in the subject; and that nevertheless this was the distinctive field of inquiry where knowledge must be had before progress in other respects could be made (1951, p. 154).

This passage not only indicates Odum's interest in the culture and anthropology of African Americans, but it also illustrates his ability to see research as providing guidance for social and policy change.

Odum made some mistakes, and most glaringly, he initially promoted the idea that African Americans were inferior (Brazil, 1988; Sanders, 2003). However, during this early research, he began to question the implication of social environments on human behavior and educational outcomes. In the course of this research, Odum came to some realizations about social environment issues for which he began suggesting change strategies (Brazil, 1988). For example, he noted that textbooks for African American children had illustrations of only Caucasian children who were spared the hardship of childhood labor and possessed such luxuries as toys and pets (Brazil, 1988; Odum, 1910; Sosna, 1977). Odum suggested that African American schoolchildren be given culturally appropriate texts that more adequately represent their reality to encourage learning. While diversity in educational materials is more commonplace today, it was a radical idea at the time. This early prescriptive work marks the beginning of Odum's examination of the impact of social environments on human development and made recommendations for progressive social change. This emphasis on environment—the context for behavior—became an increasingly central characteristic in his subsequent writing (Brazil, 1988; Sosna, 1977). Odum became increasingly tolerant (Sanders, 2003) and was considered to be an important and leading liberal scholar in the South (Sosna, 1977), often taking great personal risks by attacking the Klu Klux Klan, documenting lynchings, and other social dynamics (Odum, 1923, 1931, 1997).

One must judge a man by his behavior to fully understand his value system. In the case of H.W. Odum, he was deeply committed to social reform. His progressive viewpoints were rooted in his graduate training, which took him to the Northeast. Odum earned a Ph.D. in psychology (1909) at Clark University and a Ph.D. in soci-

ology (1910) at Columbia University. Odum had an opportunity to view the beginning of social work education at Columbia (Feldman & Kamerman, 2001), and he returned to the South intent on developing a social welfare education program. By 1920, Odum founded the UNC School of Public Welfare, with a vision for a broad curriculum grounded in multiple sciences, including geography, sanitation, and biology (H.W. Odum, 1920). Odum headed the school for over a decade, wrote extensively on the subject of social welfare (Odum 1923c,d, 1926, Odum & Willard, 1925), and developed important social work training programs (Brazil, 1988). Odum's commitment to the profession was such that, when founding *The Journal of Social Forces* in 1922, he established a permanent public welfare section reporting the proceedings of charities and corrections conferences, educational opportunities, practice standards, and research (Odum, 1922).

H.W. Odum's integration of natural and social sciences was most obvious in his later work, beginning with *Southern Regions of the United States* (1938). Historian Morton Sosna discusses this text and Odum's founding the discipline of regionalism, noting that the regionalist's belief that "resource planning could advance the nation's welfare provided the differences between the six regions were taken into account. In [the regionalists'] view, the whole would, and should, be greater than the sum of its parts" (Sosna, 1977, p. 56). H.W. Odum laid out a holistic template for national planning and "development through a fine equilibrium of geographic, cultural, and historical factors" (Odum & Moore, 1938, p. 39).

From 1920 until the time of his death in 1954, Odum was identified as one of the most progressive Southern scholars, and his publications have led to national recognition for his social reform work in the South (Brazil, 1988; McDonough, 1993; Milligan, 1994; Sosna, 1977). An obituary in *The New York Times* summarized his contributions as follows: "Odum had laid the groundwork for understanding the facts, customs and history of Southern people. No man in our time then had done more than Odum to help the understanding of the South in the South, and of the South in the nation, too" ("Howard W. Odum, sociologist, dies," 1954).

Odum's approach to social problems was based on a holistic theoretical perspective focusing on and integrating both natural and social environments (Odum, 1934, 1936, 1939, 1945, 1947a,b; Odum & Moore, 1938). His research focused on both of these systems, emphasizing natural and human resource management from a social policy perspective. His work is one of the earliest examples of the explicit application of ecological theory to social problems. Like his theoretical perspective, Odum's vision for social work education was also holistic, integrating natural and social sciences (Odum, 1920)

Natural Science Ecology: E.P. & H.T. Odum

Both of Odum's sons were ecosystem ecologists and carried on their father's holistic legacy by asking large-scale systems questions. Their approach ultimately influenced other academic fields, including social work (Craige, 2001; Hagen, 1992; Kirby, 1991; Odum, 1953, 1977; Smith, 2001). His elder son, E.P. Odum, has been called the father of modern ecology (Craige, 2001) largely because of his book *Fundamentals of Ecology* (1953), which deals with ecosystem as the central unit of

study (Craige, 2001; Golley, 1993). This text was the first in America to summarize ecosystem ecology by focusing on holism, and it was the only such text for 10 years (Craige, 2001). Today, it is in its fifth edition and has been translated into more than a dozen languages (Craige, 2001; Hagen, 1992). The younger son, H.T. Odum, collaborated with his brother on *Fundamentals of Ecology*. He also wrote numerous texts of his own, including *Environment, Power, and Society*, which he dedicated to his father (Odum, 1971). H.T. Odum discusses the interrelationship of the three systems found in the book title.

> The small ecological systems, the large panoramas that include civilized man, and the whole biosphere of the planet earth—all receive only certain amounts of energy. Hence, we approach man and nature by studying limited energy of environmental systems (p. 1).

H.T. Odum goes on to apply the concept of *energy flow* to society, pointing out man's dependence on and attempts to control natural systems and resources, such as fossil fuels. These sources of energy are then "put back into [man's] environmental system so that his yield of food and critical materials is greater" (Odum, 1971, p. 6). He explores other systems with which man interacts and controls the flow of energy, including religion, politics, and economics.

H.T. Odum later published *Systems Ecology: An Introduction* (1983), in which he makes a clear link between general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) and ecology, linking systems theory back to social science. Sometimes called the "Odum bible" by his students, *Systems Ecology* was hailed as "a tour de force of systems thinking focusing on bringing the concepts of systems into general education" (Brown, 2003, p. 1). In a revised edition of this text, entitled *Ecological and General Systems* (1994), H.T. Odum acknowledges both his father and older brother E.P. Odum among the scholars who were influential in his development of systems theory. More recently, he co-authored with his wife, Elizabeth Odum, *A Prosperous Way Down* (2001), which is a text that focuses on our current state of resource over-consumption, especially of fossil fuels. His overall work focuses more specifically on energy, and he is recognized as a leader in modeling energy flows across systems including human systems (Hall, 1995).

The scientific achievements of the Odum brothers have been recognized internationally. E.P. Odum was a member of the National Academy of Science and received countless accolades from state, national, and international scientific and other organizations (Craige, 2001). Both brothers were recognized for their contributions to the science of ecology and their collaborative thinking as they shared the Swedish Crafoord Prize, considered ecology's equivalent of the Nobel Prize (Brown, 2003; Craige, 2001; H.T. Odum, 1983). Today, they are recognized as important scholars who developed holistic concepts central to ecology and related natural sciences. Their work typically leads the reader to consider complex issues by relating how larger systems incorporate and interact with the human condition.

From a formal education perspective, both E.P. Odum and H.T. Odum were first influenced by natural science scholars at UNC, where they both received their bachelor's degrees in zoology, then later in their graduate programs, where they received doctoral degrees on this subject—E.P. Odum at the University of Illinois

and H.T. Odum at Yale University. While at UNC, E.P. and H.T. Odum studied with biologist and family friend Robert Coker. Eugene Odum recalled his tutelage with Coker as being laboratory-based, with his days being spent dissecting frogs and other small animals. This experience impressed upon Eugene the joys of outdoor and naturalistic pursuits, where he could explore the landscape and observe natural phenomena, such as observing birds in their habitats (Craige, 2001). During his graduate work at the University of Illinois, Fredric Clements and Victor Shelford introduced Eugene to the concept of *succession* (Craige, 2001), a major concept of community ecology. Succession is the way in which communities change over time by going through a series of predictable stages (Carpenter, 1962). For example, a bare field will go through a series of stages, from one with grass, to one with herbs and bushes, and frequently into a forest, depending upon the local physical environment. E.P. Odum was so influenced that he informed his father's thinking about the systematic changes in human systems presented in *American Regionalism* (Odum & Moore, 1938). E.P. Odum said that Shelford:

> instilled . . . four concepts [in him] that influenced his thinking thereafter: nature tends towards stability, 'the whole is more than the sum of its individual parts,' ecology is the study of large-scale systems and the interrelationships therein, and real ecology is not reductionistic (Craige, 2001, p. 25).

While completing his doctoral work at Yale University, H.T. Odum studied with G. Evelyn Hutchinson, one of the preeminent animal ecologists of the last century, who focused on population ecology and energy flow in systems (Hutchinson, 1978). The Odum brothers frequently exchanged ideas throughout their lifetime, and H.T. Odum specifically encouraged his older brother to consider new ideas, such as Hutchinson's holistic approach to the study of systems. Hutchinson influenced E.P. and H.T. Odum to focus on higher levels of organization, such as ecosystems, as the central unit of study, and E.P. Odum used this idea as one of the foundations for his ideas in the *Fundamentals of Ecology* (Craige, 2001).

Just as their father before them, the younger Odums were known to push their scholarly contemporaries to think in terms of large-scale systems. The following quotation summarizes E.P. Odum's view of holism as it relates to science:

> It is self-evident that science should not only be reductionist in a sense of seeking to understand phenomena by detailed study of smaller and smaller components, but also synthetic and holistic in the sense of seeking to understand the large components as functional wholes. A human being, for example, is not only a hierarchical system composed of organs, cells, enzyme systems, and genes as subsystems, but it is also a component of supra-individual hierarchical systems such as populations, cultural systems, and ecosystems. Science and technology during the past half century have been so preoccupied with reductionism that the supra-individual systems have suffered benign neglect (1977, p. 1291).

The Odum brothers' concern for both human and natural systems is remarkable among biologists and naturalists of their generation. Scientific training in the

mid-20th century often focused on natural subsystems; those who received this training historically have been reductionists and neglected the discussion of multiple and nested systems, including human systems (Odum, 1977). As a result, much of the recent work in the natural sciences defines problems but fails to bridge to pragmatic recommendations to ensure the future of human civilization. Prescriptions for the future were found in the work of both brothers as well as their father's work before them. Both generations made significant contributions to systems theory in their respective fields.

European Roots of Ecology

The Odums built upon the European tradition of ecology, drawing from the work of early theorists who developed critical concepts and groundbreaking research. Darwin's concepts of *evolution* and *adaptation* of an organism within an environmental context are at the root of early theory development. Ernst Haeckel, who avidly studied Darwin, coined the term *ecology* and was the first to use it in 1866 to "draw attention to the inclusive study of organisms in the environment, in contradistinction to the narrower study of organisms in the laboratory" (Keller & Golley, 2000, p. 9). Haeckel discussed ecological adaptation, using the concepts of *reciprocity* and *mutuality* between organism and environment (Greif & Lynch, 1983). By 1885, the term ecology was used in a book title, and the development of ecological theory rapidly progressed (Keller & Golley, 2000, p. 9). Coursework began to be developed, and the first professional society, the British Ecological Society, was inaugurated in 1913. By 1935, botanist Sir Arthur Tansley challenged the use of ecological language in his article, "The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts and Terms" (Keller & Golley, 2000; Tansley, 1935). "Tansley challenged the term biotic community, because it aggregated animals and plants as members of a community without specifying their interrelationships and implicitly separated them from their physical environment" (Craige, 2001, p. 25). The problem with separating humans from the physical environment, Tansley asserted, is that one must then ask, "Is man a part of nature or not?" (Craige, 2001, p. 6). In his article, Tansley describes ecosystems as follows: "They form one whole category of the multitudinous physical systems of the universe, which range from the universe as a whole down to the atom" (Craige, 2001; Tansley, 1935, p. 290). Beginning from the whole-system perspective and the development of the concept of the *ecosystem*, Eugene and H.T. Odum built an ecological legacy in American scholarship.

Social Work: Carel Germain & Other Theorists

Ecologically grounded practice dates back more than 100 years, with the practice of Jane Addams and Mary Richmond (Deegan, 1988; Richmond, 1917). However, in 1973, Carel Germain was the first social worker to formally apply ecological concepts to social casework, emphasizing the concept of *ecosystem* (Germain, 1973; Germain & Gitterman, 1995; Robbins et al., 1998). She wrote about ecology and its conceptual relationship to social work:

> Ecology is the science concerned with the adaptive fit of organisms and their environments and with the means by which they achieve a dynamic equilibrium and mutuality. It seems to furnish an appro-

priate metaphor for a helping profession concerned with the rela-
tionships between human beings and their interpersonal and orga-
nizational environments, with helping to modify or to enhance the
quality of transactions between people and their environments, and
with seeking to promote environments that support human well-
being (1973, p. 326).

Although Germain discusses ideas central to ecosystem ecology, she fails to cite
previous use of the concept *ecosystem*, which, by that time, was widely recognized
in the natural sciences, as introduced into contemporary American ecology by
the Odum brothers (Craige, 2001; Hagen, 1992). However, Germain cites a range
of contributors from the social sciences, including psychologists and social work-
ers, specifically those professionals working in psychiatric settings.

Germain followed her general work about ecosystems ecology with a discussion
of specific ecological concepts, such as *time* (1976) and *space* (1978), as they relate
to the human condition. From ecological theory, Germain began development of
the life model of practice (Germain & Gitterman, 1995), which, she states, "may
provide us with the necessary action concepts as guides in engaging the progres-
sive forces and adaptive potentialities of the person, mobilizing the environmen-
tal processes as helping media, and altering elements of the environment"
(Germain, 1973, p. 326). Germain points out that the central strength of the eco-
logical perspective is its treatment of the individual and the problem, both in and
as part of the environment, instead of focusing solely on the person or the illness
as the problem. This point targets the age-old professional struggle between com-
munity systems practice and the medical model, which focuses solely on person
and illness, removing him or her from the environmental context (Weick, 1981).
In contrast to massive institutionalization based on assumptions of individual
path-ology, ecological theory, by its very nature, requires study of the person-
environment interrelationship as a central theme for practice activities. In this
initial discussion of the ecological life model, Germain focuses on previous use of
ecological ideas by psychological theorists, including the concepts of *adaptation*
and *milieu*.

Germain builds upon her early ecological work with a more specific conceptu-
al treatment in *Time: An Ecological Variable in Social Work Practice* (1976), in
which she discusses time as it relates to the rhythms of life from the biological,
cultural, and social perspectives. Practice implications included casework plan-
ning surrounding the sense of time for children and elders as it relates to their
respective developmental cycles. She points out that lengthy foster care place-
ment decisions are out of sync with children's developmentally anchored experi-
ences of time. On the other end of the lifespan, she points out that elders often
have a fleeting sense of time, which also requires immediate case management
action, according to this internal clock.

Germain continued to explore ecological concepts in her 1978 article, "Space:
An Ecological Variable in Social Work Practice." She begins her discussion by not-
ing that, "human beings have tended to overlook the physical settings in which
they are embedded as sources of influence in behavior" (p. 515). In her discussion
of human behavior in the physical environment, she states that there are "recip-

rocal relations between the social and physical environments and their interaction with culture, personality, and behavior" (p. 516). The ecological concepts of *population density* and *territoriality* emerge in this discussion. She defines the latter term as:

> an observable social phenomenon among individuals, groups, and families. People have feelings of possessiveness toward space and objects. They mark spatial territories with nameplates, signs, doors, locks, and fences. They use gestures, in-group jargon, and threatening verbal behavior to defend their control of space (p. 522).

This idea of territoriality has important implications for social work practice, given the human behavior realities associated with the individual's need for personal space as he or she interacts with others and the physical environment. For example, historical overcrowding of people in inner-city public housing has set a context for multiple social problems, including youth delinquency and gang violence.

Germain's commitment to the emerging social work ecological paradigm in the mid-1970s culminated in the edited collection *Social Work Practice: People and Environments: An Ecological Perspective* (1979b). Chapters include discussion on child welfare, social networks, and hospitalization within the ecological framework. The introductory chapter defines such foundational ecological concepts as *adaptation, environment, stress and coping, competence, relatedness, and autonomy* (Germain, 1979a). This book marks the first comprehensive overview of the ecological model as it relates to practice focusing on specific populations and problems.

Throughout her career, Germain continued to build upon the ecological framework, setting forth the groundwork for its emergence as a dominant social work perspective (Payne, 1997). Her collaborative work with Gitterman resulted in numerous publications, including the 1980 book *The Life Model of Social Work Practice* (Germain & Gitterman, 1980), which was revised and presented in a new edition in 1996 after Germain's death (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). In this second edition, a long overdue reference to Eugene Odum's work was made in the discussion of the concepts *habitat* and *niche*, metaphorically described by Odum as an organism's "address" and "profession," respectively (Germain & Gitterman, 1996, p. 20). These concepts are defined respectively by Gitterman as a "place where the organism is found . . . all the social settings of human individuals or groups" and "the social status occupied in a human community by an individual or a group" (Germain & Gitterman, 1996, p. 23).

Germain developed social work ecological theory, while other social work theorists made equally important contributions to our understanding of holism and general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) from a social environment perspective. Ralph Anderson and Irl Carter (1974) published *Human Behavior in the Social Environment* (HBSE), which, for two decades, was one of the most widely adopted texts for social work education on the subject of social systems (Robbins et al., 1998). Their discussion focuses on the concept of *holon*, defining the term as "denoting that a system is both a part of a larger suprasystem and it is itself a

suprasystem to other systems" (Anderson & Carter, 1984, p. 321). Their discussion draws on the natural science concepts of *energy, synergy, entropy*, and *organization* as they are related to systems at all levels. Anderson and Carter begin by discussing *culture* and *society* and move on to *communities, groups*, and *organizations*, and finally summarize the concepts as they relate to families and individuals (Anderson & Carter, 1984). Their discussion, starting at the broadest of scales, is in contrast to other more recent HBSE texts, which focus more on the individual's development within the social environment (Hutchinson, 1999). In this text, Anderson and Carter draw upon the ecological approach, which they state, originated "probably" at the University of Chicago; however, references to specific theorists are absent, except for their 1990 reference to Kurt Lewin's field theory in which he develops the ecological psychology model (Anderson & Carter, 1990). Anderson and Carter state that the ecological approach is "virtually synonymous with a systems approach" (1990, p. 262) but do not directly cite Germain or any other ecological systems theorists, including the Odum family. They do state that the term *ecological systems* is "used by some writers in the broad sense of systems that are hierarchically related. In biology and ecology, the term refers to living organisms in the earth's biosphere that are hierarchically related" (Anderson & Carter, 1984, p. 230). Anderson and Carter's contributions to understanding human behavior in the social environment have endured over time, and their framework is based on *nested systems*, a hallmark concept of ecology.

Germain began to theorize about ecological social work practice 19 years after the death of H.W. Odum (Germain, 1973). In her early work, Germain reviews previous approaches that consider the environment from the psychological perspective, but she does not cite the work of the important, ecologically-focused sociologists before her, including scholars at the Chicago School of Sociology who were historically recognized for social ecology theory (McKenzie, 1925; Odum, 1951). Even though Germain was a scholar of social work history (Germain & Hartman, 1980), she never recognized the senior Odum and only briefly mentions E.P. Odum in 1996 (Germain, 1973, 1976, 1978, 1979a; Germain & Gitterman, 1996). Several factors may have contributed to less attention to Odum's work in the major schools of social work in the Northeast and Midwest: 1) Odum was recognized nationally primarily as a Southern regionalist and as the founding editor of *Social Forces*, 2) major scholarly work in social work research and treatment was being carried out in urban environments in the Northeast and in Chicago, where their major focus was on urban problems and urban approaches to practice and research, 3) because the most prominent schools of social work at the time did not study rural problems and approaches. In contrast to this focus of Northern schools, Odum's work focused on description and measurement of social problems with a broad prescription for policies and administrative practice. Germain also overlooked American natural systems ecologists and their European predecessors, including Haeckel and Tansley, who built substantial scientific theory by this time (Golley, 1993; Greif & Lynch, 1983; Keller & Golley, 2000).

THEORY BRIDGING BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY, ECOLOGY, AND SOCIAL WORK

The fields of sociology, ecology, and social work have benefited from the work of both generations of Odums. The Odums' theoretical contributions connect the
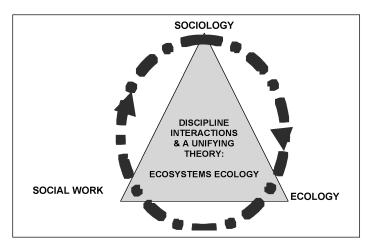
Figure 1. *Theory Bridging Between Sociology, Ecology, and Social Work.*

disciplines through ecosystems' ecology as a unifying and overarching paradigm (Odum, 1997). The inter-relationship of these three disciplines and the unifying paradigm in illustrated in Figure 1.

Ecology is a powerful perspective that bridges the gap, which has traditionally existed between natural and social sciences. Currently, social work incorporates basic human ecology. The Odum contributions offer social work an opportunity to construct interventions more broadly, incorporating a natural resource management strategy.

The theoretical cross-fertilization is best illustrated by the parallel concepts developed by both generations. The senior Odum began to integrate natural science and ecological concepts into his publications in the late 1930s (Odum, 1939; Odum & Moore, 1938). In *American Regionalism* (1938), he devoted an entire chapter, "Exploring the Region: The Ecologists," (p. 323) to an exploration of the fundamental concepts of the natural sciences. In his descriptions of the concepts of *biome* and *succession*, Odum directly quotes his son Eugene:

> The ecologist, according to Eugene P. Odum, characterizes his major divisions as "biotic formations" or "biomes," regions in which there is a uniform "climax," which is the highest type of vegetation possible in the region, and also in which the most important animals are similar. This idea of climaxes is fundamental in modern ecology, and it is believed that they represent climatic influences perhaps more than soil. Another fundamental idea is succession, which represents, of course, the environmental and time quality. Thus, if one lets a field in the southeastern deciduous forest lie fallow, there are, first of all, grasses of various kinds, then pines, and finally if we wait long enough, the oak-hickory deciduous or hardwood forest, which is the climax for that area. The animals will also change with the plants (p. 326).

This passage not only marks a clear intersection of perspective in regionalism and modern ecology, but it also indicates the cross-fertilization of ideas within the Odum family, including feedback from the younger generation, specifically Eugene, to the senior Odum scholar. Today, ecologists and regionalists recognize this relationship as indicated by Kirby's observation that "Howard W. Odum and his Regionalist colleagues at the University of North Carolina are entangled in the roots of our Age of Ecology" (1991, p. 23; Hagen, 1992). Odum's holistic worldview, which was clearly passed onto his sons, is one of the earliest examples of ecological theory developed by a social work scholar. He was a man ahead of his time, laying out major ecological concepts for his regionalism theory development and research.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS OF
ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN SOCIAL WORK

In social work and other social sciences, ecological theory has been applied to nearly every population and significant social problem, from juvenile delinquency (Fraser, 2004), to child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and child abuse (Garbarino, 1977). However, ecological theory has been criticized as being inadequate (Finn & Jacobson, 2003) and too abstract and impractical for the applied practice nature of social work (Wakefield, 1996). As a result, some scholars consider it to be only a perspective that "offers a lens" (Grief & Lynch, 1983, p. 53) from which to view problems and practice rather than an appropriate theory related to intervention (Fraser, 2004). One of the reasons for this diversity of opinion may be because ecology and general systems are typically treated as synonymous; they are not. Ecology is an organic theory, whereas general systems theory is mechanistic, making it more difficult to apply to human social problems.

Ecological theory offers social work a paradigm that recognizes the interconnected nature of our world and the long-term survival of humans and other species and demands that we view ourselves and our environment in a holistic manner. Polluted air, which is the result of automobile and industrial emissions, has contributed significantly to the decrease of ozone and ultimately to the destruction of artic environments. As a result of Global Warming, the ice caps melt and populations living at or below sea level are losing their life-supporting land at alarming rates. The resulting human costs include the destruction of villages, towns, and cities throughout the world, from Charleston, South Carolina to Bangladesh. With growing environmental devastation, social work still needs to become more aggressive about using ecological theory above and beyond social ecology. This adaptation will require modification of theory and concepts to direct greater focus onto human issues in both the natural and social environments, as well as develop an ecological vocabulary and implement interventions grounded in applied ecology. In the face of globalization and rapid social and economic change, social work researchers and practitioners need advanced ecological theory to develop models of practice and research, incorporating sustainable development principles (Gamble & Hoff, 2005).

These interconnected human/environmental phenomena have an impact on social work practice on a daily basis. However, as a profession, social work has failed to partner in the development of policy and practice to prevent environ-

mental devastation and inherent human costs. This failure is most likely related to the fact that social work education has not yet embraced biological sciences, such as agriculture, geography, and environmental engineering. However, solving these human problems relies on an integrated natural and social science approach that would further expand our definition of generalist practice.

Another critique of ecological theory is that some of the major concepts, such as *homeostasis* and *system stability*, may be used to promote ideas of social systems remaining the same or constant rather than changing, which is a serious concern when dealing with issues of power and inequality of women, the poor, and people of color. *Stability* may be used as an excuse for oppressive systems and maintaining the dominant paradigm. Such concerns are well justified, given the history of social Darwinism and the fact that the idea of *survival of the fittest* has been misused as a justification for social stratification. However, when applied correctly, the ecological perspective provides a powerful framework for understanding systems and social issues, such as inequality and diversity. For example, ecological theory can be applied to the Civil Rights movement, which began as early as the 1940s (Odum, 1997) as a current that reached a critical mass by the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the massive socio-political changes that took place in subsequent decades. The momentum of the movement demanded that the oppressive and racist social stratification system had to change in the South, as H.W. Odum himself argued. Change was slow, but change did occur and continues to evolve. Among other human phenomena, ecological theory provides social work with a framework by which to study, track, and forecast social movements and social change.

CONCLUSION

Other disciplines have clearly recognized the connection between the two Odum generations and ecological theory development. However, the relationship between H.W. Odum and his sons has not been recognized in social work. In fact, with the exception of one author's brief reference (Siporin, 1980), the earliest social work discourse failed to even merely cite E.P. Odum (Germain, 1973, 1979a,b), even though he was an important and seminal ecology author.

This oversight is the result of at least three dynamics. First, H.W. Odum is overlooked in social work history, as he is traditionally remembered as a sociologist. Second, overall, our knowledge of natural science ecology is shallow and, thus, the historical roots of the science are overlooked. A third dynamic is that we have traditionally focused on social systems while failing to fully embrace the reality that natural environments, that is, the healthy forests, rivers, and clean water, air, and pollution, not only impact human behavior and welfare but must be intervention targets.

For the long-term welfare of human populations, social workers must more fully embrace ecosystems ecology. This requires enhancing our knowledge and improving our ecological theory. Then, the practice will be better informed, including progress in sustainable development.

[1] In order to avoid confusing the reader, Howard W. Odum from here forth is referred to as H.W. Odum, Eugene P. Odum, is referred to as E.P. Odum, and Howard T. Odum is referred to as H.T. Odum.

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Kinship Ties: Attachment Relationships that Promote Resilience in African American Adult Children of Alcoholics

J. Camille Hall

Abstract: *For many African Americans, the extended family has been the source of strength, resilience, and survival. Although changes in African American families, like changes in all families in the United States that have diluted the importance of kinship ties, many African Americans continue to place a high value on extended family members. Children of Africans and communities of African descent traditionally interact with multiple caregivers, consisting of kin, and fictive kin. Utilizing both attachment theory and risk and resilience literature, this paper discusses ways to better understand the resilient nature of African American families and how multiple attachment relationships assist at-risk African American children, specifically adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs).*

Keywords: African-American, ACOAs, kinship ties

INTRODUCTION

Alcoholism is a complex phenomenon, with many factors affecting its onset, progress, and remission. The effects on individuals in the alcoholic's life are equally as complex, as is the fact of resiliency in many of those people (Hall, 2007; Hawley, 2000). It is estimated that one out of every eight Americans is the child of an alcoholic (NIAAA, 2002a, 2002b). A rather large body of current empirical research clearly indicates that there is great variability in adult children of alcoholics' adjustment and that, not all children of alcoholics develop drinking problems or psychopathology as a result of their alcoholic parentage (Black, 2001). Many studies (Hall, 2007; NIAAA, 2002a; Velleman, 1999) have pointed to a common core of individual dispositions and support systems in the extended family and community, which appear to foster resilience. This paper explores the effects of secure attachment relationships through a known support system within African American families, kinship ties, in promoting resilience among African American adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs). In this paper, factors related to ACOAs' risk and resilience, and the protective functions of the kinship network within African Americans, which are significant in the development of kinship ties, are presented. I will conclude this paper by proposing an agenda for future research and implications for social work practice.

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ALCOHOLISM AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ALCOHOLICS

Alcohol is the world's most commonly used drug. Unlike most addictive substances, alcohol is legally available with minimal governmental regulation, does not require a prescription, is openly and frequently advertised, and is relatively inexpensive. Alcohol-related problems include economic losses resulting from time off of work, owing to alcohol-related illness and injury; disruption of family and social relationships; emotional problems; impact on health; violence and aggression; and legal problems. There is now a burgeoning interest in alcoholism among African Americans (NIAAA, 2002a). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) contends that alcoholism ranks almost certainly as the number one mental health problem, if not the most significant of all health problems in black urban communities (2002b).

Determining the incidence of alcoholism in any community is difficult and largely depends on the definition one uses. The NIAAA (2002a) found that African Americans report significantly higher numbers of drinking consequences and alcohol-dependence symptoms than do whites. According to a report by the NIAAA (2002a), African Americans and whites report similar rates of frequent heavy drinking, but, African Americans are more likely to die of alcohol-related illnesses and injuries, such as cirrhosis of the liver and alcohol-related car crashes. Results from research studies on alcohol consumption among racial/ethnic groups found that African American men with relatively low incomes were significantly more likely than their white counterparts to report high rates of alcohol dependence symptoms; the reverse was true for African American and white men with relatively high incomes (NIAAA, 2002a).

Alcohol studies on African Americans make up a small but growing body of research. A report by the NIAAA summarized research regarding drinking patterns in African Americans as follows: 1) African Americans report higher abstention rates than do whites; 2) African Americans and whites report similar levels of frequent heavy drinking; 3) Rates of heavy drinking have not declined at the same rate among African American men and women as among white men; and 4) Variables, such as age, social class, church attendance, drinking norms, and coping behaviors may be important in understanding differences in drinking and drinking problem rates among African Americans and whites (2002b).

Adult Children of Alcoholics

Data suggest that families with alcoholic members are often confused about the specific ways alcoholism has compromised their lives (Black, 2001; NIAAA, 2002a). The NIAAA (2002b) contend that the clinical literature focusing on the more dramatic events associated with alcoholism gives a misleading picture of its impact on the family. Adult children of dysfunctional families, where alcoholism is present, are typically referred to as adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs). Numerous self-help books and other publications describe ACOAs as maladapted. More than 20 years ago, researchers first noted that children of alcoholics (COAs) appeared to be affected by a variety of problems over the course of their lifespans. Such problems include fetal alcohol syndrome, which is first manifested in infancy; emotional problems and hyperactivity in childhood; emotional problems and conduct

problems in adolescence; and the development of alcoholism in adulthood (Black, 2001; NIAAA, 2002a, 2002b).

Currently, there is a move to classify ACOAs' identifiable and diagnosable characteristics as a separate clinical syndrome in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). COAs tend to encounter many serious problems as they attempt to fulfill the demands of adult life. The clinical literature has suggested that ACOAs may also be at risk for emotional and interpersonal problems (Black, 2001). ACOAs have reported more alcohol-related deaths, more frequent divorces, significantly less communication with their parents, and greater frequency of parental arguments and violence in their families of origin (Black, 2001; NIAAA, 2002a, 2002b). Limited data is available that examines the development of resilience among this population; very few studies have targeted the African American population. Although it is clear that many ACOAs experience difficulties within their families, it is also clear that many factors can contribute to positive adjustment outcomes. Extended family and/or social support networks found in African American family systems are known protective mechanisms for at-risk children. Research regarding the impact of kinship ties on fostering resilience among African American ACOAs is scarce.

Researchers (Black, 2001; Hall, 2007; NIAAA, 2002a, 2002b) suggest that children of alcoholic parents may be at risk for developing a variety of self-esteem, depressive symptoms, coping problems, family dysfunction, and perceived lack of control over events in their environment. Family circumstances define the nature and extent of the trauma, making a detailed examination of family environment important. In addition, COAs' adjustment to the alcoholic member and their attempts to cope with and survive the realities of alcoholism may mediate the effects on COAs. Because it is clear that not all COAs are maladjusted, examination of the variables, such as secure attachment relationships with other family members, may have a role in buffering the stress of parental alcoholism and may provide important insights. Alcoholic family environments have been demonstrated to exhibit a higher level of family conflict and a lower level of cohesion than nonalcoholic families. It is unclear whether those characteristics of the alcoholic family that lead to poor offspring outcome are specific to alcoholic families or are merely characteristic of dysfunctional families in general and may lead to similar negative outcomes in families where alcoholism does not play a role. Consequently, COAs' status has been linked to various negative outcomes, while certain aspects of family environment (i.e., high conflict and low cohesion) have also been linked to negative offspring outcome.

Alcoholic homes are not all alike, but there are threads of commonality. Conflict, inconsistency, and role confusion are daily occurrences. An air of tension is nearly always present. Reality testing is difficult when the child is confronted by an alcoholic parent's cycle between drinking and sobriety and also starts reactive cycles of turmoil (demanding heightened problem-solving and emotional states) and calmness for family members (Black, 2001; Hall, 2007). The ever-presence of alcoholism is such that families' inclination to preserve homeostasis leads them to confront, yet accommodate to the alcoholic (NIAAA, 2002a).

Which parent and how sick s/he is seems to be an important consideration. If the mother is an alcoholic, the household is usually more chaotic and the children suffer more, especially if the father escapes the drinking problem by overworking (Black, 2001). When the mother is an alcoholic, the oldest child may be turned into a surrogate housekeeper and companion, giving rise to the problems that accompany pseudo adulthood (Black, 2001). This is especially true for African American children living in an alcoholic home. In many cases, younger siblings in the home form a secure attachment to the eldest female (Hall, 2007; Werner & Smith, 1992). This child is respected and held in high regard, because of his or her ability to take care of everything and perform well. African American ACOAs in this role earn respect in the community (Hill, 1999). Werner (1999) asserted that the feeling of being responsible is a source of satisfaction for those providing assistance or support to the family. McCubbin and Thompson (1998) pointed out that the African American female, because of culture, will also assume the role of hero in healthy family functioning and is unlikely to seek help for her problems because of the rewards of praise from the family for being responsible.

Children in alcoholic homes live with chronic embarrassment. A lack of trust develops in children who grow up in alcoholic homes (Black, 2001; NIAAA, 2002a). One or both parents seemingly fail to nurture the child; hence the child discovers his or her parents cannot be depended on (Black, 2001; Hall, 2007). The availability of caring and emotionally supportive family, friends, siblings, teachers, and neighbors (multiple attachment relationships) help to mediate stressors for African American ACOAs. Bernard (1999), Hall (2007), Hawley (2000), and Werner (1999) found that, in the presence of stressful life events, the odds of child maltreatment decreased as social support increased. Werner and Smith's 1989 longitudinal study, covering more than 40 years, found that the presence of at least one caring person provides support for healthy development and learning (Werner & Smith, 1992). Participants in Hall's study of African American ACOAs reported their problems decreased when kin and fictive kin provided support.

Risk and Resilience Factors

The literature is replete with references to the strengths and resiliency in African American families (Logan, 2000). African American families have received an abundance of negative press in regard to crime, violence, female-headed households, joblessness, and alcohol and other drug use, while the positive aspects have not received comparable attention. At a time of widespread concern about the demise of the family, the African American family has much to teach us, because social workers need useful conceptual tools as much as techniques to support and strengthen families. McCubbin and Thompson (1998) found that knowledge of successful adaptation under stressful life conditions also strengthens the conceptual base needed to frame both treatment and preventive intervention for high-risk youth, families, and especially ethnic minority families.

Rutter (1994) noted that there are difficulties in presenting a format for research in an area in which there exists neither a substantial body of empirical data nor a formal conceptualization. Resilience implies the presence of two components in the lives and makeup of "at-risk" children: 1) the presence of sustained and intense life stresses, and 2) the maintenance of mastery and competence despite such

stress exposure. Garmezy (1993) posits that three types of protective factors emerge as recurrent themes from several diverse studies: 1) dispositional attributes of the individual that elicit predominantly positive responses from the environment, such as physical, robustness, and vigor; an engaging, "easy" temperament; good problem-solving and communication skills; and an area of competence valued by the person or society; 2) socialization practices within the family that encourage trust, autonomy, initiative, and affectional ties to a stable, caring, competent adult, whether a parent, grandparent, older sibling, or other kin; and 3) external support systems in the neighborhood, school, church, or the community that reinforce self-esteem and self-efficacy and provide the individual with a positive set of values. These "buffers" appear to make a more profound impact on the life course of children and youth who grow up under adverse conditions than do specific risk factors or stressful life events. Hence, these buffers appear to transcend geographical, historical, and social class boundaries and have been replicated in samples of Asian, Black, Caucasian, and Hispanic youth (NIAAA, 2002a). Hawley (2000) contends that specific family circumstances define the nature and extent of trauma; however, others (Bernard, 1999; Black, 2001; NIAAA, 2002a; Werner, 1999) have suggested that parental alcoholism can be conceptualized as a form of chronic stress and trauma.

Risk factors are factors that have a statistically significant association with the occurrence of one or more harmful outcomes (e.g., physical and/or mental illness, substance abuse, poverty, racism). Resilience appears to be governed by interactions among protective factors within the individual, the family environment, and the larger social context. Werner (1999) documents how a chain of protective factors is forged over time, making it possible for high-risk children to become competent, confident, and caring individuals. For example, when Werner and Smith examined the links among protective factors within the individual and outside sources of support, they noted a certain continuity that appeared in the life courses of the men and women who successfully overcame a variety of childhood adversities (including parental alcoholism) (Werner & Smith, 1992). Their individual dispositions led them to select or construct environments that, in turn, reinforced and sustained their active, outgoing dispositions, and rewarded their competencies. There was, for example, a significant positive link between an "easy" infant temperament and the sources of support available to the individual in early and middle childhood. Werner (1999) posits that individual disposition is critical to being resilient. An understanding of the correlation between the infant and mother attachment behavioral systems is important for the development of resilience. Attachment theory also has relevance to our understanding of the role of the family in African American ACOAs' lives. A broader discussion of kinship ties and social support, in the context of multiple attachment relationships, follows.

KINSHIP TIES: A CULTURALLY UNIQUE PROTECTIVE MECHANISM

Hollingsworth (1999) proposed that the African American community is central in the socialization of African American children. The childrearing strategies of African American families are protective of the child against the antagonistic environment located beyond the community and, in some cases, within the family. McCubbin and Thompson (1998) noted that, without the agency of caregivers

from outside nuclear families, many black children would live significantly brief and less comfortable lives. This interaction gives meaning to the definition of family and the ways in which extended family members assist in socialization of the young. Multiple attachment relationships formed by kin and fictive kin caring for children began during slavery. According to Bowlby, a warm and continuous relationship with a caregiver promotes psychological health and well-being throughout life in a manner that accords with the adaptive requirements of the human species (Thompson, 1999, p. 265).

The Afrocentric paradigm proposes that, in African culture, humanity is viewed as a collective, rather than as individuals, and that this collective view is expressed as shared concern and responsibility for the well being of others (Mbiti, 1969). "My family, "my folks," "my kin," "my people" are terms used by African Americans to identify blood relatives and to denote relationships with special friends or "cared for" individuals who are not related. Thus, family is a group of people who feel they belong to each other, although they may or may not live in the same house, and those relationships are governed by complex rules that guide interactions and ensure that physical necessities and support are available to all. Common cultural patterns that have contributed to the resiliency of African American families include supportive social networks, flexible relationships within the family unit, a strong sense of religiosity, the extensive use of extended family, and a strong identification with their racial group (Billingsley, 1992).

It bears repeating that a discussion of African American family characteristics is exemplified in the extensive use of the entire family in childrearing, including siblings, and the extensive use of intergenerational support-giving (usually a grandmother or aunt to a younger mother). Various scholars have found that many grandmothers, sisters, aunts, or cousins act as "other mothers" by taking on childcare responsibilities for one another's children (Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Hill-Collins, 2000). In 1995, Guy-Sheftall added that the presence of other mothers in black extended families and community role modeling offers powerful support for the task of strengthening black selfhood. Hill-Collins (2000) adds that boundaries between biological mothers and other women who care for their children are fluid. Hence, a child living with an alcoholic parent can receive the nurturance and support needed to become resilient.

Juxtaposed with the role of motherhood, the parameters of fatherhood are broad in the African American community. Uncles, ministers, deacons, elders of the church, and male teachers can all be viewed as father figures. In his discussion of father-child interaction in the African American family, Denby (1996) noted that, given economic and social supports, African American fathers welcome the responsibilities of childrearing; black fathers, like fathers of all ethnic groups, take an equal part in childrearing decisions in the family. In the case of the dubious father who may require an extra incentive to fulfill his rightful responsibilities, elders or male fictive kin fill in the gaps by encouraging and redirecting him towards familial matters of importance. These elders or male fictive kin also serve as role models, caretakers, tutors, and informal counselors for the youth of the community. African American ACOAs form attachment relationships with many family members.

ATTACHMENT THEORY

The importance children having close ties may be understood in the context of attachment theory. The origin of attachment theory lies in the early work of John Bowlby, who posited that individuals are motivated to maintain a dynamic balance between attachment to familiar situations and protective figures who provide security and "antithetical exploratory and information-seeking behaviors" (Bretherton, 1992, p. 28). Bowlby (1988) introduced the idea that individuals may have multiple models of attachment figures. The first and most important test for Bowlby's theory of attachment was conducted by Mary Ainsworth in a series of naturalistic and laboratory studies in which she coined the term "secure base relationship" (Ainsworth, 1967). Bowlby's evolutionary rationale is that infants in all cultures should demonstrate secure base behavior. Data provided by researchers support the idea that the secure base phenomenon is observable in different social and cultural contexts (see Ainsworth, 1985; Bretherton, 1992; Howes, 1999).

In his early writings, Bowlby (1951) proposed that a child develops a hierarchy of attachment relationships: first, to the mother as the primary relationship, and then to others, specifically the father. Later, Ainsworth (1967) wrote that "nearly" all the babies in a Ganda sample, who became attached to their mothers during the period spanned by observations, also became attached to some other familiar figure—father, grandmother, or other adult in the household, or to an older sibling (p. 67). Hence, Ainsworth acknowledged the possibility of other attachment figures. Although these findings show that the recognition of alternative attachment figures has been a part of attachment theory since its development, attachment research has largely been conducted on the child-mother attachment relationship; considerably less is known about attachment to other familiar figures (Ainsworth, 1985). The significance of this theory for African American ACOAs is that it stresses the nature of alternative and multiple attachments found in the African American family system. These attachment relationships have been proven to be significant in the development of resilience (see Hall, 2007; Rice, Cunningham, & Young, 1997).

Multiple and Cross-cultural Patterns of Attachment

Various studies have generally shown that emotional availability and other aspects of emotional communication are predictive of security of attachment (see Ainsworth & Eichberg, 1991). For example, infants whose mothers are depressed are often insecurely attached, though not all infants of depressed parents will develop insecure attachments. It is the quality of caregiving, not the depression *per se*, that is predictive of attachment. Other factors, such as infant temperament, may be indirectly related to attachment, though causal relationships are difficult to demonstrate. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that infant temperamental characteristics interact with caregiving to increase or decrease the probability of developing an insecure attachment. Unfortunately, A/COAs' parents are not always available to nurture or provide them with a secure base for exploration, which is important for future development (Main, 1990). Fortunately, African American ACOAs have the benefit of multiple caregivers, who facilitate the development of secure attachment relationships. The African American family emits an opportunity for support and attachment relationships that serve as protective bar-

riers against the negative dynamics of alcoholism. Attachment in a network of multiple caregivers is of crucial importance, because cross-cultural evidence shows that, in most societies, non-parental caretaking is either the norm or is frequently formed (Marvin et al., 1977). Rothbaum et al. (2000) argue that the focus on individuation and related qualities, such as self-reliance and efficacy, seems to lead many researchers to devalue reliance on others as a way of meeting one's needs. Perhaps further exploration of multiple attachment relationships provided through kinship ties is a beginning step towards acknowledging the value and worth of interdependence found in the African American culture.

DISCUSSION

After years of focusing on pathology, social scientists have begun the task of identifying strengths, resources, and talents of individuals and families. Werner and Smith's 1989 longitudinal study of 49 at-risk children, which covers more than 40 years, found that the presence of at least one caring person provides support for healthy development and learning (see Werner and Smith, 1992). This availability of caring and emotionally supportive family, friends, siblings, teachers, and neighbors may mediate stressors. Bowlby clearly recognized that an infant can, and usually does, become attached to more than one figure. In fact, Bowlby maintains that, at 9 or 10 months of age, most children have multiple attachment figures. The small but growing literature on attachment to an alternative caregiver suggests that this process is similar to that of the infant-mother attachment.

Many, if not most of the infants in the United States today, will have multiple caregivers. Some longitudinal studies, several of which follow individuals over their entire lifespan, have consistently documented that, between half and two-thirds of children growing up in families with mentally ill, alcoholic, abusive, or criminally-involved parents or those in poverty-stricken or war-torn communities, do overcome the odds and turn a life trajectory of risk into one that manifests "resilience" (Bernard, 1999; Rutter, 1994; Weinfield, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1992).

In sum, a key characteristic of resilient children was their history of having received whatever emotional nurturance is available in the family. Rice, Cunningham, and Young (1997) posit that an attachment bond can be considered a resource factor in the initiation of other relational support systems as well as serve as a factor in the evolution of coping skills necessary for managing developmental challenges. Rice and others (1997) further argue that, having an attachment to the mother, was not a significant predictor of social competency or emotional well-being among black and white adolescent students. Research has demonstrated that infant attachment security might provide a buffer, which allows for continued competence in the face of adversity (Weinfield, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2000).

Difficult life experiences take their toll on children, despite possible avenues of resilience. Research has indicated that individuals with secure early histories may show a rebound to better functioning after setbacks. Furthermore, Rice and others (1997) found that, early on, children develop internal working models with multiple attachment figures, which enable them to bounce back and serve as protective

mechanisms when exposed to risky situations. By acknowledging the significance of kinship ties/bonds that serve as alternate attachment figures for at-risk populations, we have identified a resource that enables African American ACOAs and/or groups to prevail against adversity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The literature on ACOAs tends to focus mostly on males, alcoholics, and non-people of color. Studies tend to contain too few people of color to infer useful conceptual tools for understanding African American ACOAs. African American ACOAs, like all other children, are apprentices of their parents and family. They learn to function based on the models they observe. A variety of adults, older children, and friends also influence the self-concept and personality development of any one black child. The development of a positive self-concept for African American ACOAs is predicated based on their ability to overcome economic, environmental, and psychological stressors (parental alcoholism). In spite of these obstacles, African American families have been able to instill positive self-concept into their children. To uncover the role of kinship ties in fostering resilience, emphasis should be placed on the connection between African American functioning and the ACOAs' attachment experiences within the context of the family and community.

The prognosis for children growing up in alcoholic families is bleak. These children are twice as likely to develop an alcohol problem compared to children of abstainers and moderate drinkers. It is therefore important to help them modify their coping techniques to withstand their adverse conditions. Attachment to a caretaker in the first few years of life is apparently crucial to the child's later ability to cope with a chaotic household. Thus, when there is an infant in an alcoholic home, and the primary caretaker is unable to provide consistent care, extended family members who act as surrogates become important resources. Armed with this insight, attachment and risk and resilience theories provide a starting point for understanding some of the types of experiences that may help to inoculate at-risk children against the deleterious effects of stress. We infer from such research that adaptive, stressed children seemed to have enjoyed compensatory positive experiences outside the family and a bond with some supportive surrogate figure/s. We infer too that these children appear to possess cognitive skills that are critical for adaptation under stress—social problem-solving skills marked by greater variability, flexibility, and resiliency.

The ability of African American family members to exercise extendedness and role reversibility when faced with a crisis increases strong kinship ties and provides a balance for the family in the event of prolonged illness of dysfunction among key family members. We may conclude, therefore, that modes of intervention are available for effecting change in less favored children. Surrogate figures are to be sought, models are to be observed, and a more formal explanation invoked to teach those problem-solving skills so as to facilitate in a crisis.

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Complexity Theory, Nonlinear Dynamics, and Change: Augmenting Systems Theory

Ralph Woehle

Abstract: *Social work change processes are addressed in terms of complexity theory and nonlinear dynamics, adding the edge-of-chaos, as well as chaos to the entropy and homeostasis of ecosystems theory. Complexity theory sees the edge-of-chaos as valuable to living systems. A logistic difference equation is utilized to model the non-linear dynamics of the hypothetical contentment of an individual. The modeling suggests that substantial input would be required to move an individual from homeostasis to the beneficial stage at the edge-of-chaos, but that too much input might result in chaos. With good measurement and data observed over time, social work might benefit from complexity theory and nonlinear dynamics, which are already advancing in related disciplines.*

Keywords: Complexity, nonlinear, dynamics, systems, chaos

Social workers want to help clients make changes, but they are also concerned with stabilizing client situations. In various social work-related articles in recent years (DeJong, 1995; Warren, Franklin, & Streeter, 1998; Bolland & Atherton, 1999; Hudson, 2000a, 2000b; Warren & Knox, 2000; Warren, Hawkins, & Sprott, 2003; Halmi, 2003; Hudson, 2004), it has been suggested that complexity theory might add significantly to social work's conceptualization of change, particularly to ecosystems theory. However, since much of the literature pertaining to complexity is of a general conceptual nature, the discussion must be framed in a way that more explicitly addresses social work change processes and describes how social work practice might be informed by complexity approaches to theory and associated nonlinear modeling. I begin that discussion with a review of the development of complexity theory and nonlinear dynamics as they apply to my paper.

COMPLEXITY THEORY AND NONLINEAR DYNAMICS

Complexity is a theory, with accompanying mathematical models, about the behavior of systems. The term complexity itself refers to the degree of elaboration required for a basic explanation. Complexity theory is related to both ecosystems

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and chaos theory, all three of which have been used to conceptualize biological, social, and psychological systems. However, to a greater extent than ecosystems theory, complexity theory attempts to explain why systems demonstrate emergent patterns that are greater than the summed effects of the original parts. In addition, complexity theory developed from computing ability, particularly where that ability allowed analysts to suspend strict logic and assumptions to model behavior realistically.

Complexity and the Physical Sciences

At the beginning of the 20th century, Newton's laws of motion dominated science and described change as predictable. Then, with the theory of relativity and quantum physics, physicists questioned Newton's laws and argued that they were insufficient to describe motion at extreme speeds or for very small particles (Marion, 1999). More recently, Prigogine (1997) has suggested an end of certainty in physics and chemistry in a world that is neither predicted nor arbitrary, but rather at the edge-of-chaos.

A number of authors have written about complexity and nonlinear dynamics, including James Gleick (1987) and Roger Lewin (1992). The history of nonlinear dynamics is the discovery that computers can go beyond mathematical proofs and theoretical assumptions to simulate a much wider array of behavior. Gleick described the computer modeling of weather systems, conducted by Edward Lorenz in the early 1960s, whose nonlinear descriptions went beyond explaining any single particle to new understandings of the larger system. Lorenz's experiments identified attractors in systems that kept the transformation of patterns within a certain range of behavior—a new kind of order.

Lewin (1992) described the invention of the "game of life," by British mathematician Jon Conway, as an early simulation. Others—Steve Wolfram and Chris Langton among them—enhanced that technique to create various models with cellular automata, grids of cells in which each cell operated according to local rules, but global patterns emerged on the grid. Watts' (2003) description of the developments of network dynamics traced those ideas to such physical phenomena as the failure of the electrical power network, as well as to airline networks and their role in the rapid spread of disease. Such dynamics have been explored by computer scientists, physicists, mathematicians, biologists, and engineers.

Complexity and Psychology

The application of the concepts of complexity and dynamic behavior of variables to psychology is a recent development, but with some older roots. Watts (2003) credits Stanley Milgram with the idea that everyone in the world is just six relationships away from everyone else, Solomon Asch with the idea that our perceptions are dependent on the perceptions of others, and Herbert Simon with the idea of limited or bounded rationality. All three were social scientists from the mid 20th century, and all of the above ideas are important in computer simulations of human behavior.

Butz (1997) was an early advocate of the metaphorical application of chaos in psychoanalytic psychology. Globus (2005) recently summarized the psychody-

namic view of complexity. He said the brain self-organizes the "belonging togeth-er" of thoughts. The process takes place on a landscape where peaks represent repellers (a phobic object for example) and valleys represent the attractor areas where thoughts are likely to settle. The individual both self-organizes the settling process and tunes the landscape, according to Globus.

Fredrickson and Losada (2005) have recently identified several issues of rele-vance to my paper's emphasis on contentment. They say that affect systems are dynamic, with increasing returns due to positive feedback. Furthermore, they say that affect changes over time, as the various components within the affect system mutually influence one another. They add that this reciprocal causality and feed-back within dynamic systems is best modeled with nonlinear equations, because it allows for interactive and bi-directional relations, and dynamic systems that characterize affect are nonlinear, with outcomes that are not always proportional to inputs. Finally, they also point to local unpredictability and global stability. By being variable, individuals are adaptable at the edge-of-chaos. In brief, over time, affect is complex and nonlinear.

Fredrickson and Losada (2005) go on to point out that positive affect broadens thought-action repertoires, whereas negative affect narrows those same reper-toires. The variability of positive states over time yields resilience that allows peo-ple to adapt flexibly. People who feel positive emotions have a wider array of action urges. Fredrickson and Losada then test the hypothesis that a ratio of positive to negative affect at or above 2.9 will characterize individuals in flourishing mental health and find that it is supported. While I do not wish to make too much of their 2.9 figure, multiples of three do appear to be important in input ratios in complex systems. Finally, Fredrickson and Losada say the literature and their findings sug-gest that a set of general mathematical principles may describe the relations between positive affect and human flourishing, a conclusion I will embrace.

Watts' (2003) description of the development of network dynamics provided some substance to my assumptions about the environment. As seen below, I assume that all input to an individual's contentment can be addressed with one general variable. Watts' use of Milgram's six degrees and Asch's dependence on the perception of others would help to explain Fredrickson and Losada's (2005) asser-tions that greater marital happiness is associated with less predictability from moment to moment, as spouses interact and such marriages are more likely to last. Similarly, in business teams, higher levels of expressed positivity among group members have been linked to greater behavioral variability within moment-to-moment interactions as well as to long-range indicators of business success. Positivity and variability do not simply cause success, but positivity molds the environment, while variability tests it, thus promoting mutual adjustment and development of the person and the environment. The social environment is remarkably close, whether it consists of loved ones or strangers, all of whom are within six degrees or less.

Complexity and Social Work

For social work, the origins of theory regarding systems may be traced to general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1972), later developed as ecosystems theory.

Complexity theory surpasses ecosystems theory with conceptions of change. Structure, epiphenomena inferred from observed behavior in systems theory (Dale, Smith, Norlin, & Chess, 2006), is seen by complexity theory as being in constant change or as process. Complexity theory emerged contemporarily with Wakefield's (1996) criticism of social work's use of ecosystems as unempirical.

Explaining the benefits of change and using mathematical models to describe change processes are the potential contributions of complexity to social work (Hudson, 2000b). Most of the social work articles related to complexity merely suggest that it may be conceptually applicable to understanding social work-related phenomena (Warren, Franklin, & Streeter, 1998; Hudson, 2000a, 2000b; Halmi, 2003; Hudson, 2004). A few others apply it metaphorically (DeJong, 1995; Bolland & Atherton, 1999) or actually seek dynamic data patterns (Warren & Knox, 2000; Warren, Hawkins, & Sprott, 2003). Thus, the true power of complexity theory and nonlinear dynamics, namely the modeling of practice-like processes, has not been applied in social work.

PURPOSE

Complexity theory, like its predecessor, ecosystems theory, attempts to be a theory of everything. However, it adds prescriptions for data analysis absent from ecosystems theory. This paper connects that prescription to micro practice, illustrates the applicability of data modeling to highlight change processes, and suggests implications for social work. Specifically, descriptions of change and simple mathematical models are used to construct a hypothetical case regarding a person's contentment. I present comparisons of change processes to suggest ways in which social work interventions could be best implemented to contribute to that advance. While the example used here is psychological, complexity theory is applicable to all levels of systems within which social workers engage. I present a psychological case for simplicity's sake, not with any intention to limit the application of complexity and nonlinear dynamics to microsystems.

PROCESSES INDICATED BY COMPLEXITY THEORY

The comparison of system functioning is best described across four processes. Ranging from decline to apparent disorder, these four include 1) an entropic/equilibric process, 2) a homeostatic/equilibric process, 3) a complex change process at the-edge-of-chaos, and 4) a chaotic change process. These processes are described in Table 1 and are loosely based on an earlier description of system states and change as described by Anderson and Carter (1990).

Table 1 cross-references the four processes with descriptions of four conditions. These are 1) the condition toward which the process tends, 2) information interchange with the environment, 3) resource interchange with the environment, and 4) change orientation. The first, the condition toward which a psychological system's process tends, consists of patterns of psychological functioning in relation to well being. The next two conditions consider interchange with the environment, referring to both information and resource exchange, where information is the array of signals utilized for guidance, and resources are the commodities needed to fulfill basic needs. Finally, change orientation refers to intention and readiness for change in relation to the environment and the enhancement of functioning.

Generally, ecosystems and complexity theorists agree that the entropic/equilibric process is the least desirable, because that process might bring pathology or death. Ecosystems theorists see the stability of homeostatic/equilibric processes as desirable (Anderson & Carter, 1990). Complexity theorists tend to group the stability-oriented entropic/equilibric and homeostatic/equilibric change processes together and see them as undesirable. They see the periodic iterations of complex change processes as particularly valuable and healthy and see the irregular chaotic change process as disruptive, but of occasional value for substantial change.

Each of the change processes can be considered in the context of a person's contentment and are compared across the four conditions listed in Table 1. In the entropic process, well being is in decline, because the person is unable to convince the larger system to provide needed resources (Krossman & Bullrich, 1997). In a homeostatic process, the second process in Table 1, the person is able to maintain parameters of well being by communicating needs and obtaining at least basic resources. As a result, the person is stable if the environment remains stable. However, the complexity theorist would see this person as near equilibrium, and thus in danger of entropy (Krossman & Bullrich, 1997). The preferred process of the complexity theorist is the edge-of-chaos or complex process. In that process, limited variation of well being is apparent as feedback is utilized. This limited variation and informed effort guides an efficient resource exchange with the environment.

Finally, the chaotic process is overly variable and unpredictable, making complexity theorists cautious. Measures of the person's well being yield erratic values, though they might stabilize in the long run. People in chaotic processes are often demanding resources, but without being informed about the environment's ability to provide resources or even being informed about their own needs in the immediate future. Even though chaos might lead to entropy, there is some chance that the change orientation of a person in chaotic process is potentially capable of settling into improved conditions (Krossman & Bullrich, 1997).

In brief, a conceptual contribution of complexity theory to social work is the addition of the nearly chaotic (or complex) change process and the chaotic change process to ecosystems theory, and thus a new change orientation. Where the emphasis of ecosystems theory tends to be homeostasis, complexity theory applied to social work would embrace the benefits of change.

MODELING CHANGE WITH NONLINEAR DYNAMICS

The variation of a measure of a complex system—contentment, in my example—follows the patterns described in Table 1. Sometimes, the values of the variable decline and sometimes they settle into a homeostatic pattern, whiled the variable values hardly change. However, when the values of input variables are sufficiently high, the outcome variable value can move to the edge-of-chaos. There, the outcome variable fluctuates in balance between a few approximate values in concert with the environment or, when inputs are excessive, the system spins into chaos and undesirable fluctuation.

Table 1:	*Comparison of System Functioning in Various Processes*			
	Entropic Functioning	**Homoeostatic Functioning**	**Near Chaotic or Complex Functioning**	**Chaotic Functioning with Possible Breakthrough or Collapse**
Condition toward which the process Tends	Pathology, death of system	Stable, but pathological	Marginal but fluctuating well-being capable of testing environment	Erratic fluctuation between extremes of well-being and pathology
Information Interchange with Environment	System has inadequate need communication to environ-ment provides excessive damping feedback	System is accepting of reinforcing feedback from environment but is not able to justify demands for resources from the environment	System locates information for correlation of available resources to needs, learns from assess-ments of self and environ-ment	Information often not accessed to fit rapid change to environment, or rapid system change makes available information untimely
Resource Interchange with Environment	Inadequate resource inputs and outputs, unable to create environ-mentally acceptable exchange	System is able to maintain resource exchange sufficient for own stability if environ-ment is constant	System efficiently obtains needed resources, and dissipates waste in concert with changing environment	Resource exchange often out of synchronicity with system's fit in environment
Change Orientation	Resists growth based on limited resources, inability to mount communica-tion to expand resources, accepts decline	System grows to a stable level, but is not ready for environmental change which may put system at risk	System is always ready for growth and change with periodic variation which promotes system learning and tests the environment	Erratic system may stumble into better condition, but erratic behavior and environmental insensitivity put it at constant risk

The mathematics of complexity is longitudinal, modeling the values of a small number of variables of a single system over time. Often, this includes the past val-

ues of outcome variables that are used to estimate future values of outcome variables. In the modeling equations used here, input and output are assumed. Some input is feedback generated by the environmental interaction of the values of outcome variables in the immediate past. Some input stimulates the growth of the outcome variable values, while other input dampens its growth. The measure of input is probably a matter of the ratio of growth producing and damping input (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Repeated iterations of the model equations can be called reciprocal causality, because the outcome variables are alternatively independent and dependent. In my example, this means that contentment at one time influences the next, but social work practice, along with other environmental influences, can modify that impact.

A logistic difference equation is utilized to model variables in the present paper, following Kiel and Elliot (1997). This logistic equation has heuristic value, because it provides a simple view of variable change processes and has been introduced in the social work literature (Warren, Franklin, & Streeter, 1998). However, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) point to the greater modeling sophistication social work should seek.

Measurement

For considering the nonlinear dynamics of contentment, the generalized contentment scale (Bloom et al., 2003) offers a useful model for the primary variable. This scale was designed to measure problems and, in the original version, would see increasing scores as problems intensify. Individuals scoring in the top 70% of these scales were assumed to have problems. Because I want to model the growth of contentment in a manner consistent with Fredrickson and Losada's (2005) growth of positive affect, the scoring of the scale has been reversed, and low scores, 0-70, are assumed to indicate the problem's end, while scores above 70 are assumed to be positive affect. It will be further assumed here that the scale represents the full possible range of the variables for the present analysis.

Modeling Equations

A common equation modeling nonlinear dynamics to model change is:

$$X_{t+1} = rX_t(1-X_t)$$

Where X=the level of contentment, X_t=outcome variable in prior iteration, r=the rate of growth accounted for by the intervention combined with other inputs, (1-X_t)=the environmental and systemic damping of the effect of r and X_{t+1}=the next iteration of the outcome variable X.

This equation explains the successive values of the variable X over time. In the calculations below, the values of X are represented by decimals to two places, or the proportion of the 100 points awarded on the contentment scale. Table 2 represents these scale scores as whole numbers, with X as the number of points achieved on the contentment scale and r as the rate of input that, when set at 1 or 100%, would tend to keep X at an unchanging value without considering environmental impact. The reader will note that the equation is structured so that the values of X_t approaching the maximum value of 100% (100 points on the contentment scale) would cause the rX_t product to be relatively large, while the 1-X_t

term would approach zero. At a contentment score of 95, for example, a crash to a score of 19 on the next iteration is expected. The converse is true when X_t approaches zero. Thus, the equation tends to be self-balancing, encouraging growth when X is small and damping growth when X is large. This self-balancing characteristic makes the equation nonlinear, because equal increments of inputs do not yield proportional increases in the outcome variable X. In my contentment example, low levels of contentment would respond to large inputs and move higher, but higher values would be resistant to improvement, because they are already near the top of the scale and because every system and environment is likely to have some damping inputs that impinge upon the growth of contentment (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). The inputs that affect contentment in the hypothetical example might be numerous and various, but r, or the rate applied to the previous levels of input, might be altered by interventions associated with social work practice.

In the iterations of the basic equation presented above, each time a value of X_t+1 is calculated, it can become the new X_t for the calculation of the next X, X_{t+2}. These iterations allow for the demonstration of reciprocal causality. That is, one can think of X as influencing itself and the environment, and the environment, in turn, influencing X and itself as one iterates the equation. However, the equation generally loses its modeling ability when r exceeds 4 (400%), because, at that point, it will generate unreal values of X less than 0 or greater than 100%, values that are not possible with the 100-point contentment scale assumed in this paper.

ANALYSIS

With the above discussion, I have laid the basis for hypothetical analysis utilizing the equation stated above. Table 2 presents hypothetical data analysis that allows comparison of the change processes of Table 1. The observations listed in Table 2 assume that the data would really behave in the way that the logistic difference equations would project. That is, values of the contentment scale are laid out in successive times (values at the various ts) in the cells of Table 2. These values were produced by iterations of the logistic difference equations programmed into a spreadsheet. Table 2 also compares initial values of the contentment scale before iteration and compares input rates, which would reflect environmental and system inputs. The input rates, which would presumably be manipulated by social work intervention, have been set to 100%, 200%, 300%, and 400%. The initial value of the contentment scale at t is set at 7, a very low level of contentment. Thus, the first row of the table shows us what would happen to clients if the input rate were left at 100% and the control condition, where the decline of contentment toward entropy would continue and, in fact, collapse to zero after numerous iterations.

Table 2 shows that one would want to increase the input rate for clients demonstrating low contentment scores and low input. At the 200% input rate, contentment increases but levels off at 50. This is a homeostatic process and, though it increases the value of the outcome variable, a homeostatic process is unsatisfactory, because it does not offer the advantages of the edge-of-chaos. Arrival at the edge-of-chaos and a complex process are achieved with an input rate of 300%.

Change Process	Input Rate	t_0	t_1	t_2	t_3	t_4	t_5	t_6	t_7	t_8	t_9
Entropic	100%	73	7	6	6	5	5	5	5	4	4
Homoeostatic	200%	7	13	23	35	46	50	50	50	50	50
Complex	300%	7	20	47	75	57	74	58	73	59	72
Chaotic	400%	7	26	77	71	83	57	98	8	29	82

Table 2: *Modeling the Behavior of the Contentment Scale Change Process[1] by Iterating the Logistic Difference Equation[2] Over Time with Differing Levels of Input to Demonstrate Various Change Processes*

[1] The 100 point contentment scale has the lowest contentment at 1 and the highest contentment at 100.
[2] The $X_{t+1} = rX_t(1-X_t)$ logistic difference equation is used to calculate the successive scale values, where tn is the time period.
[3] Beginning with the low contentment score of 7 suggests a deeply troubled individual.

Inspection of the contentment values at 300% input shows that a periodic pattern of iteration is emerging, and the values of the contentment scale would eventually alternate between 62 and 71. This range of scores would still be marginally problematic, but the potential of the system at the edge-of-chaos would be positively valued from the complexity viewpoint. Increasing the rate of input to 400% makes the process chaotic, however. The contentment values of the chaotic change process show no sign of settling down. This shows a danger of excessively high contentment scores and input rates, perhaps leading my individual to carefree, neglectful behavior that brings on discontentment.

DISCUSSION

This paper has suggested that social work needs the change processes of complexity theory in addition to the entropic and homeostatic processes it has considered in ecosystems theory. It also suggests a new view of client outcomes. Rather than designating variable values at the positive end of the scale as desirable outcomes, the desirable outcome may be characterized by the more modest variable values, with variation that suggests the complex edge-of-chaos readiness for change. Indeed, outcome values that are too high on the scale may bring on risky chaotic conditions. Two qualifications are in order. First, the value of complex processes does not rule out at least the occasional value of the other processes. Entropy resulting in death, chaos resulting in substantial change, or the occasional homeostatic relief from entropy or chaos might have value in some circumstances. Continuing my contentment example, a chaotic trajectory dipping into deep sorrow resulting from a debilitating life experience may result in an ultimate bounce back to contentment, indicating the value of chaos. In addition, the equations used here are no doubt inadequate, therefore social work must do the theory and mathematics to examine fully the potential of complexity theory.

The viability of the theory and mathematical models is ultimately an empirical question (Sabelli et al., 1995), and Fredrickson and Losada (2005) point us in the direction that social work should take. I wish to state strongly that the unempirical

stance of traditional ecosystems theory (Wakefield, 1996) is unacceptable. Thus, social work must engage complexity theory and nonlinear modeling empirically. Central to the empirical agenda must be the cycling behavior of data over time. People variously cycle through family generational cycles, school years, child developmental stages, and mood swings to name a few. Social work's research, however, is often based on experiments or surveys that are snapshots in time, rather than continuously moving pictures. To examine life's cycles, social work needs a strong program that continues the development of good measurement, and good measures must be applied over time. Nonlinear dynamic modeling can provide the hypotheses with which to test such data.

The potential of complexity theory might be realized then, but not without an ambitious research agenda. Fortunately, social work practice does not need to wait until the research agenda is accomplished. Complexity theory suggests that reasonable people seeking knowledge and action will find order emerging and that the emerging order will be tested in the environment even if our understanding is incomplete (Marion, 1999). Perhaps, practice knowledge will be the key at least some of the time. Scholarship in social work can provide a voice to the environmental test of complexity and can improve understanding by doing the theory, the mathematics, and the data collection. This is a lot to chew on, but social work should come to the complexity table to taste the rich menu it offers.

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Life Span and Resiliency Theory: A Critical Review

Alexa Smith-Osborne

Abstract: *Theories of life span development describe human growth and change over the life cycle (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006). Major types of developmental theories include biological, psychodynamic, behavioral, and social learning, cognitive, moral, and spiritual, and those influenced by systems, empowerment, and conflict theory. Life span development theories commonly focus on ontogenesis and sequential mastery of skills, tasks, and abilities. Social work scholars have pointed out that a limitation of life span and other developmental theory is lack of attention to resilience (Greene, 2007; Robbins et al., 1998).*

The concept of resilience was developed to "describe relative resistance to psychosocial risk experiences" (Rutter, 1999b, p. 119). Longitudinal studies focused on typical and atypical child development informed theory formulation in developmental psychopathology (Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Luthar, Cichetti, & Becker, 2000) and in an evolving resilience model (Richardson, 2002; Werner & Smith, 1992). Research on resilience has found a positive relationship between a number of individual traits and contextual variables and resistance to a variety of risk factors among children and adolescents. More recently, resilience research has examined the operation of these same factors in the young adult, middle-age, and elder life stages.

This article examines the historical and conceptual progression of the two developmental theories—life span and resiliency—and discusses their application to social work practice and education in human behavior in the social environment.

Keywords: Life span, resiliency theory, life cycle, critique

Theories of life span development describe human growth and change over the life cycle (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006). Major types of developmental theories include biological, psychodynamic, behavioral and social learning, cognitive, moral and spiritual, and those influenced by systems, empowerment, and conflict theory. Life span development theories commonly focus on ontogenesis and the sequential mastery of skills, tasks, and abilities.

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The major theories address the entire life cycle, from prenatal or birth to death, but they often focus in-depth on particular age periods, referred to as life stages. Some theorists within this field have focused more exclusively on a single life stage (Vaillant, 1993) or on a macro-level view of developmental traits that characterize an age cohort with defined ranges of birth dates or historical/cultural periods of primary influence on development (Strauss & Howe, 1991). For purposes of this paper, only a segment of life span theory can be addressed. Therefore, this paper focuses on personality and psychosocial theories, which form the historical foundation for much of the other life span theories.

Resiliency theory is an emerging theoretical perspective that has been developed within developmental psychopathology and ecosystems perspectives and is influenced by stress and coping theories. Although this theory has not been explicitly developed as an outgrowth of life span theory, it is developmental in focus, and theory-driven research typically examines a specific chronological life stage as a starting point. This theoretical framework addresses health development of at-risk populations, and overcoming stress and adversity to achieve functional outcomes either during a life stage, a specific trajectory (e.g., educational or deviancy), or throughout the life span. The initial focus of theory development has been on childhood and adolescence and associations of traits and events at these life stages with outcomes later in life. Some recent research in this field has applied resiliency constructs to adults at risk (Daining, 2005; Smith, 2003; Smith-Osborne, 2006).

Historical Context

The notion that life can be understood as a series of significant and sequential stages can be traced to the earliest human civilizations and has appeared consistently in literary, religious, and philosophical writings throughout history (Erikson, 1968; Robbins et al., 1998). The scientific approach to human development throughout the life cycle was stimulated by the emergence of evolutionary theory at the turn of the century (Darwin, 1872), which led to the development of biologically focused maturational and psychosexual perspectives, such as those of G. Stanley Hall in 1904, Sigmund Freud in 1905, and Arnold Gesell in 1925. These seminal theories challenged the Victorian (and earlier) conception of children as little adults, and childhood as a time of relative stability, while the children were simply waiting to grow physically (Colby, 1970; Karl, 1964).

These theories also established the conceptualization of human development as occurring in a series of essentially stable stages, with periods of instability during transitions between stages and the mastery of stage-specific skills or conflicts as the foundation for progress to the next stage (Hoffman, Paris, Hall, & Schell, 1988).

Freudian theory came to dominate much of human development theory and clinical practice in the early 20th century, with several of Freud's students, notably Jung and Erikson, expanding on his concepts on the basis of their own clinical and cross-cultural experiences. These amplifications of Freudian theory occurred against the backdrop of the rise of fascism, the Holocaust, and World War II. The originator of what is now called the life span approach to human psychological development, Erik Erikson, had been a student of Freud's and trained as a psy-

choanalyst in Germany. Erickson fled Nazi Germany in 1939 to immigrate to America, where he expanded Freud's stages to apply to the entire life span, emphasizing psychosocial, rather than biological drive theory.

Resiliency theory, in contrast, originated on the basis of prospective longitudinal research on cohorts of children at risk (Garmezy, 1993; Rutter, Quinton, & Hill, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992), rather than on the basis of individual clinicians' observations and case studies. Such studies were informed by prevention science (Greene, 2007) and the application of the epidemiological concepts of immunity and resistance to disease to human development and psychopathology (Thoits, 1983). In particular, Werner and Smith's longitudinal study of 698 infants, many of Hawaiian and Asian descent, provided a major empirical basis for the inception of resiliency constructs and hypotheses for further testing, as did Rutter's work with early onset mental disorders and with institutionalized Romanian children (e.g., Rutter, 1983; Rutter et al., 1990). Resiliency theory's salutogenic orientation has been heavily influenced by the Hawaiian study's focus on those in childhood adversity who overcome the odds by the time they reach adulthood. The initial formulation of theoretical concepts and constructs based on this research proceeded within the developmental psychopathology framework in psychiatry (e.g., Rutter, 1987) and developmental psychology (e.g., Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984) and within family stress and adjustment theory (e.g., McCubbin & Dahl, 1976; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) in social work. Much of the seminal research in this field was begun in the late 1950s (e.g., Werner & Smith began their study in 1955) and initial findings were reported in the 1980s. Thus, this early theoretical development was situated historically in the post-Vietnam War and the post-colonial era of globalization, and it often focused on identifying factors in overcoming trauma and adverse events, such as war-induced family separations. Later, as social work educators and researchers gave more attention to salutogenic, strengths-based (Saleebey, 1997) theoretical models for practice, resiliency constructs were further developed within the ecological perspective (e.g., Fraser & Galinsky, 1997; Gilgun, 1996) in social work theory, rather than in life span theory. Social workers have continued to draw on resiliency theory constructs and empirical findings in research (e.g., Herrenkohl, Hill, Chung, Guo, Abbott, & Hawkins, 2003) and in human behavior and practice texts (e.g., Haight & Taylor, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Thomlison, 2007), either within the ecological perspective (e.g., Haight & Taylor) or, more commonly, outside a specified theoretical frame of reference. Furthermore, some social workers have explicitly identified and used resiliency theory as a theoretical framework, independent of other perspectives, for education (Greene, 2007) and research (Smith-Osborne, 2005a, 2006; Ungar, 2004).

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Life Span Theory

Life span theory utilizes the central concept of ontogenesis, the chronological unfolding of human development (Gunnar & Thelen, 1989; Thelen & Smith, 1994), which includes both change in size and change in the complexity and differentiation of function (e.g., the change in motor reflexes at various stages in

life). Some theorists include deterioration or diminishment in size and function, particularly if the focus is on aging and the adult life cycle, as well as accretion or augmentation (Jung, 1965; Newman & Newman, 1975; Santrock, 1989).

Erikson (1950) proposed the concept of "epigenesis" to convey that human development unfolds from part to whole, with elements of the chronologically appropriate ability or personality feature gradually emerging in a prescribed sequence until the functional whole was achieved. The term has since been used within the developmental psychopathology theoretical perspective to also apply to the chronological unfolding over the life span of the disease process, such as schizophrenia (e.g., Cannon, Rosso, Bearden, Sanchez, & Hadley, 1999). He saw this emergence as occurring within an interactional and adaptive framework, within which the individual develops through interaction and adaptation to the immediate social environment as well as to the larger society, culture, and historical context. Thus, Erikson postulated that mutual responsiveness on the part of both the individual and society was necessary for optimal development.

Another key life span concept associated with the work of Freud and Erikson is the life stage. The life stage is seen as an age-related period of life characterized by predictable features, tensions, and changes and leads into a subsequent stage. Erikson formulated the notion of the psychosocial crisis, a period of tension and disorganization centered on a stage-specific theme, the resolution of which was the goal of the transition phase from one stage to the next. Freud and Erikson conceptualized stages as prescriptive, in that their sequence was unvarying and defined optimal mature development, was associated with specific tensions/conflicts, and was prerequisite, in that each stage must be worked through and the associated conflicts resolved before successful transition to the next stage could be accomplished. Freud's and Erikson's life stage models are presented in Hoffman et al. (1988, pp. 30 and 32).

Erikson (1950) moved beyond Freud's life stage constructs in proposing that ego development in childhood is a process of identification, which he defined as internalization of another person's values and standards in an attempt to become like that person or parts of that person. It was in adolescence that Erikson observed (1968) the identity was formed through a process of:

> repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration, which in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society (often through subsocieties) identifies the young individual, recognizing him as somebody who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted. (p. 159)

In Erikson's theory, then, the concept of the mature ego identity as a complex sense of self, comprising societally-defined life roles as well as aspects of personality, is crucial. The "identity crisis" in adolescence is normative and revolves around issues of personal sameness and historical continuity, which serve as a link between the individual and the larger society. Prolonged adolescence, in Erikson's schema, provides a psychosocial moratorium in which the sexually mature individual engages in free role experimentation, sanctioned by society, in

order to find a defined niche in society, while postponing adult sexual roles. Erickson saw this as a second period of delay in the life cycle, with the first being Freud's psychosexual moratorium of the latency life stage, which permits the young to learn the basics of society's work situations before embarking on mature sexual roles, such as spouse and parent. Erikson used the term identity diffusion, and later the term identity confusion (1968), to describe the state of mild confusion commonly experienced by adolescents in the process of identity formation. James Marcia (1980) developed this concept further to apply to adolescents who are not in an identity crisis, because they are not committing themselves to occupational or ideological goals and are not concerned about the situation.

Based on the mature and socially acceptable ego identity, the young adult, in Erikson's schema, could then take up the mature sexual role in seeking a spouse or intimate partner. In the middle adult stage, the individual was seen as transitioning to the ego strength made up of procreativity, productivity, and creativity, such as in forming a family and mentoring future generations on a personal, societal or even global level. The last stage of life was that of ego integrity, which involves the older adult's acceptance of his/her own live as meaningful and coherent, and the perspective that one has handled life's tasks in the best way possible under given circumstances.

Contemporary theorists have proposed expanded models, particularly in the adolescent and adult stages. Two such models, proposed by Vaillant (1993, p. 145) and Newman and Newman (1988, p. 45).

Erikson (1982, 1986, 1988) built on his earlier work in the last life stage, as he and his wife reflected on their own adult development in later life, conceptualizing aging in terms of revisitation of earlier stages of development within his Stage 8 of Integrity vs. Despair.

Erikson and other psychodynamic theorists, such as Vaillant (1993), acknowledge developmental influences such as culture, race, and gender, but tend to view intrapsychic and biological factors, including IQ, as being more important to development.

Other theorists conceptualize human development as being more fluid throughout the life span, rather than the product of invariant and chronologically sequential stages, and as being more heavily influenced by social roles (Goffman, 1959; Neugarten, 1985), demographic variables, such as gender, race, or socioeconomic status, culture and historical "moment," and even the reciprocal, interactive effects of the immediate physical/social environment (Gunnar & Thelen, 1989).

Resiliency Theory

The concept of resilience was developed to "describe relative resistance to psychosocial risk experiences" (Rutter, 1999b, p. 119). It has been further defined as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000) and "the process of coping with adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, fortification, and enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors"

(Richardson, 2002, p. 308). Research on stress reactions and recovery from stress, with implications for education, has also informed this theory (Benotsch et al., 2000; D'Imperio, Dubow, & Ippolito, 2000; Dubow, Schmidt, McBride, Edwards, & Merk, 1993; Dubow, Tisak, Causey, Hryshko, & Reid, 1991; Fontana, Schwartz, & Rosenheck, 1997; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Golding, 1989; Keenan & Newton, 1984; Lazarus, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus, resilience is conceptualized as relative resistance to psychosocial stressors or adversity. Although varying models of resiliency have been tested, researchers and theorists agree that the construct is salient in the context of stress and adversity and is not operative in the absence of environmental stressors (Jew, Green, & Kroger, 1999; Rutter, 1999).

The central constructs of the theory include risk factors/mechanisms, vulnerability factors, and protective factors/mechanisms. Risk factors and mechanisms have been conceptualized in alternate ways in the literature: either as 1) the events or conditions of adversity (for example, poverty) themselves for which there is empirical evidence of association with psychopathology, illness, or dysfunctional developmental outcomes or as 2) factors that operate to reduce resistance to stressors/adversity. Vulnerability factors are traits, genetic predispositions, or environmental and biological deficits (such as cognitive impairments) for which there is empirical evidence of heightened response, sensitivity, or reaction to stressors or risk factors. The constructs of vulnerability factors and risk factors are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature. Protective factors and mechanisms are traits, contextual characteristics, and interventions that operate to enhance or promote resistance, or which may moderate the effect of risk factors, and for which there is empirical evidence of association with health and functional developmental outcomes. Rutter (1987) suggests that protective mechanisms may operate in one of four ways to allow overcoming odds in the face of adversity: by reducing risk impact, by reducing negative chain reactions to risk factors, by promoting resiliency traits (i.e., the opposite of vulnerability factors, such as self-efficacy and optimism), and by setting up new opportunities for success. Reducing risk impact can occur not only by way of buffering events and social networks, but also by inoculation due to successful coping with earlier, milder stressful events. Protective and risk mechanisms have been found to vary according to the type of adversity, type of resilient outcome, and life stage under analysis; risk factors in one context may be protective in another (Rutter, 1999; Smith-Osborne, 2006; Ungar, 2004).

Research on resilience among children, adolescents, and young adults has found a positive relationship between spirituality, social support, social capital, income, and personal/family traits (e.g., hardiness, coherence, social competence and self-efficacy, normal attachment, healthy attributions, active stress appraisal, and coping), and resistance to a variety of risk factors, including psychiatric disorders and school failure/drop-out (Daining, 2005; Garmezy, 1991; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Richardson, 2002; Rutter, 1999a; Smith & Carson, 1997; Werner, 1992). Research on military families dealing with war-induced separation and trauma has found associations between resilience and similar protective mechanisms (Benotsch et al., 2000; Lavee et al., 1985; McCubbin & Dahl, 1976; McCubbin, Dahl, Lester, Benson, & Robertson, 1976;

McCubbin, Hunter, & Dahl, 1975; McCubbin et al., 1980; McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996; Patterson, 2002; Sutker et al., 1995; Thoits, 1983).

Units of Analysis

Life span theory is most commonly applied to the individual and family as the units of analysis (McCubbin et al., 1980). However, Erikson (1962, 1968, 1969) proposed that this theory could apply to humanity as an entity, thus not being limited to one's interactions with individuals, groups, or specific environments/institutions.

Subsequent theorists, such as Coles (1990, 1991, 1997) and Strauss and Howe (1991), have focused on the more macro-level implications of Erikson's concepts, for example, in investigating human development within generations and religious reference groups.

Like life span theory, resiliency theory has been most commonly applied to individuals and family units that are consistent with these theories' shared developmental focus. More recent investigations of specific risk and protective factors, however, have shown a trend toward the examination of macro-level or contextual variables (Herrenkohl et al., 2003; Schafft, 2006; Smith-Osborne, 2005, 2006; Ungar, 2004), such as neighborhoods (e.g., disorganized, residentially unstable) and institutional policies.

Aspects of Human Development

Rapid advances in the knowledge base about the biological underpinnings of human development tend to lend support to conceptualizations of the life stages that are more fluid throughout the life span, rather than invariant or even necessarily sequential (Robbins et al., 1998; Thelen & Smith, 1994). Incorporation of this new knowledge is seen most clearly in researchers who focus on adult development and aging. George Vaillant (1993), for example, pointed out that:

> If adult development is to be conceived as a psychobiological process then it must conform to biology, and neither to social mores nor to chronological age. This means that, as with shaving and menstruation, not everybody will reach a given stage at the same chronological age (p. 166).

Similarly, Sharon McQuaide, in her research on "Women at Midlife" (1998), examined biological and cohort variables to add to life span theory. She found that "The generation of women now entering midlife differs from previous generations" (p. 21), and that women who were "'blocked from being in the world' (through disability, poor health, involuntary unemployment, limited spending power)" (p. 29) were less likely to achieve well-being and other indicators of generativity, Erikson's designation for the midlife stage issue. Life span theory, then, has the flexibility to address various aspects of human development throughout its stages.

Resiliency theory has, from its inception, been remarkable for encompassing the broad biopsychosocial aspects of human development, as well as for cross-referencing empirical findings on normative or healthy human development with findings on pathological development (Cichetti & Cannon, 1999). Early develop-

ment of the theory gave more attention to individual characteristics and to factors present in childhood, which were associated with adult outcomes, thus privileging enduring traits from earlier life stages. Although recent cross-sectional studies have begun to offer more possibilities for developing an understanding of resiliency in middle and later adulthood, this theory's current utility is, in its application to the broad aspects of human development, from infancy through early adulthood.

Philosophical Underpinnings

The life span theory philosophical underpinnings, most of which have been noted previously in this paper, include: a health and adaptation orientation, rather than a medical illness-oriented orientation; a special interest in the earlier stages of life; an ontogenetic perspective with emphasis on predictable and discontinuous life stages; a transition period between stages, which may be characterized by increased tension and disorganization (Erikson's "psychosocial crises"); an intrapsychic focus and an interactive focus; and lifelong development. As noted previously, the life span theorists who built on Erikson's work have gone far in addressing the limitations of many of these philosophical underpinnings, as well as the biases built into the original theory. Resiliency theory is characterized as similarly salutogenic, but with a philosophical orientation toward the linear, cumulative connections between earlier life stages and adulthood for those at risk. Resiliency research to date has been largely conducted by Western scientists and has had a linear, positivistic paradigm. Thus, it has been criticized as hegemonic and, thereby, limited in its scope in accounting for diverse resiliency experiences. Philosophically, resiliency theory is more heavily focused than life span theory on interactions between the environment and person in terms of environmental adversity and personal protective traits. As with life span theory, more recent work in resiliency theory has tipped the balance philosophically more in the direction of contextual protective variables, often operationalized as social groups and community and institutional characteristics.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The evident strengths of life span theory include its expansion of understanding of personality development through the life span, its utility across a variety of human service settings and functions, and its "generativity," to borrow Erikson's term and reapply it to theory-building. Life span theory gave rise to a rich plethora of human development models, not only to increase understanding of specific life stages or the entire life cycle, but also to address intermediate and macro-level entities, such as families, family-run businesses, social movements led by "great" personalities, faith communities and religious reference groups, and entire generational cohorts. In so doing, this theory has been applied to disciplines beyond the human service domain. For example, the sociological concept of the bourgeois bohemian (Brooks, 2001), the theological concept of Gen X religiosity (Beaudoin, 2000), and the economic concept of style as a form of self-expression (Postrel, 2003), all owe their origins ultimately to life span theory.

Several of the most cogent points of criticism of life span theory weaknesses have been noted above: the Euro-American, middle class, male bias; the rigidity

of the life stage concept; and the notable lack of empirical support. Another, less frequently discussed weakness is the theory's failure to address or adequately explain the sources of the stage shifts (Haroutunian, 1983; Oyama, 1985) and the application of those stage shifts across domains (Thelen, 1987). Concomitantly, the theory has been targeted by critics for failure to account for the emergence of new forms in each stage (e.g., why do immobilized Hopi babies start walking at the same age as mobile WASP babies) in the context of the nature versus nurture dichotomy.

Resiliency theory shows promise as an emerging theory, which extends life span theory in offering predictive and explanatory constructs relevant to healthy development in the face of adversity. Its constructs and models have been used flexibly by social workers in concert with other theoretical perspectives, such as the ecosystems perspective (Fraser, 1997; Gilgun, 1997), systems theory (Ungar, 2004), the differential resiliency model (Palmer, 1997), and the social development model (Herrenkohl et al., 2003). Furthermore, this theory has demonstrated that it offers both a viable platform for developmental research and a conceptual framework capable of elegant and parsimonious evolution based on that research. Resiliency theory has the advantage of being empirically based from its inception and of thereby incorporating ongoing findings and constructs from biology and neuroscience, such as neuroplasticity (Rutter, 1999b). It has begun to demonstrate utility in application across human service settings and practice models and across life stages and trajectories (Greene, 2007).

One important limitation of resiliency theory is its restriction to application only to populations in adversity or populations experiencing trauma or high stress levels. Theoretical constructs may be misapplied in research or practice to normative life cycle issues or moderately stressful events. The constructs themselves have been criticized as tautological and are inconsistently defined across studies, thus limiting validity and reliability of the research. Considerable effort has been made by leading resiliency theorists, particularly in the last decade, to clarifying and standardize these definitions. This theory has also been criticized for its positivist research paradigm to date, with consequential bias towards linear explanatory models based on predictable, hierarchical relationships between protective and risk factors (Ungar, 2004). This tendency may limit its utility in application to diverse cultures and populations. On the other hand, the original empirical basis for the development of the theory consisted heavily of studies of cross-cultural and ethnic minority populations, which may be evidence to counter this criticism.

Empirical Support

Life span theory has been criticized as lacking an empirical base of support, much like psychodynamic theory in general has been criticized. It is true that many theorists in this perspective use clinical case and cross-cultural observation (Erikson, 1968; Coles, 1990; Greenspan, 1992) and, in some instances, examination of the lives of great men and women, as their primary methodology for generating the theory. For example, Erikson studied the lives of Luther and Gandhi (1962, 1969), while Vaillant looked at Florence Nightingale's life in his analysis of women's adult development (Vaillant, 1993). Coles is robust in his defense of these clinically ori-

ented methodologies in generating rich, contextually-based theoretical constructs, and is critical of the biases and limitations he finds inherent in empirical, quantitative methodologies (1990, pp. 22-39).

However, Vaillant's longitudinal study of adult men (1977), his follow-up study of male adults from a different socioeconomic group (1993), and recent quantitative studies of adult development (McQuaide, 1998; Norman, McCluskey-Fawcett, & Ashcraft, 2002) have provided empirical support both for the life span concepts derived from ego defense theory and for life stage concepts.

In general, the life span theory has maximal utility when used to describe and explain the human development of individuals and, at a probabilistic rather than prescriptive level (Robbins et al., 1998). Erikson indicated his general concurrence with this summation in his discussion of the misapplication of his concept of the psychosocial crisis (1968, pp. 15-43).

As previously described in this paper, resiliency theory has been conceived on an empirical basis, with two examples being Werner and Smith's study of infants in Hawaii and the English and Romanian Adoptees Study Team's investigation of institutionalized children who were later adopted (Rutter, Quinton, & Hill, 1990; Rutter & ERA, 1998). Resiliency theory-based empirical findings have been useful in refining important practice modalities used in social work. For example, such findings suggested a shift in the focus on family therapy to include assessment of the differential impact of family communication patterns on different family members, depending on individual vulnerability factors and peer group influences (Rutter, 1999b; Greene, 2007). Richardson (2002) has suggested that there have been three waves of resiliency research: the first wave focused on identifying resilient qualities in person and environment, the second wave focused on specifying resilient processes effective in overcoming the odds, and the third and current wave in identifying innate transformational processes. Empirical testing of resiliency constructs and models is ongoing in several disciplines, including social work (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2005; Hrabowski, Freeman, Maton, & Greif, 1998, 2002; Kennedy, 2005; Wright, Fopma-Loy, & Fischer, 2005).

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Consistency with Social Work Values

Despite its lack of empirical evidence, life span theory has enjoyed widespread acceptance, not only among social workers, but among the wide range of human service disciplines, particularly those with a psychodynamic theoretical perspective regardless of discipline. Thus, part of its appeal has come from its expansion of Freudian theory and its correction of some of the limitations and biases of that theory. Its optimistic, strengths-oriented perspective, and its applicability to some domains other than the individual (McCubbin et al., 1980) have shown consistency with social work values. The utility of its concepts and theoretical constructs has been amply demonstrated by the variety and magnitude of applications that have been made to practice issues (e.g., Streever & Wodarski, 1984; Snow, 2003; Smith-Osborne, 2005b), to theory building (e.g., Elder, 1998; George, 1993; Ingersoll-Dayton, Krause, & Morgan, 2002; Vaillant, 1993), and to popular

understanding of the nature of human life (e.g., Sheehy, 1976). The psychody-namic life span theorists deemphasized the biological determinism of strict Freudian theory, and their theoretical concepts focus on successful negotiation of the life stage transitions as a normative, not as pathological process. These factors are seen as consistent with social work values, such as client self-determination and strengths-based practice.

Contemporary social workers are cautioned to be mindful that the originators of this theory base operated almost exclusively within a Euro-American middle class framework, which limits the utility of the theory for application to diverse cultures and classes. The male bias inherent in the original theory base has been partially addressed through research and additional theory formulation on the development of women through the life span (Gilligan, 1978, 1982, 1991; Friedan, 1963, 1977; and 1993; McQuaide, 1998).

The social work emphasis on person-in-environment is a good fit with life span theory's perspective of human development as proceeding interactively. The lim-itations of the theory in taking macro-level influences into account, and the expansion work in this area by Strauss and Howe and others, is noted above.

Resiliency theory shares with life span theory the excellent fit with social work values detailed above, while avoiding the cultural, class and gender biases that have been noted in life span theory. Its focus on vulnerability and populations at risk makes it particularly useful to the social work mission. This theory has been criticized as being less consistent with social work values than it could be, due to the hegemonic tendencies inherent in its positivistic philosophical underpin-nings; however, new qualitative and mixed methods research, undertaken within a constructivist paradigm, may develop this theory so as to correct these tenden-cies.

Next Steps for Theory Progression

The current status of life span theory within social work remains that of wide-spread, even uncritical acceptance in its application, in a variety of human serv-ice settings, from child welfare agencies to parent education classes. Social work-ers who practice or conduct research with specific age groups are informed by this theory in understanding the unique aspects of that age group or birth cohort (e.g., McQuaide, 1998; Norman et al., 2002). In social work education, it is taught in theory and human behavior classes at all levels of social work preparation. The concept of developmental stages has been applied to student development through the field instruction process in social work, as well as in counseling and psychology (Deal, 2000, 2002). The utility of this theoretical perspective and its value-fit with the social work profession are likely to ensure its continued place within the discipline. In order to enhance its viability as a foundation for best practices, life span theory must take the next steps in theory progression by strengthening empirical support for both its micro and macro levels across life stages, including the incorporation of recent advances in human neuroscience evidence. Further development of models for middle and older adult life stages, differentiated by gender and ethnicity, is also needed. Continued attention must be paid to the dissemination of updated life span theory development by social work educators, text writers, and researchers.

The current status of resiliency theory in social work is that of an emerging theory; its main constructs are used more often than the entire, articulated theoretical framework, both in social work research and education, while frequency of practitioners' use of this theory and its evidence base is unclear. Since it represents an extension of more well-established life span theory and shares many of that theory's strengths and acceptability for the profession, it is likely that resiliency theory will become more widely used in social work education the near future, as indicated by its use in at least two recently published texts in the Human Behavior in the Social Environment curriculum (Greene, 2007; Haight & Taylor, 2007). The next steps for progression of this theory should include cross-sectional studies to elucidate applicability of the known protective mechanisms to young adult, middle adult, and older adult life stages, and to generational cohorts. Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies are needed to examine the operation of protective and risk mechanisms for particular resilient outcomes, such as educational attainment, health disparities and perceived level of wellness, quality of life, and vocational achievement, to build on results of the most common, previously studied outcome of psychopathology versus mental wellness. Qualitative and mixed methods research designs must be applied to extend theory development to diverse cultures and perceived operationalizations of resiliency within the lived experience of persons across the life span and across conditions of adversity. Further discussion is needed in the literature to refine the operationalization of this theory's constructs and models and to promote common usage of the same in research. Articulation of practice applications of the theory, followed by empirical testing of related interventions, is necessary to integrate this theory into our understanding of human behavior in the social environment and to add to the evidence base for practice with populations in adversity.

Resiliency theory offers a rich opportunity for social work to refine evidence-based developmental theory for the vulnerable populations it is our unique privilege to serve.

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An Analysis of Afrocentricity as
Theory for Social Work Practice

Dwain A. Pellebon

Abstract: *Afrocentricity is developing rapidly within the social work profession as a theory for practice with African Americans. Afrocentric practitioners claim the theory provides a basis for understanding African Americans from an African perspective and cultural value system, and it is the most effective approach to address racial oppression. However, social work has not critically analyzed the merits of Afrocentricity as a source of knowledge to inform the profession. This article takes the initial step to determine whether Afrocentricity is in-fact a theory. Afrocentricity is described, discussed, and analyzed based on current and accepted definitions of theory. The analysis reveals Afrocentric epistemology lacks the rigor to be accepted as an empirically-based theory for practice. The author concludes that Afrocentricity is more accurately categorized as an ideology. Research and practice implications of this conclusion and the need for further critique are discussed.*

Keywords: Afrocentricity, African-centered, empirically-based theory, cultural competent social work

INTRODUCTION

Human service professions must constantly adapt to the dynamism of societal change as it relates to politics, culture, technology, and knowledge. For example, political climates can produce legislative outcomes harmful to populations-at-risk (Alzate, 2006). Cultural trends influence inter-group relationships, including race, class, gender, and age cohorts. Medical advances in health and mental health require all helping professions to assess and develop treatments and interventions that produce optimal outcomes. For these reasons and more, social work must be self-critical and adapt to the realities of society. One of the profession's responsibilities to clients and to the profession is to "…critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work practice (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 1996, Section 4.01-b)." As the profession examines new ideas, social workers must be willing to accept or reject knowledge based on objective criteria. Practice approaches developed from untested trends, appeals to emo-

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tion, and/or oppressor guilt do not promote the well being of client systems or influence change in target systems. Ethical social workers use the most current and verifiable knowledge-base, resources, and skills for competent practice.

For all of the above reasons, this article examines the contribution of Afrocentricity to social work knowledge. It specifically analyzes whether Afrocentricity is technically a theory useful for social work practice. Despite Afrocentricity's brief history, it is described as both a theory and an essential perspective for social work practice with African American clients (Graham, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007; Schiele, 1996). In addition, several social work practice textbooks recognize Afrocentricity as a practice perspective to use with African Americans (Devore & Schlesinger, 1996; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2006; McCroy, 2007; Miley, O'Melia, & DuBois, 2007; Poulin, 2005; Weaver, 2005; Zastrow, 2003). Regarding Afrocentricity's contribution to theory, social work textbooks in research (Dudley, 2003) and human behavior in the social environment (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2004) assert Afrocentricity as a perspective and worldview for African Americans. Interestingly, Afrocentricity's growing recognition in social work does not result from the profession's scholarly examination of its merits. In fact, the social work literature neglects any critical analysis regarding the perspective's scientific rigor or effectiveness with African American clients.

Considering the relatively new scholarship of Afrocentricity in social work, the profession must assess its standing as a theory and its implications. Afrocentricity's founder encourages such analysis; he suggests that an "Afrocentrist is a scientist… interested in reason, evidence, and falsifiability and in submitting her or his interpretations to rigorous analysis if she or he is studying human behavior" (Asante, 2003, p. 648). Thus, this paper critically examines the merits of Afrocentricity as a theory in terms of its rational conceptualization, scientific rigor, and utility within social work. Afrocentricity's system of interest is to Africans worldwide. To focus the analysis, this article concentrates on Afrocentricity's relevance and application specifically to African Americans as a client system.

After a brief history of Afrocentricity, this article describes its goals and central components. This writer then assesses Afrocentricity using currently accepted standards of theory and knowledge as described by the Commission on Accreditation (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2003) and the profession's values based on the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1996).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFROCENTRICITY

Molife Kete Asante is the "founder, principal theorist, and authority of Afrocentrism…" (Turner, 2002, p. 712). In a published interview, he describes his initial inspiration came during his travels in Africa when he realized that it was "crazy" for a Black man to have a European name (Asante, 2003, p. 716). He accepts the conclusion that the primary social crisis for Black Americans is one of culture. A crisis is based on the notion that Eurocentric misrepresentation of African history psychologically dislocates Black Americans (Karenga, 1980). Karenga's philosophy and work to reconstruct African American history in the 1960s was a major influence on Asante's development of Afrocentricity (Asante, 2003, p. 30).

Asante's (1980) first comprehensive description of his theory laid the foundation for Afrocentricity's development. Within a few years, scholars from history, education, and anthropology criticized the theory's analytical methods and epistemology (Lefkowitz, 1996; Howe, 1999; Ratvich, 1992). These debates prompted Asante (1987, 1988, 2000, 2003) to further develop and defend this new theory. Regardless of the disagreements, Afrocentricity's growing influence is undeniable. It has become a framework to articulate an alternate voice for understanding African culture; it has led to the founding of the *Journal of Black Studies*, and it has influenced several disciplines, most notably Black studies/African American studies programs in the United States (Turner, 2002, p. 712). Now, Afrocentricity has emerged as a theoretical perspective for social work practice (Schiele, 1996; Graham, 1999).

THE THEORY OF AFROCENTRICITY

It is important for social workers to understand the theory of Afrocentricity. This writer paraphrases and quotes prominent Afrocentric writers to provide a detailed understanding of the theory and a sense of Afrocentricity's rhetorical style. Asante (2003) defines Afrocentricity:

> *"Afrocentricity is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. In regards to theory, it is the placing of African people in the center of any analysis of African phenomena.*
>
> *Thus, it is possible for any one to master the discipline of seeking the location of Africans in a given phenomenon. In terms of action and behavior, it is a devotion to the idea that what is in the best interest of African consciousness is at the heart of ethical behavior. Finally, Afrocentricity seeks to enshrine the idea that blackness itself is a trope of ethics. Thus, to be black is to be against all forms of oppression, racism, classism, homophobia, patriarchy, child abuse, pedophilia, and white racial domination"* (p. 2).

Afrocentricity has several broad goals, but four are pervasive in its literature: 1) Afrocentricity exposes and actively resists "white racial domination" over African Americans; 2) It transforms African Americans toward their cultural center; 3) It converts African Americans to an ideology of values, spirituality, and rituals; and 4) It analyzes disciplines, such as literature, history, linguistics, politics, science, religion, and economics from an Afrocentric perspective (Asante, 2005, pp. 1-13).

The first goal to expose and resist White racial domination is the centerpiece connecting the other three. According to Afrocentricity, this goal is foundational, because African Americans will never thrive until they recognize that the Western world only examines social phenomena from a White perspective, while actively negating African culture. Another problem of Eurocentric thinking is an assumption of universality so pervasive that European Americans place their culture at "the center of the social universe" (Asante, 2003, pp. 2-5). The reason to focus on European culture in America is the belief that culture is the most powerful influence on social, political, educational, economic, scientific, and religious structures

within society. Thus, the United States, a society built upon the racist domination of other groups, is incapable of developing a humane, pluralistic, or multicultural society. In the end, Eurocentric hegemony "…creates a fundamental human crisis" of unavoidable domination" (Asante, 1998, pp. 5, 22-23).

According to Abarry (1990), the primary objective of Afrocentricity "… is to liberate the research and study of African peoples from the hegemony of Eurocentric scholarship…" (p. 123). Afrocentricity bluntly declares that current methods of inquiry, logic, and research in academia are inappropriate methods to study African Americans. In fact, such approaches to knowledge are "based on an ideology of racial superiority and racial privilege" (Asante, 2006, p. 653). So-called theoretical development through empirical research intentionally oppresses Africans by imposing a racist and sexist interpretation to knowledge. Furthermore, the academy's intentional contrivance of language is an important tool to maintain the hegemony. For example, terms, such as "multicultural," "inclusive," and "ethnic minority" actively promote the dominance and superiority of White Americans. Only the analytical tools of Afrocentricity can discover the truth regarding the African American condition. Afrocentricity's primary tools of analyses are "the twin towers" of tradition and reason (pp. 651-652).

Even African American scholars, educated in the academy, are ineffective using Eurocentric research methods (Asante, 2006, pp. 648-649). African American scholars using empiricism to understand the experience of his or her own culture are "enemies" of African Americans (Turner, 2002, p. 723). These scholars "don't normally speak from a sense of centeredness and intellectual background of Africa or of African America. They speak out of European centeredness…. [Asante] thinks centeredness has to be a sense of fidelity and… integrity… out of your own culture" (Turner, 2002, p. 724). Therefore, a non-Afrocentrist, regardless of race or scholarship, is incapable of developing knowledge that accurately represents the African American collective experience for self-determination and self-definition. The ineffectiveness of African American scholarship is symptomatic of the misorientation resulting from Eurocentric hegemony. Asante (2006) believes that many African American scholars "…are victims of the hegemonic influences of their teachers and are therefore caught in a uniquely stifling bind." In fact, many African American scholars "… write as if they are not just conceptually European but also possess an anti-African agency." Asante maintains his position is not racist or anti-White. On the contrary, it is pro-African to expose the racist and oppressive effects of European mythology (pp. 657-658).

The second goal of Afrocentricity is to return all African Americans to their cultural center. The term "cultural center" refers to the unique African Cultural System, which "… is the first and only reality for African [American] people." The African Cultural System comprises main elements of African symbolism, language, rhythm, spirituality, and values that have always been African culture. However, the system has varied manifestations among Africans globally, because no cultural system is unaffected by new environments (Asante, 2003, pp. 4-5). Variation exists in terms of levels of awareness, manifestation, and participation, but the African Cultural System has not eroded. In fact, Africans "… respond to the same rhythms of the universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same gen-

eral historical reality as the African descended people" (p. 4). Therefore, unless African Americans are "mis-educated, de-centered, or culturally insane," most participate in the African Cultural System" pp. 3-5. Afrocentricity seeks to facilitate African America's connection to the African Cultural System by raising the collective consciousness (pp. 33-37).

According to Afrocentricity, becoming part of the African collective consciousness goes beyond a mere acceptance and understanding of one's African ancestry. The nature of this consciousness involves a collective acceptance of commitments, similar reactions to Eurocentric assaults, cultural destiny, and respect for African ancestors. Only full acceptance pulls the individual to the African cultural center and begins the emergence of Afrocentricity within the person. This comprehensive response is a step towards psychological health and cultural assertiveness, which prevents cultural insanity (Azibo, 1989, p. 178). Finally, the goal of all African Americans, to cross the threshold into collective consciousness, transcends the notion of group unity without Afrocentricity as the organizing paradigm (Asante, 2003, pp. 34-35, 53). This is a logical progression, because it is futile for Afrocentrists to unite with de-centered or mis-oriented African Americans. People of African descent must first experience the transformation to become agents of African culture.

Afrocentricity's transformation is analogous to the Christian notion of religious conversion. Asante (2003) emphasizes, "What [Christians] meant is what I mean … Your conversion to Afrocentricity becomes total… It supersedes any other ideology because it is the proper sanctification of your own history" (p. 12). Accepting Afrocentricity is a conversion of mind and action. A transformed mind analyzes the world through an African-centered lens and assesses self in relation to that center. After self-examination, analysis extends to all African people in every cultural context. Ultimately, Afrocentrists interpret all social phenomena from this perspective. Asante (2003) points out the "Afrocentrist… studies every thought, action, behavior, and value, and if it is contradictory to [African] culture or our history, it is dispensed with quickly…. Our problems come when we lose sight of ourselves, accept false doctrines, false gods, mistaken notions of what is truly in our history, and assume an individualistic, anti-humanistic, and autocratic posture" (p. 10). In terms of action, it is a continuous process of rejecting the Eurocentric social reality, while embracing all aspects of Afrocentric reality in the midst of a racist society. Afrocentrists assertively challenge Eurocentric perspectives as applied to, or experienced by, African people (p. 35).

Transforming to Afrocentricity leads African Americans to their cultural center and allows them to reach their full potential. In fact, Afrocentricity is an essential reality for African Americans to participate in American society. If one recognizes the power of culture to dominate the minds and behavior of a people (e.g., African Americans), it follows that African Americans must operate within their own culture to respond to European oppression. Without Afrocentricity, Black Americans bring "… nothing to the multicultural table but a darker version of whiteness" (Asante, 1998, p. 8). The solution to White ideological domination is the literal construction of "another reality" to expose, contrast, and critique Eurocentric domination; this alternate reality is the theory of Afrocentricity (Asante, 1998, p. 2).

The third goal of Afrocentricity is to convert African Americans to an ideology of values, spirituality, and ritual. Asante (2003) developed a belief system referred to as Njia. Translated as "The Way," "Njia is the collective expression of the Afrocentric worldview which is grounded in the historical experience of African people… Njia represents the inspired Afrocentric spirit found in the traditions of African-Americans, and the spiritual survival of an African essence in America" (p. 30). Asante (pp. 137-148) concretely organizes the reconstructive attitudes, values, and behaviors into 10 quarters of teachings, for a total of 234 precepts to learn and internalize. Six examples of precepts from Njia are: "Feeling is before belief and to everyone who feels is given belief" (p. 137); "Refuse to be dogmatic in all things except The Way;" "The revelation of The Way is pure. This is the Truth" (p. 144); "Beware of what you eat because you so easily become what you eat;" "When you feel the wind you are feeling the Presence. Therefore, never ask, where is the Presence? It is everywhere," and "At thirteen years of age every child shall be required to participate in the Mfundalai rite of the coming of age" (p. 147). Practicing Njia in whole is central to developing the fullness of Afrocentricity.

An important ritual in Afrocentricity is "the gathering" ceremony (Asante, 2003). Members meet on Sundays to participate in this meeting, which consists of several rituals. The gathering begins with a libation, which is the pouring of a liquid to invoke the presence of African ancestors, honoring their deeds and accomplishments. With that inspiration, participants engage in forms of creative expression, such as poetry or music. In the rituals called Nommo, participants discuss world problems and consider creative solutions in a manner that validates The Way. A leader reads from Njia's precepts to affirm Afrocentricity's survival and one's own God-force. A second libation, accompanied by a collection of money, affirms prosperity, followed by the final libation that calls upon the next generations of Africans to witness and learn from the current generation. Finally, each attendee raises his and her "right hand into the air for harambees." The word "harambee" means "pulling together" in Kiswahili. A designated person performs the ritual seven times before engaging in fellowship (p. 32). In addition to this weekly celebration, those who follow The Way also celebrate the annual Kwanzaa (p. 114).

The fourth goal of Afrocentricity is to provide a culturally appropriate method of analysis for African Americans. Afrocentricity exposes the Eurocentric historical practice of analyzing African Americans as objects. Placing African Americans into the position of subject allows them to examine phenomena from an African perspective or "location" (Asante, 1993, p. 22). In essence, Afrocentricity is "… a radical critique of the Eurocentric ideology that masquerades as a universal view in the fields of intercultural communication, rhetoric, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, education, anthropology, and history" (Asante, 1998, p. 1). Afrocentricity's approach to the analysis of these disciplines is to interpret and understand information and phenomena using African tradition, history, and culture (Turner, 2002, p. 718).

In summary, Asante presents Afrocentricity as a worldview, paradigm, theory, and ideology of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. It opposes the White domination of Africans by exposing and resisting Eurocentric hegemony. The primary method to over-

come European oppression is to convert African Americans to Afrocentricity and to return them to their African cultural center. This transformation includes indoctrination into Njia, which provides values, spirituality, and rituals by which the Afrocentrist actualizes his or her potential. Finally, the Afrocentrist uses these truths and knowledge to analyze all social phenomena for the interests of African people.

AN ANALYSIS OF AFROCENTRICITY AS A THEORY

The task of analyzing Afrocentricity as theory presents a logical dilemma. Specifically, this article uses analytical approaches antithetical to Afrocentricity's unique epistemology. As previously described, Afrocentricity characterizes current conceptualizations of theory, science, and empirical research as oppressive Eurocentric hegemony (Asante, 1998, p. 18). Any assertion that social work research promotes oppression requires examination, because social workers are obligated "to prevent ethical problems from occurring in their studies" using "a variety of safeguards" to protect clients (Dudley, 2003, p. 10). Though Afrocentric writers passionately argue that empirically-based theoretical development is racist and oppressive, they provide no supportive evidence beyond opinion. The social work profession is aware of the potential biases related to politically-driven research, realizes the need for cultural competency in research design, and is aware of the limitations of science measuring social phenomena (Cournoyer & Klein, 2000, pp. 24-27; Dawson, Klass, Guy, & Edgley, 1991, p. 72; Dudley, p. 56; Rubin & Babbie, 2005, pp. 89-94). An interesting observation of Asante's (2003) critique of empiricism is his use of both scientific and nonscientific terminology; for example, Asante describes Afrocentricity as a theory (p. 2), a philosophical perspective (p. 3), an ideology (pp. 3, 12, 28), and a paradigm (Turner, 2002, p. 718). This article's primary analytical goal is to determine whether Afrocentricity is a theory. The analysis examines Afrocentricity in the context of accepted definitions of theory, epistemology, and paradigm. First, this writer describes the essential components of theory, using religion as an analogy, to determine whether Afrocentricity meets its essential criteria. Second, the article examines and comments on Afrocentric epistemology. Third, by understanding its epistemology, the author argues that Afrocentricity's paradigm is ideological. A discussion follows the analysis to consider the implications of accepting Afrocentricity as a paradigm for social work practice.

Is Afrocentricity a Theory?

Despite Afrocentricity's unique epistemology, accepted definitions of theory must provide the analytical framework. The Council on Social Work Education's (2003) *Educational Policy Accreditation and Accreditation Standards* guides social work programs on foundation content essential for social work practice. One stated objective is that graduates are able to use "theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence" (Program Objectives, Sec. 3.0). Though knowledge is not limited to theoretical frameworks, accepting a premise of empirical support for theory is a logical method to prepare social workers to competently develop and use social work knowledge (CSWE, Foundation Curriculum Content, Sec. 4.3). Knowledge challenged by critical thinking skills and science provides systematic

methods for social workers to develop interventions, convey their methods to clients, and measure practice outcomes (Cournoyer & Klein, 2000, p. 2; Dudley, 2003, p. 3; Thomas, 2007, pp. 1-14).

Dawson, Klass, Guy, and Edgley (1991) note variation across definitions of theory; however, they share "…the idea that theories, in as logical terms as possible, [are] a set of general statements that explain or account for some phenomenon…" (p. 70). Examining the definitions of several social science researchers, this observation appears valid (Dudley, 2003; Cournoyer & Klein, 2000; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003; Rosenthal, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Of the research writers reviewed, Kerlinger's (1986) definition is the most comprehensive: "A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (p. 9).

This definition details the components and nature of theory. Afrocentricity has defined concepts, propositions, and statements that explain phenomena. However, it is important to realize that rational organization of concepts into explanatory statements is insufficient to conclude their ideas are theory (Dawson, et al., 1991, p. 70; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 7). On this basis, one can argue religions are theories. Consider Christianity as an illustration. Christianity has numerous concepts, such as God, creation, sin, grace, repentance, salvation, and sanctification. Vine's (1966) dictionary provides sufficient information to develop these conceptual definitions: 1) *God* is the creator spirit possessing attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and, perfection; 2) *Supernatural creation* is God's ability to bring physical matter into existence independent of nature. The human race exists though the *supernatural creation* of two progenitors (Adam & Eve), who are the common ancestors to all humanity; 3) The *Sinful nature* is a universal spiritual condition of evil resulting from Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's law; 4) *Grace* is God's conditional spiritual response and solution to forgive human sin; 5) *Repentance* is the conscious rejection of sin and condition of God's grace; 6) *Salvation* is the conversion from unbeliever to believer through grace; and 7) *Sanctification* is the believer's progressive transformation toward perfection. These are a few of the numerous concepts in this complex worldview.

Using these conceptual definitions, many variations of Christianity have developed coherent perspectives to explain social phenomena. A brief description of one variation of evangelical Christianity follows: Because *God* created humanity, he has the authority to determine morality and power to judge *his creation* by that standard. The universal human crisis is the *sinful nature*, which separates humanity from relationship with God. Knowing the propensity for humans to sin, God preordained a plan to forgive sin through the agency of *grace*, based on the human decision to *repent* from volitional sin. Anyone who accepts God's grace by faith in this truth experiences *salvation*. Salvation frees believers from the curse of sin; constrains the sinful nature; and, allows one to live the Christian lifestyle. With power from God's Holy Spirit, the Christian undergoes the *sanctification* process. This process develops the Christian's ability to obey and please God (Martin, 1975).

The logic of this theology is internally consistent, that is, there are no fallacies of reason within the body of statements. However, it is fallacious to assert that the

description of reality is objectively true, because it clearly lacks external consistency (Warnick & Inch, 1989, pp. 75-77). Besides Christian believers, would most grant the premises of God's existence, creation, the sinful nature, grace, or Christianity's conceptualization of morality? What are the observable evidences to support these concepts? If the primary evidences are church tradition, personal testimonies, or biblical authority, then the fallacy of premise arises. On what basis should non-Christians accept church tradition? Are all personal testimonies reliable and consistent? Would most accept the Bible as authoritative valid evidence? The requirement that a valid argument must have external consistency and empirical evidence exposes why religion is not theory.

This is philosophically moot for Afrocentricity, because it does not apply empirical methods to examine its central constructs. Truth is "self-knowledge," and many important concepts in Afrocentricity are beyond measurement (Mazama, 2001, pp. 399-400). Operating under the presumptions that, concepts, such as *African Cultural System, Afrocentric transformation, collective consciousness, African centeredness, African interests, ancestral communication*, and *Eurocentrism* are valid constructs, Afrocentrists are not compelled to formulate operational definitions or examine hypothetical relations. From an empirical perspective, without operational definitions, such relations are beyond scientific inquiry (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 4). Afrocentricity's acceptance as empirically-based theory requires internally consistent logic, a broad acceptance of its premises, adequately conceptualized and operationalized constructs, and the ability to test relations between those constructs (Dawson et al., 2002, pp. 70-72; Kerlinger, pp. 19-20; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 7; Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 11; Warnick & Inch, 1989, pp. 75-77). Under such conditions, this analysis concludes that Afrocentricity is not a theory.

Afrocentric Epistomology

Accepted epistemology for social work practice is not limited to science (Dawson et al., 1991, p. 64; Dudley, 2003, p. 3). Several ways of knowing often produces accurate knowledge about the social world, but epistemological perspectives differ in terms of bias, structure, and reliability (Dudley, 2003, p. 4; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 2). Non-scientific ways of knowing influence social work decisions based on informal hypotheses about clients in the environment (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 6). Because the social work profession is grounded in empirically-based theories and accepted perspectives, other ways of knowing augment knowledge developed through the scientific method. In place of empiricism, Afrocentricity's epistemology consists of truth based on authority, cultural tradition, and mysticism.

Authority claims knowledge is true, because someone of expertise or importance makes the statement (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 6; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 3; Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 13). One limitation of knowledge by authority is the fact that expertise does not guarantee accuracy. For example, Asante (2003) proclaims himself as an authority in African worldviews. The basis of this authority is personal study and his having received the revelation of Afrocentricity as immutable truth (pp. 10, 137-140). Stated expertise in African history and culture alone is insufficient to accept Afrocentricity. When social work confronts theoretical differences, the profession depends upon quantitative and qualitative research to refine

knowledge; whereas, Afrocentricity has no self-correcting mechanisms based on evidence. To assert Afrocentricity is truth solely on authority is to accept conclusions based on circular reasoning. For example:

Major Premise: Afrocentricity was revealed to Dr. Asante as the only reality for African Americans.

Minor Premise: Afrocentricity teaches that African Americans must be African-centered for psychological health.

Minor Premise: Afrocentricity is the only way to become African-centered.

Conclusion: Therefore, Dr. Asante's Afrocentricity is the only cultural reality for African Americans psychological health.

Evidence: Dr. Asante developed the one reality for African Americans, i.e., Afrocentricity.

Without evidence for each premise, the conclusion depends upon the major premise resulting in an invalid argument (Warnick & Inch, 1989, p. 139).

Even less reliable is an individual who is an expert in one field but speaks with authority in another. Some of Dr. Asante's views may inform the profession, however, his expertise in African American studies does not assure his views are relevant to social work practice with African Americans. This conclusion in no way marginalizes disciplines of ethnic study. In the interest of serving populations-at-risk, social work has historically looked to other disciplines to identify knowledge to inform the profession. Some considerations are how the discipline conceptualizes humans in the environment, defines social problems, its philosophical premises, the line of reasoning that follows, and, the practicality of its solutions. For example, Asante (1998) claims that Eurocentric hegemony is a "crisis" for African Americans (p. 23). Afrocentricity's solution is for African Americans to enter the *African collective consciousness* and pursue psychological liberation through the total acceptance of Afrocentricity (Asante, 2003, p. 62). Given that solution, social work must ask a fundamental question: Is an African American's well being at-risk because she or he does not accept Afrocentricity? One cannot answer the question without determining the validity of two related Afrocentric premises: 1) De-centered African Americans are outside their only cultural reality and, 2) *The collective consciousness* leads de-centered African Americans to their essential African reality (Asante, 2003, pp. 3-4). Accepting these premises could lead one to conclude the most critical need for African Americans is transformation to Afrocentricity. If converting African Americans to Afrocentricity is a social work goal, what feasible role does a Eurocentric dominated profession (White and de-centered Black professionals, alike) have to participate in the intervention? According to Asante (2003), the role is to move aside so that African Americans can rise "… from the intellectual and spiritual pit that has held our mighty people! Let each person take his post in the vanguard of this collective consciousness of Afrocentricity! Teach it! Practice it! And victory will surely come as we carry out the Afrocentric mission to humanize the Universe" (Asante, 2003, p. 11). Though humanizing the world is compatible with social work's mission, a simple call to convert African Americans to Afrocentricity illustrates how non-professional disciplines may oversimplify com-

plex social issues. To summarize, knowledge from authority can be accurate or false, depending upon the source of information; the given context; external support for the stated claims; and whether that knowledge can critically inform social work.

Accepting knowledge by *Tradition* is stating that a belief is true because it was true in the past or that tradition is continuing a practice because it was effective in the past (Dawson, et al., 1991, p. 3; Kerlinger, 1986, p. 6; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 3). Sources of traditional knowledge are the family, culture, and historical practices (Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 12). Asante (2003) explicitly grounds Afrocentricity's truth in cultural tradition (p. 30). However, there are several difficulties using cultural tradition as the basis of truth.

First, it is questionable whether tradition is a stable reality. According to Glassie (1995), tradition is a social perception of beliefs and behaviors from which individuals or groups create a future from the past (p. 409). In other words, tradition has aspects of continuity and discontinuity based on an interpretive process imposed by the observer (Handler & Linnekin, 1984). Asante (2003) believes African cultural tradition transcends social change, thus, it is bounded and equally applicable to all Africans over the centuries (p. 30). This deterministic view suggests an axiomatic bond between corresponding races and cultures in nature (Azibo, 1989, p. 175). This naturally occurring bond, however, is vulnerable to the unnatural interference of group domination. This explains the danger of European hegemony to Africans. As Spencer (2000) points out, "Afrocentricity… suggests that philosophy is at root a racially determined enterprise, with the immediate implication that all epistemology becomes racially relative (p. 191)."

Second, knowledge about ancient traditions depends upon written record, oral testimony, or indirect evidence. Without extant records or reasonable agreement on the original knowledge, tradition is unreliable and is open to challenge and interpretation. For example, Lefkowitz (1996) and Howe (1999) offer challenges to Afrocentricity's interpretations of African history and culture.

A third difficulty, using tradition as truth, is an evident reality that truth changes over time. According to tradition, it was once known that the earth was flat and spirits were the cause of disease and hallucinations (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 3; Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 12). Science provided evidence to replace erroneous traditions; likewise, modern social work uses evidence to develop knowledge, not mythology. Afrocentricity provides no evidence that African ancestors can guide living descendants (pp. 8, 32). Nevertheless, this belief qualitatively differentiates de-centered African Americans from Afrocentrists, "… the non-Afrocentric person operates in a manner that is negatively predictable…. Unable to call upon the power of ancestors, because one does not know them; without an ideology of heritage, because one does not respect one's own prophets; the person is like an ant trying to move a large piece of garbage only to find that it will not move" (p. 3). The ant moving a large piece of garbage is an interesting metaphor. African Americans with various cultural and spiritual worldviews moved institutionalized segregation from its foundation during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement without an Afrocentric tradition. The extraordinary changes brought about by the Civil Rights Movement suggest that there is no direct correlation between African mythologi-

cal homogeneity and social power. Philosophy and religion can use mythological and metaphysical frameworks to function within their disciplines; whereas, social work must be grounded in sound theory and observation.

Mysticism is a way of knowing unobservable phenomena without evidence or a valid logical argument (Cournoyer & Klein, 2000, p. 5). Many people believe in an invisible Supreme Being, curses, and spirits through faith in place of empirical evidence. This is the primary reason most religions do not classify as theory. Though many religions suggest spiritual existence explains paranormal or supernatural events, it is impossible to forward a valid line of logical reasoning to support the conclusion. As previously pointed out, Afrocentricity has central constructs that are beyond direct measurement and logic.

Afrocentricity as An Ideology

Afrocentric epistemology depends upon non-scientific knowledge, predominately authority, tradition, and mysticism. The final section of this analysis looks at the similarities and differences between theory and ideology to determine whether Afrocentricity's assumptions and conclusions are ideological constructions.

An *ideology* is a quasi-theory without the essential features of scientific theory. This closed system explains the social world using fixed assumptions, beliefs, and values that shape its believers. Ideological truth is fixed and immovable by evidence (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 45; Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 40). Ideologues promote their views in the popular media, cults, politics, academic disciplines, and religion. Scientists become ideological when they remain fixed in their positions despite contradictory evidence. Social work has ideologues on both sides of many social issues, such as abortion, gay rights, transracial adoption, and evidence-based practice (Rubin & Babbie, 2005, p. 40). Unlike ideologues, scientists follow accepted norms of the scientific community; that is, an ethos of open and diverse investigation, rigor, organized skepticism, neutrality, communalism, and honesty (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003, p. 9).

According to Neuman and Kreuger (2003), theory and ideology have similarities and differences. Afrocentricity generally satisfies the similarities between ideology and theory. Both Afrocentricity and scientific theory operate under assumptions, explain social phenomena, provide a system of concepts, discuss conceptual relationships and causality, and, offer an interconnected system of ideas.

Based on Neuman and Kreuger's (2003, p. 45) differentiation between theory and ideology, at each point, Afrocentricity diverges from theory and becomes ideological. Asante (2003) supports the conclusion that Afrocentricity is an ideology. "As the highest, most conscious ideology it makes its points, motivates its adherents, and captivates the cautious by the force of its truth" (pp. 11-12). Without the conditional and negotiated understanding that theory requires, Afrocentricity touts the absolutes of Njia in response to the certainty of Eurocentric hegemony. While theoretical development presumes incompleteness and uncertainty, the collective consciousness leads one closer to the one reality of the African Cultural System. As theoretical knowledge openly expands, Afrocentricity's closed system is primarily committed to conversion into its ideology. While Asante suggests openness to positive and negative testing, he vilifies findings that were produced by so-called

Western research. Such denunciation restricts objective testing, thereby reducing the likelihood of discrepant findings. It follows that, if the only acceptable evidence supports the structure, there is no basis to change. Science seeks to be objective and detached; whereas, Afrocentricity is an immutable belief system of values that direct attitudes and behavior. "The Way" is not a negotiated system of beliefs, because it presumes to be true. Theory seeks logical consistency, while this analysis finds many issues of internal and external inconsistency within Afrocentricity. Finally, theory transcends social positions. Afrocentric ideology is clearly rooted in a cultural position with predetermined conclusions. Given the ideological nature of Afrocentricity, this analysis has demonstrated the profession must debate its appropriate role in social work practice.

DISCUSSION

This critique challenges the presumption that Afrocentricity is a practice perspective that is generally applicable to African Americans. By definition, Afrocentricity is an ideology that promotes itself as a valid culture, not a practice paradigm. Mazama (2001) correctly points out that many scholars, claiming adherence to Afrocentricity, clearly misunderstand the paradigm. He points out that some authors do not define the term. Other authors define Afrocentricity, yet misrepresent it as being culturally African, promoting pure African values to benefit all people, or as a worldview with variation (p. 389). Those who would force an ideology into a practice perspective should accurately represent Afrocentricity.

Graham (2007) accurately observes the marginalization of African-centered knowledge in social work. Considering the ideology's goal to liberate African Americans from Eurocentric hegemony, one expects its supporters to assert their perspective. In the spirit of open debate, these views are welcome. However, non-Afrocentrists are minimizing the importance of determining the most appropriate role for this perspective, which suggests a double standard. On one hand, social work insists that empirically-based theories are necessary for competent social work practice; on the other hand, ideology and culture are accepted as sufficiently rigorous for practice with African Americans. There must not be any cultural exceptions for competence practice guided by recognized and empirically-based knowledge (NASW, 1999, Section 4.01).

Social work should acknowledge Afrocentricity in light of the above analysis. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that some African American clients accept Afrocentricity. Hence, social workers will require insight into the culture to be competent practitioners with an Afrocentric client. This approach affirms Afrocentricity as one of many cultures that social workers may be required to understand, depending upon the client (NASW, 1999, Section 1.05). As social workers prepare for clients with that worldview, the implications for research are to identify the prevalence of Afrocentricity in African American communities, the degree of its cultural variation, and potential barriers for cultural competency working with Afrocentric clients. Implications for practice would emerge as research produces answers to these and other research endeavors. Finally, Afrocentricity's views on multiculturalism, cross-cultural practice, gay rights, racially-based personality structures, and self-determination are beyond the

scope of this article. However, these issues are salient and deserve the profession's attention in the literature.

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Psychodynamic Theory

Kathleen Holtz Deal

Abstract: *Psychodynamic theory, a theory of personality originated by Sigmund Freud, has a long and complex history within social work and continues to be utilized by social workers. This article traces the theory's development and explains key concepts with an emphasis on its current relational focus within object relations theory and self-psychology. Empirical support for theoretical concepts and the effectiveness of psychodynamic therapies is reviewed and critiqued. Future directions are discussed, including addressing cultural considerations, increasing research, and emphasizing a relational paradigm*

Keywords: Psychodynamic theory; empirical support; social work practice

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Psychodynamic theory, a theory of personality originated by Sigmund Freud, has a long and complex history within social work. The young profession's desire for a scientific base, Mary Richmond's choice of a medical model to assess and treat client problems, and the wide impact of Freud's ideas on the popular culture, contributed to the prominent role of psychodynamic thought in the theory base of social work (Germain, 1970; Greene & Ephross, 1991). In addition, the movement of large numbers of social workers into areas of practice heavily influenced by psychiatrists, including child guidance and work with war veterans and their families, exposed them to psychodynamic ideas (Brandell, 2004; Goldstein, 1995). The diagnostic or psychosocial school developed by such early contributors as Mary Richmond, Charlotte Towle, Gordon Hamilton, and Florence Hollis, used psychodynamic concepts to help explain complex human behaviors. These writers attempted to integrate concepts, such as the role of drives in human motivation, stages of psychosexual development, and ego defense mechanisms into a person-and-environment framework to explain the interaction of interpersonal and societal factors. These efforts resulted in social work widely utilizing psychodynamic concepts, while retaining the profession's own identity and psychosocial focus (Orcutt, 1990).

When psychoanalysts such as Hartmann, Erikson, and White theorized a more autonomous role for the ego, social work adopted this theoretical shift as consistent

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with the profession's perspective that individuals actively interact with their environment and are capable of growth and change throughout their life times (Greene & Ephross, 1991). Perlman's development of the popular problem-solving model is heavily based on ego psychology (Brandell, 2004; Goldstein, 1995).

During the 1960s and 1970s, psychodynamic theories fell out of favor. Psychodynamic principles that explained human behavior were criticized as overly deterministic, resulting in "blaming the victim" (Goldstein, 1995). Their focus on intrapsychic phenomenon was seen as inadequate to explain the massive social problems of the day, including poverty, racism, sexism, and heterosexism. During this same period, alternative ways to understand individual and family behaviors arose, including behavioral, cognitive, existential, and family systems theories, greatly expanding the profession's theoretical base.

These expansions offer many theoretical options to social workers; however, psychodynamic theories continue to be included in HBSE textbooks utilized by social work practitioners (Saltman & Greene, 1993) and provide the theoretical base for such journals as the *Clinical Social Work Journal* and *Psychoanalytic Social Work*. The NASW Standards for Clinical Social Work in Social Work Practice (National Association of Social Workers, 2005) include psychodynamic theory in a list of theories on which clinical social workers base their practice. The persistence of psychodynamic theory within social work can be partially understood by changes within the theory itself, particularly the theory's shift to a relational focus, which resonates with social work's traditional emphasis on the importance of interpersonal relationships.

KEY THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

Psychodynamic theory attempts to explain human behavior in terms of intrapsychic processes and the repetition of interpersonal patterns that are often outside of an individual's conscious awareness and have their origins in childhood experiences. Its long history reflects frequent modifications and differences among major theorists around key concepts and principles. Given psychodynamic theory's complex evolutionary history, this section is organized around the theory's four major schools of thought, commonly conceptualized as drive theory, ego psychology, object relations theory, and self-psychology (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Mishne, 1993).

Drive Theory

Psychodynamic theory began with Sigmund Freud's belief that drives, biologically-based impulses that seek gratification, play a critical role in determining human behavior. Freud originally hypothesized sex (eros) and self-preservation as the primary drives, later modifying his ideas to include a destructive or aggressive drive (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The term sexual is understood broadly to include pleasure across the body's erogenous zones. In psychodynamic theory, the zone of bodily pleasure shifts during the normal stages of psychosexual development (oral, anal, phallic, and genital). Early libidinal stages arise "in connection with important nonsexual bodily functions, such as sucking (when feeding) or anus arousal (when defecating)" (Mishne, 1993, p. 11). The phallic stage is particularly

critical in personality development, because, during this period, the developing child experiences and ideally resolves the Oedipus conflict, resulting in a mature, integrated identity (Brandell, 2004). During the Oedipus conflict, the child typically desires the opposite-sex parent, while wishing to eliminate the same-sexed parent, who is viewed as a rival. In resolving this conflict, the child fears retaliation for his or her wishes, relinquishes the desire for an exclusive love relationship with the opposite-sex parent, and identifies with the same-sex parent. Family members other than parents, such as siblings, can become objects of desire, depending on family dynamics and configurations (Brandell, 2004).

In seeking gratification of their endogenous drives, individuals are confronted with the frustrations imposed by the external world (i.e., parents, society), which frequently oppose such gratification. Freud (1946) viewed the conflict between the drives and the restraining forces that forbid, delay, or limit drive gratification as a necessary condition for the development of civilization. However, restraints on drive gratification are not only externally imposed on individuals, but they eventually come from within the individual, through the development of the psychic structures of the ego and superego. Freud conceptualized the ego as developing from the id, the seat of the drives, in reaction to the frustrations of the external world (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The ego performs functions that help the individual effectively adapt to reality, including the ability to accurately perceive the world, respond to both external and internal stimuli, and control the drives (Mishne, 1993). The superego is a structure formed initially by the child's internalization of parental ideals and prohibitions, which become transformed into abstract principles after the Oedipal period (Milrod, 2002). The superego has four functions: providing direction (based on the ego-ideal), limiting behavior, punishing unacceptable behavior, and observing and measuring the ego against the ego ideal (Milrod). Because the superego also contains early punitive tendencies, it can be harsh, intolerant, and demanding, if development does not proceed well (Schamess, 2002).

When an individual's unacceptable drive-based wishes and fantasies threaten to become conscious, they trigger conflicts between the drives (residing in the unconscious id) and the superego and/or the ego. If the individual successfully represses these wishes, they return to the unconscious. If repression is unsuccessful, the individual experiences anxiety, activating the ego's defenses, defined as "psychological activities that reduce the unpleasure of psychic conflict by blocking, inhibiting, or distorting awareness of disturbing mental contents" (Brandell, 2004, p. 36). There may be a disguised breakthrough of the unacceptable impulse, which manifests itself as a symptom or compromise formation that both partially conceals and indirectly expresses the underlying conflict (Mishne, 1983). For example, Joe's boss gives him a poor performance evaluation. Joe reacts by assuring himself and his wife that, although he is disappointed, his boss is only doing his job and has Joe's best interests at heart (the defense of intellectualization). Joe represses his unconscious wish to retaliate and injure his boss, which triggers an intrapsychic conflict between his id and his ego, which can understand and evaluate the negative repercussions of such an action and/or his superego, which views harming another person as wrong. Subsequently, when Joe is around his

boss, he begins to experience prolonged coughing spells, which he feels unable to stop. Joe's symptom of loud, uncontrolled coughing is a compromise formation, because it partially conceals his wish to injure his boss (when he's coughing, he feels vulnerable, rather than aggressive; he's unable to physically attack or even speak to his boss), while allowing Joe to indirectly express it (Joe's loud coughing itself is aggressive, in that coughing makes it impossible to hear his boss and it could spread germs to his boss, making him ill).

Ego Psychology

Sigmund Freud's (1923/1961) structural theory conceptualized the ego as relatively weak in relation to the id. Building on his work, later theorists expanded the role of the ego beyond drive regulation to include organizational and synthetic functions, including judgment, reality testing, thought processes, regulating internal and external stimuli, regulating self-esteem, and organizing the conflicting aspects of the personality (Goldstein, 1995; Schamess, 2002).

In contrast to Freud's idea that the ego developed solely from the id, Hartmann (1939) theorized that some aspects of ego functioning, such as perception, memory, intellectual ability, language ability, and motor activity develop autonomously, that is, they are free of intrapsychic conflict. White (1963) posited that individuals have a drive for mastery equal to the drives of sex and aggression, such that human beings derive satisfaction by exploring and manipulating their environment. He described this drive for competence or "effectance," as implying "a primary positive interest in the world apart from its drive-reducing properties" (p. 47). Through these modifications to psychodynamic theory, ego psychology changed the focus of inquiry from how pathology develops to how individuals grow, adapt, and master their environments (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Goldstein, 1995). This shift moved psychodynamic theory from a primary focus on intrapsychic phenomenon to include the significance of reality or the environment in individual development.

This shift can be seen in the work of Erikson (1959), who expanded Freud's earlier psychosexual stages by developing eight psychosocial stages that broaden the process of personality development to include the impact of social and cultural influences. By describing the stages from birth to old age, Erikson emphasized the ongoing development of the individual across the entire life cycle, with each stage presenting unique tasks and opportunities for further identity development and refinement.

Object Relations

Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) describe a major shift in psychodynamic theory, from the use of drives and their derivatives to explain human behavior (drive/structure model), to understanding individuals as "object seeking," that is, motivated to connect with others (relational/structure model). Consistent with this focus, object relations theory has a particular interest in pre-Oedipal relationships, including the nature of the attachment between infants and their caregivers and the process of separation-individuation. Object relations theory posits that, through repeated interactions, children internalize representations of themselves and their caregivers. The term *object relations*, therefore, "refers not only to 'real'

relationships with others, but also to the internal mental representations of others and to internal images of self as well" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 128). These internalized representations of self and others begin as cognitive constructions based on experiences, ideas, and memories, but they take on emotional meaning, becoming cognitive-affective templates for future relationships (Flanagan). Because many factors can affect the internalization process, including the child's early experiences, drives, needs, and perceptions, internal representations may not correspond to the objective characteristics of the self or the other person (Fonagy & Target, 1996; Goldstein, 1995; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983).

The following example illustrates how self and other representations are formed, become internalized, and affect future relationships. Through repeated interactions with a responsive caregiver who generally provides good care, an infant is able to internalize a sense of herself as safe and is able to affect her environment. For example, when she is hungry and cries, she is comforted and fed. Through these repeated interactions, she also internalizes the caring and dependable "other" who is connected to her experience of herself. Based on these internalized representations, the child will be able to enter future relationships, trusting that she is competent with interacting with her environment and that others can be depended upon. Because representations of both the self and the other are internalized, both representations contribute to the formation of the self; therefore, this child is able to trust others (self-representation) and be dependable herself (other representation).

Object relations theory is not a unified theory, and major theorists differ on important major concepts and principles, such as the extent to which drives continue to play a role in motivating human behavior, the process through which internalization of objects occurs, and the importance of "real" relationships versus internalized representations (Brandell, 2004; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Goldstein, 1995). Key concepts developed by Winnicott (1965), a member of the British school of object relations, are included in this section, because of his influence on social work from clinical practice (Applegate & Bonovitz, 1995; Chescheir & Schulz, 1989; Seinfeld, 1993) to case management (Kanter, 1990). Winnicott's collaboration with his wife, Clare Britton Winnicott, a social worker, was one of mutual influence (Kanter, 1990).

Winnicott (1965) described the holding environment as the physical and emotional environment offered by the infant's caregiver, which serves to support the needs and wants of the developing infant. A good enough mother is one who can meet the child's needs by responding appropriately to the infant's spontaneous gestures or biologically-based aliveness, both which represent the infant's core potential. If these environmental conditions are met, the child's true self, a sense of being alive, creative, and genuine, is able to flourish. If the mother or caregiver consistently neglects the infant's needs or impinges by substituting her own needs for those of the child, the child learns to ignore her or his own authentic needs, resulting in a false self, which shields the true self and is "prematurely and compulsively attuned to the claims and requests of others" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p. 194). Gradual, small failures in responsiveness by the mother, however, help the infant's ego develop through experiencing the world separate from the

mother, thus facilitating the separation-individuation process (Brandell, 2004; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983).

Self-Psychology

In contrast to Freud's vision of human beings beset by intrapsychic conflict between their drives and the constraints of the ego and superego, Kohut developed a deficit theory in which humans are seen as isolated, fragmented, and vulnerable (Brandell, 2004). Kohut wrote, primarily from the 1960s through the 1980s, a cultural period marked by an exaggerated emphasis on self-fulfillment. He encountered patients whom he viewed as having a fragile, fragmented sense of self and who were "extremely sensitive to failures, disappointments, and slights" (Kohut & Wolf, 1978, p. 413). Kohut connected such deficits in these narcissistic individuals to their parents' lack of empathic responsiveness.

He explained that parents first serve as self-objects "in which the object is actually experienced as an extension of the self, without psychological differentiation" (Brandell, 2004, p. 63). Individuals need three types of self-object experiences to facilitate the development of a complete tripolar self. They need mirroring self-objects who will praise and admire their unique capacities and characteristics to provide a sense of healthy grandiosity and self-confidence, self-objects who can be idealized (called the parent imago) as persons with whom the child can merge in order to feel safe and complete, and partnering self-objects to provide an experience of twinship, or being like others (Brandell, 2004; Flanagan, 2002). Through the process of transmuting internalization, individuals gradually take in the functions initially performed by self-objects, so that these functions become part of the child's self-structure (Brandell, 2004). Although the internalization process described by Kohut is similar to how the "other" is internalized in object-relations theory, self-psychology emphasizes that empathic attunement is the key environmental condition facilitating the development of a healthy, cohesive, and secure self. Another difference is that Kohut believed that individuals continue to need self-objects throughout their lives, a contrast to the separation-individuation process described by object-relations theorists.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Psychodynamic theory seeks to explain human behavior largely through understanding unconscious processes, that is, forces that lie outside of an individual's awareness. Referred to as depth psychology, psychodynamic thought attempts to explain phenomena that, on the surface, may appear unrelated or to serve no obvious purpose. The theory is considered deterministic in that early intrapsychic and interpersonal experiences shape personality and determine later-life choices. This theory's primary emphasis is on individual behavior, although it is also used to explain dyadic relationships, particularly the parent-child dyad and small groups.

While criticized as focusing on pathology, rather than on individuals' strengths and capabilities (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006), contemporary trends in psychodynamic theory, such as ego psychology, include an emphasis on ego mastery, competence, and normal development across the life cycle (Brandell, 2004).

Object-relations theory seeks to explain how an individual's external environment gets "taken in" and shapes the individual's growth and development as well as how what is "inside" effects how the individual shapes her or his external world (Flanagan, 2002). Therefore, the individual's interaction with his or her surrounding environment is critical to development.

Treatment modalities based on psychodynamic theory exist along a continuum, from those intended to modify or change personality structures, to those that aim to support, enhance, and strengthen the individual's functioning. Ego-supportive approaches focus on the present situation and conscious processes to improve adaptive coping abilities, while ego-modifying approaches focus on the use of insight to understand preconscious and/or unconscious conflicts and their effects on behavior with the goal of modifying/reorganizing personality (Goldstein, 1995).

EMPIRICAL SUPPORT

Empirical support for psychodynamic theory can be divided into two related, and sometimes overlapping, areas: studies that test the effectiveness of psychodynamic treatment and those that support the validity of key theoretical concepts. Empirical support for treatments based on psychodynamic theory suffers from numerous limitations. There is a paucity of well-designed studies; interventions identified as "psychodynamic" are frequently poorly defined, and standardized outcome measures are difficult to develop when the treatment focus is broader than symptom relief (Fonagy, Roth, & Higgitt, 2005; Lis, Zennaro, & Mazzeschi, 2001; Messer & Warren, 1995).

A review of evidence-based practices for social workers by O'Hare (2005) yielded little support for the effectiveness of psychodynamic treatments. Bloom, Yeager, and Roberts (2006a) cite some support for brief psychodynamic treatment for depression in the elderly (Niedereche as cited in Bloom et al., 2006a) and chronic anxiety (Crits-Christoph as cited in Bloom et al., 2006b), while concluding that brief cognitive behavioral treatments have generally been found to be more efficacious than brief psychodynamic treatments. By contrast, a recent social work study of psychiatric outpatients treated with psychodynamic psychotherapy, which used a psychodynamic outcome measure, found significant improvements in symptom distress, interpersonal relationships, and social-role functioning over the course of a year (Roseborough, 2006).

Research reviews from related disciplines report greater, albeit limited, support for the effectiveness of psychodynamic treatment models. In an extensive review of psychodynamic treatments for adult mental disorders, Fonagy et al. (2005) concluded that empirical studies provide limited support for the efficacy of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy (an average of 20 sessions) for some disorders: major depression (comparable to cognitive-behavioral therapy or problem-solving therapy in random controlled trials), anorexia nervosa (as effective as intensive behavioral and strategic family therapy), opiate abuse (one trial; better results at follow-up than cognitive behavioral therapy and drug counseling), post-traumatic stress disorder (despite methodological problems with the trials), and borderline personality disorder (models that offer a structured framework). This

same review concludes that long-term psychodynamic treatment appears to be consistently helpful for individuals with neurotic disorders.

A meta-analysis of 11 studies of brief psychodynamic therapy conducted by Crits-Christoph (as cited in Messer & Warren, 1995), which used rigorous selection criteria, found that psychodynamic treatment produced outcomes much better than waiting-list controls, slightly better than non-psychiatric treatments (e.g., self-help groups), and equal to alternative psychotherapies and medication. Leichsenring and Leibing's (2003) meta-analysis of 25 studies of psychodynamic and/or cognitive treatment of personality disorders found both approaches to be effective in improving personality disorder pathology.

Despite the wide use of psychodynamic treatments for children and adolescents, few sound empirical studies of their effectiveness have been conducted (Fonagy, Target, Cottrell, Phillips, & Kurtz, 2002; Lis et al., 2001). One comprehensive study involved a retrospective chart review of more than 700 children and adolescents treated with either psychoanalysis (4-5 times per week) or psychodynamic psychotherapy (1-3 times per week) at the Anna Freud Centre (Fonagy & Target, 1996). For those patients who continued in treatment for a minimum of six months, 56% of those in psychoanalysis and 44% of those in psychodynamic psychotherapy, moved from the clinical to the normal range on the Hampstead Child Adaptation Measure (HCAM). This research found the following variables to be associated with greater treatment effectiveness: longer treatment, age (children under age six showed the greatest improvement), treatment intensity (children did better in psychoanalysis, particularly seriously disturbed children; adolescents with less intensive treatment), and the presence of an anxiety disorder (either alone or combined with a disruptive disorder). Children who showed relatively poor outcomes included those with mental retardation, pervasive developmental disorders, serious disruptive disorders, and depressive disorders.

Empirical studies show some support for several psychodynamic concepts. Defense mechanisms are one area of considerable theoretical and empirical inquiry (Conte & Plutchik, 1995). Consistent with the hypothesized relationship of defenses to overall ego functioning, Vaillant's (1993) longitudinal study found that the use of mature ego defenses was associated with better mental health, psychosocial adjustment, and life satisfaction, independent of gender, social class, and education. On the other hand, Johnson's (1991) critique of studies related to the psychodynamic concepts of unconscious processes, defense mechanisms, and developmental stages, concludes that empirical evidence for these concepts is weak and/or flawed. The concept of the therapeutic alliance, defined as "the observable ability of the therapist and patient to work together in a realistic collaborative relationship based on mutual respect, liking, trust, and commitment to the work of treatment" (Foreman & Marmar, 1985, p. 922) was first developed within psychodynamic theory (Greenson, 1967). Now widely accepted across theories and measured empirically, the therapeutic alliance has been found to exert a small but consistent influence on successful client outcome (Crits-Christoph & Gibbons, 2003; Roth & Fonagy, 2005).

Psychodynamic theory posits that individuals repeat relationship patterns internalized in childhood in their current relationships, including their relationship with their therapist (transference). The development and testing of the Core

Conflictual Relationship Theme method (CCRT) by Luborsky and his colleagues (Barber & Crits-Christoph; Fried, Crit-Christoph & Luborsky, both as cited in Charman, 2003) offers support for the validity of these repetitious interactive patterns.

Recent research within neurobiology explains how infants' repeated experiences with early caregivers shape structural connections within the brain. This research offers neurobiological support for such object relations and self-psychology concepts as internalized object relations, mirroring, and affect regulation as occurring through repeated interpersonal processes (Applegate & Shapiro, 2005; Schore, 1997). For example, Schore describes how interdisciplinary developmental research provides information on the mechanisms through which the orbitofrontal cortex of the infant's developing brain integrates information from the emotions on the caregiver's face with changes in the infant's self-state to generate internalized object-relations consisting of self and other representations linked by affect.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Current trends in psychodynamic theory include a vibrant interest in theory development, including cultural considerations, an emphasis on a relational paradigm, and increasing support for research, all of which have implications for social work. Object relations theory and self-psychology helped move psychodynamic theory from a one-person psychology focused on the intrapsychic dynamics of an individual to a two-person psychology, focused on relationships between individuals, including the client and clinician. Social work has a long history of emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships, including the client-worker relationship, in understanding how individuals develop and change (Biestek, 1957; Coady, 1993; Sudbery, 2002). In fact, Horowitz (1998) views psychodynamic theory's relational paradigm as reflecting much of this decades long-tradition within social work, albeit without direct recognition of social work's contributions. Given the consistency of a relational emphasis in both social work practice and current psychodynamic theory, social workers are well-positioned to continue contributing to theory development in this area, particularly around the nature and importance of the client-worker relationship.

Psychodynamic theory has long been criticized for failing to adequately address the cultural context of human development (Robbins et al., 2006). Although this criticism still has some validity, there are increased efforts to address this gap. Social workers, such as Mattei (2002), use psychodynamic theory to explain such phenomena as racial dynamics and the symbolic significance of color and to explore cultural differences in identity development and the nature of boundaries between self and other. Many social workers address the application of psychodynamic theory to clinical work with diverse populations (see, for example, Perez-Foster, Moskowitz, & Javier, 1996). The richness of theory development around the concept of intersubjectivity (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984), that is the mutual influence of client and clinician on each other, focuses on the contributions of both persons to the therapeutic process. This approach lends itself to examining the effects of such variables as culture and race within psychodynamic treatment.

Studies of community treatment settings suggest that many clients suffer from co-morbid disorders, rather than the single diagnosis desired for randomized controlled trials (Westen, Morrison, & Thompson-Brenner, 2004). Such clients, including those with multiple psychosocial problems and those mandated to receive services, are frequently encountered by clinical social workers. Psychodynamic theory offers a well-developed conceptual framework for understanding what may appear to be unrelated symptoms or the repetition of seemingly unrewarding intrapsychic and interpersonal patterns, suggesting its potential to address the complex, multiple problems of many clients served by social workers. A mutually informative process of research and theory development could add greatly to understanding these clients, who are frequently left out of treatment-effectiveness studies. Such research should include determining which clients do better with ego-supportive versus insight-oriented psychodynamic treatment. For example, low-functioning clients do poorly when therapists make interpretations, suggesting that a minimal level of interpersonal maturity and stability may be needed for insight-oriented treatment to be therapeutic (Roth & Fonagy, 2005).

Case studies, the primary type of psychodynamic therapy research conducted in the past, have their strengths and weaknesses (Aveline, 2005). Current research on treatment effectiveness is much more diverse and includes quantitative and qualitative studies, despite the challenges in operationalizing psychodynamic concepts. For example, some researchers examine therapeutic processes, such as interactional patterns and the therapeutic alliance, rather than outcomes, as particularly suited to the nature of psychodynamic treatment (Charman, 2003; Lees, 2005). Others suggest using a social constructivist research paradigm to study psychodynamic treatment. In this post-modern view, the goal of psychodynamic treatment is to understand truth as a narrative co-constructed by client and clinician, rather than an objective reality (Lees, 2005).

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Theory for the Public Good?
Social Capital Theory in Social Work Education

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Abstract: *As a concept, social capital is both relatively recent and highly controversial. This analysis overviews the history of social capital theory and the three main theoretical frameworks related to the concept. The components of social capital are discussed, as well as the controversy over its conceptualization. A review of recent studies is provided, particularly in the relationship between social capital and mental health. The article concludes with a discussion regarding the heuristic usefulness of social capital theory in the human behavior and social environment sequence in social work education, opening discourse in civic engagement and participation, collectivity, and the value of social networking.*

Keywords: Social capital theory, social work education, human behavior and the social environment, social capital and mental health, social networks, social work and civic participation

It is rare enough that there is enthusiasm around a term or theory used in the macro Human Behavior and the Social Environment curriculum, particularly at this time in social work history. Does it matter that we join groups or associations? Does the number of television sets in the nation actually affect whether I can get help when my car stalls in traffic? Is there something called "social capital," and if so, do I really have to be more of a joiner to make more of it? Does it matter, in other words, whether or not we are "bowling alone" as Robert Putnam (2000) suggests?

The concept of social capital is a relatively recent one, with the development of theory in an unsettled and underdeveloped state. While potentially very relevant as theory for students in social work, particularly in the sequence of studies regarding human behavior and the social environment (HBSE), its usefulness may remain limited due to its seeming endless elasticity. This analysis will provide an overview of the history of social capital theory, which, in the social sciences, is generally agreed to at least mean "…social networks that can be activated" (Wall, Ferrazzi, & Schryer, 1998, p. 304). Implicit in much of the discussion is that social capital at

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some level represents a public good to be encouraged. Because of this seeming prejudice toward the public good, scrutiny of the term and its accompanying theoretical base is especially important.

HISTORY OF THE TERM

The fact that six authors sporadically used the term "social capital" over a period of approximately 70 years in the 20ᵗʰ century may be a foreshadowing of the widely diverse uses of the term today. Putnam (2000) names the six early users of "social capital" as: Hanifan (1916), Canadian sociologists (1950s), Jacobs (1961), Loury (1970s) and Bourdieu (1980s), and Schlicht (1980s). The interests of these authors ranged from education to sociology to economics, but with all focusing use of the term "social capital" on the importance of social relationships, apparently without knowledge of the others' work. Generally, credit is given to Jacobs (1961) for first use of the term:

> If self-government is to work, underlying any float of population must be a continuity of people who have forged neighborhood networks. These networks are a city's irreplaceable social capital. Whenever the capital is lost, from whatever cause, the income from it disappears, never to return until and unless new capital is slowly and chancily accumulated (p. 138).

As a 1960s urbanist critiquing the governmental practices of urban renewal, Jacobs deplored the imposition of governmental destruction and reconstruction of depressed urban areas, advocating instead the development of dense urban communities similar to Greenwich Village in New York City. Interestingly, governments seem to be coming full circle on that issue.

Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (1993, 2000) represent the three main developments of theoretical frameworks for social capital (Wall et al., 1998). Bourdieu's (1986) original theoretical work described the term "capital" as having three forms: economic, cultural, and social. He saw social capital as the property of the individual, such that someone with social "connections" could convert his or her connections into economic advantage or capital. He posited that social capital could also be institutionalized into the fabric of society in ways such as the titling of the noble class or, for that matter, acceptance at a better university due to the social capital of a prestigious high school's name.

Coleman (1988) is credited with shaping a different theoretical framework for social capital. Attempting to forge an alternative to an economic ("undersocialized") purpose of social action as rational self-interest and a sociological ("oversocialized") purpose of social action as determined by social norms and obligations, Coleman developed a concept of social capital to include components of both. Given the economic emphasis on physical capital (tools and equipment) and human capital (skills and capabilities), Coleman brought forward the term social capital to discuss the "something more" of social action, a value-added dimension. All capital being productive, social capital made human capital more so, suggesting that a group "within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without that

trustworthiness and trust" (p. S101). Coleman's work developed out of a study of the interlocking expectations of adult networks on children—an intergenerational closure of social networks—where high school graduation rate outcomes were significantly higher for those in the religiously-affiliated private high schools than in public schools or non-religious private schools.

Whereas Bourdieu had focused social capital at the individual level, Coleman placed it at the family and community level. Putnam (1993) drew more directly from Coleman's work, placing the level of analysis at the community or regional level (Wall et al., 1998). Putnam (1993) initially introduced his interest in social capital through a study of local governmental effectiveness in Italy. He later brought his concept of social capital to the public fore with the publication of *Bowling Alone*, supporting a more expansive theory of social capital as based on civic participation, a property of a group.

It was the metaphor of "bowling alone" that engaged the public discussion of social capital. Is the response to Putnam's book a visceral national reaction to the "malaise" in the nation? According to Lehman (1996), this is the case. Lehman contends that Putnam's book "struck a nerve," because it provided a rationale for a growing sense that "the quality of our society at the everyday level has deteriorated severely" (p. 4). The bottom line of Putnam's thesis is that civic engagement has been in rapid decline in the United States since the 1960s, largely as a result of television privatizing our leisure, in essence causing our associations with one other in voluntary groups to suffer. Whether this is true or not—and Lehmann suggests not—is the subject of some lively academic discussions. Lehmann contends that the associational groupings that Putnam studied have simply been replaced by newer groupings of people and that our civic engagement remains largely intact. Regardless, the discussion itself points to re-visiting the issues of individualism and collectivity.

The movement toward individualism has been noted as a major trend in social organization since at least the 18th century and was forged by related movements in political philosophy and economic theory. Individual rights have subsequently become embedded in "sociocultural arrangements that encourage and legitimate the autonomy, dignity, and equality of individuals" (Horwitz & Mullis, 1998, p. 119). In reference to social action, however, Coleman (1990) called it a "broadly perpetuated fiction in modern society" (p 300) that social action is independent action by independent individuals working solely from self-interest, rather than actions influenced by relations among people. Thus, the corrective construction of the term "social capital."

Much passion is fashioned into the current discussion surrounding the term and beginning theory of social capital. As a brief taste of the intensity of the discourse, Greeley (1997) suggested the work of others to be "pop social science" (p. 587), while Greeley, himself, used Coleman's (1988) definition of social capital to illustrate the importance of certain social structures in creating social capital. Putnam's arguments were supposedly "devastated" by Ladd (Greeley, 1997, p. 587), while Ladd (1996) admitted that, while he would prefer not to argue with Putnam, he had little choice, ". . . it's testimony to the prominence of his work that it's impossible to avoid such an argument" (p. 1). The data debate has continued

since. Perhaps it will turn out that our civic engagement has remained steady, but that changes in the form of that engagement will still mean at least a temporary decrease in social capital. If people are switching types of engagement, they may actually be as actively involved as ever (Greeley, 1997). However, the new activity will slowly construct new ties that begin to interconnect and overlap, while old ties are likely to loosen and unweave. Putnam (2000) discussed social capital in this country until recently as cyclical; however, perhaps the loss he described in social capital is more of a cycle caught up in these changes than a permanent issue.

That Putnam's work became a part of the popular and political culture of our times is itself no small matter and represents the importance of its recognition in the social work curriculum. Although the study of social capital began in the literature on urban and community studies, it has moved into such diverse disciplines as education, health, urban poverty, unemployment, criminology, sociology, social philosophy, public policy, international development, economics, trust in society, experimental psychology, sociology, political science, and economics. On the other hand, it is exactly this popularity and over-generalization of the theory of social capital that has initiated the current onslaught of criticism (Wall et al., 1998). The theory and research currently seem boundary-less. The advice of Wall et al. (1998) is worth noting:

> …there is a point where diverse interpretations create more confusion than clarity. Social capital is on the threshold of being used so widely and in such divergent ways that its power as a concept is weakened (p. 319).

Confusion over the boundary-expansiveness of the theory should not be allowed to deflate all the energy this concept is generating. Abandoning the concept of social capital before it is fully pursued would be unfortunate, rare as it is to obtain the benefits of the attention of the larger non-academic community, while pursuing a potential lead in the social sciences. Political and popular focus on macro-level theory may provide some impetus for political advocacy of governmental investment in community. Coming as it does at a time when traditional public policy agenda-setting techniques are similarly changing in the light of the electronic communications revolution, the need to better understand the building of networks is particularly timely. Fortunately, the next steps in further research of social capital theory have begun. Perhaps the greatest disagreement lies in the definitions of social capital, beginning with the determination whether social capital is the property of the individual or the property of the group.

Individual Social Capital

Originally, social capital was seen more generally as the property of the individual; in other words, it was a good that the individual could access as a resource (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990). For example, the individual could derive benefit from contacts with friends of friends who had information about a potential job opportunity (a private good) or the individual could benefit from a support group for cancer survivors at a local hospital (a public good). It was the differential access that represented the extent or amount of social capital that

belonged to a person. In either case, the individual benefits from phenomena we already term as social supports and social networks (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006).

Ecological Social Capital

In Putnam's study of government in Italy (1993), for instance, he concluded that our tendency to contrast the ability of government and business to solve social problems ignored the factor that added something extra to each—that "*both* states *and* markets operate more efficiently in civic settings" (p. 181). According to Putnam, the horizontal relationships built by groups engaged in society build a thicker web of social trust that everyone benefits from, making the outcome (social capital) a property of the group. The most accepted definition for ecological social capital is currently that of Putnam (1993), and it refers to "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (p. 167). Of importance are the number and density of community networks, civic engagement and participation, reciprocity and norms of cooperation, and the building of personal and social trust (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). The assumption is that the problems of society could be resolved by increasing social capital.

Components of Social Capital

Putnam (1995) concluded a study on Italian governments with the idea that "the performance of government and other social institutions is powerfully influenced by citizen engagement in community affairs," an engagement he termed "social capital" (p. 664). For this, Putnam drew on Coleman's (1990) discussion, developing the idea of social capital as "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (p. 664-665). Clearly, it is the building of relationships upon which social capital is dependent, not simply goal-directed actions and their outcomes. According to Putnam, relationships and trust build on each other, therefore, associating with others leads to a more trusting society.

The main components seem to have achieved some general acceptance as such: trust, networks, and norms of reciprocity between and within groups and institutions. Trust in society has come under increasing scientific and popular scrutiny, apparently, in the past few decades, as a result of the perception of a decline in trust in society. Again, the impact of individualism on our society seems to be at least on the edge of people's thinking: what is happening to this town, this country, this world? People will say that they do not feel as safe, as trusting. Attempting to address the risk of dealing with untrustworthiness in relationships, institutions, and society has led to a resurgence of trust in this study (Cook, 2001).

Personal trust is reinforced by the actions of someone who is found to be trustworthy, someone who does what is expected of them in response to an action, fulfilling the obligation invested in that interpersonal exchange. At the most basic level, these transactions involve a specific reciprocity, a version of "I'll do this for you if you do that for me" (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). In small communities where people are familiar with each other and know more of what to expect from each other (and are likely to remain in relationships with each other with the concomitant consequences), personal trust becomes social trust. The familiarity breeds what

Putnam (2000) calls "thick" trust, "trust embedded in personal relations that are strong, frequent, and nested in wider networks" (p. 136). Where this thick trust continues to be reinforced, wider networks reach farther into society, creating a more trusting society, which, in turn, results in a greater efficiency where each transaction does not have to be negotiated separately. Things function more smoothly, with less friction and the weighing of costs. However, this trust is different from that built on a personal relationship and specific reciprocity. As it reaches out further from the trust-based exchange of personal relationships, people may expect reciprocity on a different basis: "I'll do this for you now, without expecting anything immediately in return and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favor" (p. 134). Called "generalized reciprocity," this trust is called "thin trust" in the further reaches of the network, and it is Putnam (2000) who suggests that it is this thin trust that can make a larger society function more efficiently. So, it is social trust, these norms of reciprocity, and the interconnectedness of social networks, that are the building blocks of social capital theory.

As scholars have pursued definitions of social capital, they have identified different dimensions: structural/cognitive, bonding/bridging, and horizontal/vertical. In addition to the question of whether social capital is the property of individuals or groups, these dimensions represent some general agreement in this unsettled theoretical discussion (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006).

Structural/Cognitive

Structural social capital involves the "relationships, networks, associations, and institutions that link together people and groups" (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006). These are somewhat measurable and analyzable units, such as groups, associations, networks, and linkages; this is the data that comprises much of Putnam's analysis of social capital. Reference to "collective moral resources"—the underlying values, the norms of reciprocity, and the civic ideas, such as altruism and civic responsibility—is considered cognitive social capital (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006, p. 15).

Bonding/Bridging

Called "sociological superglue," (Putnam, 2000, p. 23), bonding social capital refers to that which bonds or holds groups together. The thick trust, strong norms of reciprocity, and social networks in bonding social capital are focused on a particular group. The boundaries of the group are clearly defined and the networks closed, so that the social capital is exclusive and inward-focused, with a strong sense of group identity and loyalty. Bonding social capital maintains and reproduces itself (Lin, 1999). Although Putnam (2000) uses the idea of social capital as inextricably linked to civic engagement and thus is generally seen as a public good, neither Putnam nor other authors assume that only positive results will accrue from bonding social capital. Usually, examples of bonding not noted as a public good are groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Bridging social capital is "sociological WD-40" (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). While bonding social capital holds a group together, bridging social capital focuses on linking to other groups and external resources. It is thought of as inclusive, finding

commonalities with those outside the closer group, and pulling groups together in the social fabric. In contrast to bonding, which brings a group in closer relationship, bridging "greases the wheels" between groups, lowering the perception of difference and separation of interests. According to Putnam (2000), bridging social capital may be more important to study than bonding, since it stretches relationships and thus social trust into more layers of society ("thin" trust), interconnecting networks, and producing greater ease in social relationships. Bridging social capital may provide for information diffusion, access to resources, and the broadening of our personal identification and trust. It has also been judged as the more fragile of these types, as it stretches outward (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006).

Horizontal/Vertical

Critics of Putnam's (1993, 2000) framework of social capital as a solution to social problems point to the lack of attention to hierarchical class inequalities and the potential of social groups to increase their command over the benefits of inequality, using social capital as a means for social control (Wall et al., 1998). Earlier formulations of the definition of social capital also seemed to suggest to some scholars that neighborhoods and communities were being told to build their own social capital—that government could not do anything for them, thus, as providing an "excuse" for a de-politization of responses to poverty (Foley & Edwards, 1997). Critiqued as institutionalizing inequity and excusing public neglect brought about a further clarification of its dimensions.

The dimension of social capital focusing on the horizontal and vertical nature of relationships responds to these critiques. Out of this developed an understanding of horizontal social capital, then defined to consider the social capital between people in similar social strata. Earlier formulations fell within horizontal social capital. Vertical social capital, on the other hand, delineates linking, or the degree of integration, between people in different social strata of society. Those in lower strata can influence policy and access resources through relationships with those above them; whereas, those with more power and status have a way to dispense resources downward out of self-interest, charity, or justice (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006). Perhaps we could call this sociological "chutes and ladders."

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

While social capital is an engaging concept, it would have to be placed among the many HBSE theories without either an accepted operationalization or a solid empirical base. There does seem to be general agreement that the term social capital pulls together knowledge and research in three areas: trust, norms of reciprocity, and networks (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006). For instance, social capital research builds on a renewed interest in the concept of social trust, a topic that resurfaced in the 1990s. The literature on social trust spans from psychological trust in another person, to social trust among groups, into the role of trust in networks, organizations, and institutions (Cook, 2001). Yet, most studies measure generalized trust using the same simple question, "do you think people in general can be trusted?" (De Silva, 2006, p. 50). Building on the concept of generalized trust are norms of reciprocity and networks, again shifting from the micro to the macro, and from cognitive social capital to structural social capital. Analyzing the state of cur-

rent research in social capital and mental health, for instance, De Silva (2006) reviewed 28 studies, finding different aspects of social capital being measured, including cognitive social capital, structural social capital, family social capital, social capital at organizational and community levels, and neighborhood safety and disorder issues.

There have been three general perspectives on the definition of social capital in regard to the level of society it is applied to, broadly stretching the spectrum between the individual and the ecological. Generally, application in theory is made to levels beyond the individual, defining social capital as occurring in rela-tionships within and between groups, thereby making it the "property of groups" (McKenzie, Whitley, & Weich, 2002); yet, the feasibility of measurement has fre-quently led to an aggregation of the individual perspectives on the level of social capital they experience. In De Silva's review (2006), 21 of 28 selected studies meas-ured social capital at the individual level, while only eight measured social capital at the ecological level either solely or in both categories. Therefore, while concep-tualized in mezzo or macro levels, measurement generally occurred at the indi-vidual level. The question that has festered in these discussions has been whether that is a valid approach to measurement, or whether it measures an individual's ability to access social support and social networks, which is better seen as a prop-erty of individuals (McKenzie & Harpham, 2006; Bourdieu, 1986). Recommending the co-existence of these approaches, De Silva (2006) suggests that the point of convergence exists in the value of social relationships:

> Indeed, it seems that research into the two streams is so entrenched that it would be naïve to assume that either one can be ignored. However, taking a holistic view of social capital as the "value" of social relationships at any level allows the two streams not only to coexist but also to complement each other. Individual social capital considers direct relationships with a network (i.e., the impact of an individual par-ticipating in or perceiving a network), while ecological social capital considers the indirect relationships (i.e., the impact of networks irre-spective of participation). For example, effective community networks that prevent the closure of a local hospital benefit everyone who depends on that hospital, not only those people involved in campaign-ing against the closure. As it is not necessary to be part of the campaign group to benefit from its actions, this is an example of an indirect rela-tionship. However, there may also be an additional impact on those involved personally in the group (direct effects), with positive effects such as feelings of self-worth and negative effects such as time and emotional investment (p. 44).

Thus, this third perspective suggests that social capital, as a resource embedded in the relationship between individuals while being subject to access by the indi-vidual, is actually a property of relationship (De Silva, 2006).

Pursuant to the difficulties in defining social capital has been, of course, the dif-ficulties of operationalizing its components. How do we actually measure social capital? The response to this question thus far has been to measure it indirectly. For example, using the dimension of structural social capital is a feasible way to

study social capital, since it can be undertaken through the quantitative analysis of indicators, such as participation in civic groups and associations. Yet, again, problems surface in the mixed use of terms, such as "civic participation," which is widely used to describe "engagement in public affairs" and "membership in civic groups" (De Silva, 2006). Due to the diffusion and popularity of Putnam's (2000) work, Putnam's preference for measuring the membership has often been accepted as the preferred definition, with much of the literature focused in the direction of challenging his results.

Honing in on an area of special interest to social workers will demonstrate challenges to the research. For example, research regarding social capital and mental health may be fruitful to consider. As background, McKenzie (2006a) offers three important questions that social workers would also want answered:

- Can social capital prevent mental illness?

- Can the lack of social capital cause mental illness?

- Does the level and/or type of social capital in an area have an impact on the rate of mental illness?

Given that mental health/illness studies involve addressing the complexity of the intervening variables of risk and preventive factors, McKenzie notes that, what little longitudinal research has been done has been inconclusive in demonstrating causation. Whereas studies have demonstrated correlations between different aspects of social capital and a variety of mental illnesses, the pathways of causation through the intervening variables have not been researched.

De Silva (2006) also noted that more recent theory conceptualizes social capital as multidimensional, although much of the research focuses on unidimensional measurements, creating additional challenges in research, such as the unequal treatment of dimensions and the question of the validity of combining different measures and aspects of social capital. Alternative approaches to studying social capital and mental health support increasing the level of sophistication in this line of research. McKenzie (2006a) suggests the use of speculative models of association for research into social capital and mental health. De Silva (2006) recommends a number of refinements in research, including the increased use of longitudinal methods, the psychometric validation of measures, and analysis through statistical modeling using multi-level techniques. Qualitative and mixed methodologies are also recommended, especially to develop the conceptualization of social capital. De Silva also suggests that our concept of community may need some updating, considering that we most often place community in a geographical context when we have entered a non-spatial relationship with each other through electronic communications. The future of research will involve the study of non-spatial communities to social capital and the connections between all types of communities and the individual.

Yet, despite all these difficulties, several findings have begun to emerge from studies of social capital and mental health. McKenzie (2006b) describes three:

- Areas with higher levels of social capital are associated with social environments with fewer risks of mental health.

- Social capital reflects facilitative behavior of residents that produces social supports and safety nets that buffer the effects of life events on mental health.
- Neighborhoods with high levels of certain types of social capital—for instance, collective efficacy—are better able to acquire and hold on to educational, health and housing resources that are linked to mental health. (p. 156).

There are also findings that relate more directly to practice with individuals who have serious mental illness and social capital. For this information to be useful to social work practice in mental illness, we need knowledge of the differential and negative effects of social capital, as well. For instance, longitudinal studies have shown social capital to be a protective factor in mental health, as noted above. However, as De Silva (2006) points out, the specific encouragement of group or civic participation, while conceptualized as positive for all groups in a democratic society, can lead to negative outcomes in mental health, where that encouragement actually can be experienced as increased stress by the individual, a known risk factor in mental illness.

Relatedly, the theory base for social capital generally directs us to think of social capital as a social good, rather than potentially leading to both positive and negative outcomes; however, the De Silva (2006) review also showed that many studies have understandably framed social capital as value-neutral in their measures. Perhaps related to this, theory would be better moved to match its operationalization. Before embracing social capital theory, the social work profession needs a fuller understanding of any differential effects on individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Let's face it. Social capital is easier to teach than trying to bring de Tocqueville's enthusiasm for civic participation in democratic society into most classrooms today. The concept of social capital touches a frayed nerve in the classroom, just as it has in the public's imagination. Students begin assessing their own social networks and civic engagement without prodding. For Putnam, the bogeyman is the privatizing of leisure through television. For me, it may well be the electronic door device that allows me to slip my car into the garage against the advances of a talkative neighbor. My students agree with both and, at least briefly, they heap other ideas onto the bonfire of individualism; the change of pace from our daily lives can be exhilarating. Some of my students tell me that these discussions change them in small or large ways; they re-consider their lack of engagement. As prospective social workers, they appropriate more the need for macro engagement and interventions in their work.

Social capital theory enjoys other uses in the HBSE and social work curriculum. As our society moves increasingly toward an individualistic political culture (see Elazar, 1972) linked to a capitalistic economy, the assumption of the need or right for social work intervention at the mezzo and macro level has diminished. Stronger emphasis on a development of the religious and philosophical bases for

social justice stances is helpful. Yet, to a great extent for some students and for all students to some extent, the link of macro theories of intervention to economic theory can also assist this process. Whereas individual social capital takes students to the literature on social support and social networks, ecological social capital theory suggests that a higher level of social capital makes for a more efficient society where each exchange need not be handled individually but is based on a higher level of social trust and norms of reciprocity (Putnam, 2000).

Coleman (1988) suggested social capital as an "aid toward making micro-to-macro transitions without elaborating the social structural details through which this occurs" (p. S101). It was precisely to offer social capital as a flag, to let the reader know that what was important in a particular situation lay in the social context: trust, norms or reciprocity, networks, and organization. As a heuristic tool alone, social capital theory can act as a doorway to other relevant concepts and theories, such as social trust and network analysis, which also lay just outside the boundaries of mainstream curricula. Unpacking the concept was then a secondary step available to the reader and researcher, alike. The availability of social capital in one context also signaled its potential availability for use in another context; for example, a group formed for one purpose could also be used to further a different purpose. The dimensions of social capital theory—bonding, bridging, linking—tie together discussions in many areas. Resources for the individual, building strong neighborhoods and communities, and developing policy networks for social and political action, to name a few. For example, when Bressers and O'Toole (1998) point out dimensions of policy networks, cohesion and interconnectedness come as no surprise to those already studied in similar dimensions. It never hurts to run into old friends in the curriculum.

Nevertheless, despite a decade of academic flurry surrounding social capital theory and the dynamism that social capital can raise in the classroom, a review of popular HBSE texts shows that reference to it has been minimal in HBSE curriculum resources. For example, in the popular Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda (2006) text, one of few to mention the theory at all, social capital theory is given but a scant paragraph in which it is briefly related to exchange and rational choice theory as a social resource obtainable by the individual. Its increasing popularity in social work is noted, with students encouraged to visit Putnam's (2000) work. Putnam's work, of course, was primarily developed ecologically as a property of the group, based on "neo-deTocquevillean" ideas of participatory democracy and civic ideals (Fried, 2002), a far cry from the theory base referenced. Thus, it would be fair to say that social capital theory has not yet found a solid niche in social work education. It is hopefully not overreaching to suggest that this review of social capital theory has helped to detect a place in the HBSE curriculum for a macro theory with enough energy that it might yet find its legs.

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Reassembling the Social Environment:
A Network Approach to Human Behavior

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Abstract: *This paper critically examines the influence of the structural elements of human behavior that are often neglected in social work literature (Robbins et al., 1998). It incorporates a new multi-theoretical framework that critically examines the significance of a network approach in analyzing social, ideological, and economic structures and their influence on individual actors. This paper discusses two interrelated theories: social network theory and social capital theory, and critiques their relevance in explaining human behavior for social work educators and professionals in an increasingly information-driven and electronically-interconnected global society. The author hopes that an expanded theory base will provide a holistic view of individual problems stemming out of inequitable social structure.*

Keywords: Social capital, social network, structural analysis, network perspective, macro-theory

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical reflections are imperative to maintaining the integrity of the concepts involved when applied to empirical research. In this paper, two interrelated theories, namely, social network theory and social capital theory, will be critiqued to evaluate their relevance in understanding the influence of social structures on human behavior. The idea of conceptualizing social structure as networks of interconnected actors is comparatively new to social work. This approach, known as the network perspective, has been imported from electrical engineering to sociology in an attempt to understand the influence of social relations and interconnected ties on individual actors (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This paper argues that the network perspective is descriptively superior to the "person in environment" centric perspective simply because "it explicitly takes into account the social context within which actors make evaluations" (Burt, 1992, p. 8). This paper outlines the importance of incorporating the network approach into the matrix of human behavior theories.

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In the 1970s, adoption of the "ecological perspective" experienced a shift from the classical social work definition of human behavior, which primarily focused on the behavior of the individual, to a broader, interdisciplinary approach that included the behavior of groups, families, communities, organizations, cultures, and societies. This broadening in the scope of the definition has resulted in a better understanding of the contextual nature of human behavior. The contextual nature refers to both personal and social contexts or structures in which individual behavior is enacted (Robbins et al., 2005). These contextual variables constantly change to incorporate the new social, technological, economic, and cultural processes that occur in our society. As the contextual variables absorb these ever-changing processes, they inform and influence the content of human behavior theories. Accordingly, the old theoretical perspectives are re-examined, while new perspectives are proposed. This paper discusses two interrelated theories: social network theory and social capital theory and critiques their relevance in explaining human behavior for social work educators and professionals in an increasingly information-driven and electronically-interconnected global society.

This paper critically examines the influence of the structural elements of human behavior that are often neglected in social work literature (Robbins et al., 1998). It incorporates a new multi-theoretical framework that critically examines the significance of a network approach in analyzing social, ideological, and economic structures and their influence on individual actors. The author hopes that an expanded theory base will provide a holistic view of individual problems "caused by inequitable social structure" (Findley, 1978, p. 55). Accordingly, the social network and social capital theories have been applied as analytical devices, as well as descriptive tools.

NETWORK PERSPECTIVES: THE MISSING DIMENSION

Historically, social work has "borrowed human behavior theories, primarily from the disciplines of psychology and medicine" (Robbins et al., 1998, p. 14). Since well-known champion of reform in the medical profession, Abraham Flexner (1915), had questioned the lack of theoretical basis for social work to qualify as a profession, social work drew closer to clinical and psychological orientations. As a result, human behavior theories turned toward a more individualistic focus to guide social work practice (Robbins et al., 1998). This pervasive psychological orientation during the early stages of social work led to the exclusion of macro-level theories from the theoretical framework of human behavior. Macro-level theories use a broader definition of human behavior, which includes a structural analysis of large entities, such as societies, cultures, organizations, and communities.

The theoretical knowledge from sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and social psychology has been parsimoniously used and rarely included in the core of human behavior curriculum (Coyle, 1948). Even the *ecological perspective* framework, which is widely used to understand human behavior, focuses primarily on the interface between people and their environment, instead of "analyzing macro-level social problems and their impact on people's lives" (Robbins et al., 1998, p. 15). However, the legacy of Jane Addams and the Hull House movement suggests that social work had had a macro-practice tradition right from its

inception, but the profession did not follow through on a later date. This drift from its rich, macro-practice background has prompted scholars to suggest that social work had abandoned an important mission that its founder had envisaged for it (Specht & Courntney, 1994). Though, over the last decade, some progress has been made to retrieve macro-practice from this enforced obfuscation, however, much remains to be done.

Moreover, social work scholarship, in particular, has rarely explored the possibility of social network and social capital perspectives in defining social problems. Interestingly, approaches akin to social network and social capital theory have periodically surfaced in social work literature. In the 1960s, Leichter and Mitchell (1967) studied the kinship networks of urban Jewish families and described their influence on individual decision-making processes. They called for caseworkers to take into consideration clients' social and kinship networks in their diagnosis. However, such instances of incorporating structural variables were not common in social work practice.

When a literature search was conducted for this paper, only a handful of published works could be found in social work literature that dealt with any form of social structure analysis; whereas, in other social science disciplines, empirical and conceptual works using a network perspective were found in abundance. As discussed above, some of the reasons for this slow pace in experimentation with new theoretical frameworks lie in the propensity of the social work profession to focus towards traditional clinical practice models (Kramer & Specht, 1983). Furthermore, the methodologies to measure the benefits of social networks have developed only in the last 10 years, making it difficult for an applied profession like social work to use them.

Investment in the potential of social network and social capital theory can prove vital for social workers to understand human behavior from a network perspective. A recent study by Loeffler et al. (2004) suggested that social work needs to take into account the dynamics of clients' social networks, while designing micro, mezzo, and macro interventions. These authors further suggest that nurturing the social network and social capital of clients in their respective communities could save social policy dollars (Loeffller et al., 2004). The next section will trace the historical background of the emergence of social network and social capital theories and underline the factors that contributed to the development of their key concepts.

THE EVOLUTION OF CONCEPTS

Social network and social capital theories fall into the long and distinguished historical tradition of structural analysis. Structural analysis originated and grew across diverse interdisciplinary fields. Spencer (1982) and Durkheim (1964), in sociology, Radcliff-Brown (1959), in anthropology, de Saussure (1916), in linguistics, and, at some level, Germain and Gidderman's (1978) ecological perspective in social work have underlined the significance of understanding the structural variables in explaining the inadequacies of person-centered perspectives on human behavior. There are two distinct traditions that historically locate development of the core ideas of social networks and social capital; they are: 1) networks as structure; and 2) the inherent values and norms in network ties.

The network as structure perspective can be traced in the work of Moreno (1934). Moreno started asking people who their friends were and what were the organizations for which they worked, he then developed a diagram of points and lines to represent relations among different social entities. Moreno termed such a diagram a sociogram and developed a distinct method to analyze the sociogram, called sociometry. Barnes (1954), however, was the first scholar to coin the term *social network*. According to Wasserman and Faust (1994, p. 10), the "notion of a network of relations linking social entities, or of webs or ties" evolving into a social structure "had found wide expression throughout social sciences." Recognition that social networks can be used to understand social structure came from the works of Mark Granovetter (1972) and most recently from Ronald Burt (1982).

The network-based perspective of social structure compliments the positional notions of explaining human behavior by early system theorists, including Max Weber (1947), Talcott Parsons (1951), and George Homans (1958). Moreover, the development of social network analysis as a distinct methodology has "brought the power of mathematics to the study of social systems" (Wasseman & Faust, 1994, p. 12). A detailed outline of this historical development can be found in the work of Harary, Norman, and Cartwright (1965). The notion of network as structure, described above, is a part of social network theory; however, many scholars, including Putnam (2001) and Coleman (1998), believe that it does not take into account the active part individuals play in creating and shaping such network structure. Thus, the social capital theory intervenes to characterize certain values and norms inherent in network ties, which further explain the role of individual actors in creating advantages and disadvantages within social network structures.

The fundamental idea of social capital can be traced as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville (1966), a French diplomat who argued for the virtue of associations in American civil society in 1830. Hanifan (1920) coined the term *social capital*, equating it with concepts, such as family relationships, goodwill, and fellowship. In the 1960s, Schultz (1961), Becker (1964), and other economists articulated the theories of human capital. This paved the way for a broader understanding of social norms and values as capital within the social context.

It was only 19 years ago when Coleman (1988) carried out the first systemic conceptualization of social capital. He viewed social capital as a public resource that is inadvertently created by unconscious human interaction. Moreover, the value of this resource is embedded within the quality of social ties, which are determined by the existence of the degrees of trust and reciprocity within those social ties. Other theorists, such as Burt (1998), Lin (2001), Field (2003), Dasgupta (2000), Wellman and Hasse (2001), Fukuyama (1995), and Woolcock (1998) further extended the concept into different structural, social, and theoretical dimensions and thus, contributed to an interesting evolution of a complex concept.

Thus, social capital began as a comparatively simple concept and evolved into "a complex account of people's relationships and their values" (Field, 2003, p. 45). Unlike other forms of capital (physical and human), social capital is defined in multifaceted ways, broadening its dimensions and making its measurement a challenging and contentious task (Field, 2003; Wellman, 2001). Bourdieu's (1986) understanding of social capital stems from structural hierarchies of society that allow

individuals who are better positioned in social, economic, and cultural hierarchies to use their homogenous (similar) and heterogeneous (diverse) social networks to sustain the existing power distribution that benefits them.

Finally, it was Robert Putnam, a political scientist at Harvard, who popularized the concept of social capital and articulated it as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam, 1995a, p. 169). He was the first theorist to draw a correlation between social capital and civic participation. Putnam's theory of social capital emulates the Durkheimian concept of solidarity, which is primarily based on trust and norms across social networks (Baron et al., 2000; Field, 2003; Fukuyama, 1995).

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL NETWORK

Social network and social capital theory in their present form were identified by Grannovatter (1973) and Bourdieu (1990) but have since been developed most extensively by Burt (1995), Portes (1998), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000). Social network and social capital theories are interconnected and provide a multi-theoretical framework for understanding the structural components of human behavior. Social capital theory proposes that there are some qualities and values embedded in social networks and relationships that render certain types of benefits, both instrumental and emotional, which people can use. These potential benefits depend on whom one knows and how well one knows his or her social connections. This social connectedness creates a relationship that generates a potential flow of benefits for the individuals who are connected. These benefits could appear in forms of valuable information, job creation, education dissemination, monetary or other instrumental support, and emotional support. As these qualities are embedded in our social networks or connections, they are capable of generating future benefits for some individuals. Thus, they are called social capital. Social capital refers to network ties of goodwill, mutual support, shared language, shared norms, social trust, and a sense of mutual obligation (Huysman & Wulf, 2004).

Thus, the core idea of social capital theory develops around this value embedded in social networks (Putnam, 1993a). Moreover, the value acquired through investment in social relationships is translated into social and economic gain for individuals, but it is unlike other forms of capital—no single individual can claim ownership of this value, as it only generates through useful interactions across social networks (Coleman, 1988). This particular network characteristic of social capital generates collective behavior among social units. Coleman (1988) equated this characteristic of social capital with "public good," which forms itself inadvertently through human exchanges within their respective social networks.

Networks are constituted by a set of relational ties across a set of actors that form social structure (Scott, 2001). Network theorists argue that an understanding of social capital requires a finer-grained analysis of the specific quality and configuration of network ties (Wasserman & Faust, 1998). Putnam (2001) distinguishes two types of networks that characteristically determine different social capital through bridging and bonding (exclusive and inclusive). Bridging refers to diverse

networks that encompass more distant ties outside of close networks, such as acquaintances and workmates, whereas bonding refers to homogenous (similar) networks that denote ties between like-people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends, and neighbors (Putnam, 2000). Coleman (1988) named these bonding ties as dense and closed networks.

Before going further in this analysis, we should note that structure and networks are not to be identified as the same. Structure is a much broader concept, with many interconnected networks existing as structural components at different levels of hierarchy (Burt, 1992); whereas, "a network is a set of interconnected nodes" of single individual units (Castells, 1996, p. 470). The architecture of modern day social structures is complex and hierarchical. According to Lin (2001), it still represents the shape of a Maslow's pyramid. If the matrix of social structure is hierarchical, then the location of the positions of individual units in that matrix attain significance in accessing the embedded resources of the network structure. This positional advantage can render characteristics, such as status, prestige, class, and authority to individual position holders who could further translate these characteristics into reputation, wealth, and power, which would increase their access to embedded resources by improving the quality of their network ties (Lin, 2001). The quality of network ties depends on the degree of social capital that they could generate (Fukuyama, 1995; Scott, 2001). Thus, the location of individual units in a structure is an important determinant of the influence that a particular unit can exercise through actions.

Thus, social capital is embedded in social structure (Ostrom, 1994). The bonding ties are stronger than bridging ties, and they tend to produce more emotional, but less instrumental, support (Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001). Strong relationships and mutual acquaintances tend to develop between people with similar social attributes, such as education, income, occupation, and age (Burt, 1998; Field, 2003). Vertical bridging ties provide opportunities for individual units to move up to networks located higher in social structure and thus improve their structural positions and gain social capital.

Burt (1992, 1998) further argues that social capital is equivalent to social resources that people accumulate through their positions and ties in social networks or structure. Eventually, people invest their earned social capital in various social opportunities. If people or units remain unconnected in a network, it is called network holes, which provide further investment opportunities by reaching out to unconnected entities within or across networks. According to Monge and Contractor (2003), these investments are largely motivated by self-interest. Thus, contrastingly, the benefits accumulated through participation in social networks, which are more collective in nature, could generate capital benefits that are private in nature.

Coleman (1988, p. 598) defines social capital as "a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors—whether personal or corporate actors—within the structure." This definition highlights the existence of two functional concepts: 1) the presence of a social network structure and 2) an element of action/interaction. Lin (2001, p. 29) further refined this definition by calling social

capital the "resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions," therefore referring to the existence of resources embedded within the structure.

Hence, theoretically, the network perspective should be able to explain the following three factors: the quality and distribution of resources ingrained in a structure, how individual actors access these resources, and what kind of outcome the aforementioned resources bring about in their lives, as well as to the structure as a whole (Bourdieu, 1990; Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001). The value of these resources can be either instrumental or relational, depending on the context of the action. As Bourdieu (1990, p. 119) rightly explained, "Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition."

EMPIRICAL SUPPORT AND METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Social network and social capital theories, though they conceptually compliment each other, grew out of distinct traditions and thus follow two separate empirical lineages that often cross paths. These theories reflect both positivistic and phenomenological orientations. Social network theory uses social network analysis (SNA), a distinct methodology, for empirical research. Though SNA has existed as a mathematical concept since 1930, it was only during the 1990s that interest in SNA peaked (Carrington et al., 2005). SNA has been used mostly in sociology, economics, political, and health sciences to analyze and measure community support networks, social capital (Wellman, 2001), kinship networks, information dissemination, organizational partnerships, international trade, terrorist networks, and the spread of epidemics.

According to Carrington et al. (2005), the behavioral sciences have been showing greater interest in SNA as they explore the social context of human behavior. Baerveldt et al. (2004) applied SNA to examine whether peer relations play a role in the precipitation of delinquent behavior. SNA has been widely used in psychology to study the influence of a patient's network on schizophrenia (Baars et al., 1990). With the media attention given to terrorist activities in recent times, social scientists have used SNA to predict the logistics of terrorist operations by investigating the workings of terrorist networks (Carrington et al., 2005). Within economic sociology, social networks have been utilized widely by studies "in eliciting the role of social capital and trust for economic purposes" (Koniordos, 2005, p. 5).

The measurement of social capital has been a debatable issue in empirical research, with various researchers contributing in their own ad-hoc ways. Social capital is a multidimensional concept and thus is difficult to measure. A theoretically informed measurement approach suggests that measures of social capital vary in different network types. As a result, it would require a wide range of measures to locate the concept. Neuman (1991, p. 575) suggests that our inability to recognize social capital as a multi-dimensional concept might "muddle our empirical question;" still, many studies follow a one-dimensional approach by identifying one item that is a deductive measure of social capital.

Both social network and social capital theories have been widely criticized for relying heavily on the quantification of empirical data and overlooking subjective phenomenon (Bollig, 2000). Social ethnographers believe that the network perspective follows a typical reasoning, such as "I know that Bob hates Mary, so, if I want to know about Mary's new boyfriend without Mary finding out, I can safely ask Bob, but I can't take what Bob says as gospel;" however, it is difficult to elicit a subjective network qualitatively (Bollig, 2000). Some scholars further believe that, by emphasizing the structural variables, social network and social capital theories have replaced qualitative approaches, like the "network therapy" that extended the boundaries of family therapy to work with personal networks (Wolfe, 1982a).

Within the methodological concerns described above, there is no denying that the social network and social capital theories posit an exciting opportunity to explain human behavior at a global level. With the growth of information communication technologies, communities across continents are quickly becoming interconnected and are contributing to the rise of a network society (Castrells, 1996). Nothing can be more appropriate for human behavior perspectives than to reposition the existing theoretical frameworks towards this emerging macro-level phenomenon.

NEW CHALLENGES: THE RISE OF NETWORK SOCIETY

During the last 15 years, we have witnessed an unprecedented spurt in technological development associated with growth of the Internet and electronic infrastructure, which have literally wired the whole world. Monge and Contractor (2003, p. 4) describe this phenomenon as "spectacular advances and convergences in computer and communication technology," which is changing the social and organizational landscapes and is resulting in the "emergence of network forms of organization as an integral part of the co-evolution of the new 'network society'" (Castells, 1996, p. 10). A network is defined as a "personalized exchange among many agents" that elicits a social structure that has properties that influence human behavior and actions (Rauch & Hamilton, 2001). The key concept of a network society is not new; however, the unprecedented rise in electronic communication due to proliferation of the Internet and the gradual trickle-down effect that it has had across different social segments, have qualified it as an emerging social context in understanding human behavior.

According to Castells (1996, p. 394), the development of electronic communication and information systems allows for an "increasing disassociation between spatial proximity and the performance of everyday life's functions: work, shopping, entertainment, healthcare, education, public services, governance, and the like." As the structural barriers become fluid and multiple bridging ties, facilitated by technological means, individuals transcend their immediate community and function virtually anywhere in the world. Thus, the architecture of social structure opens up its barriers and undergoes a "spatial transformation" (Castells, 1996, p. 10). As a result, communities become disembodied from their geographic meaning and get integrated into functional networks (Castells, 1996; Coleman, 1988). According to Castells (1996, p. 375), "today the space we live in has elements of reality and virtuality and is no longer transfixed into territories." This "space of

flow" is characterized by the material foundation of a new culture, the "culture of real virtuality."

Social science theorists have long been interested in how changes in communication technology impact human behavior. The new millennium was characterized by the rapidly expanding Internet communication technologies, with 75% of Americans having access to the Internet by the end of 2006 (Pew Internet Report, 2006). This astronomical growth in computer-mediated communication throws new challenges to the existing theoretical frameworks for analyzing human behavior and raises pertinent macro-level questions that postulate theoretical restructuring. Do networks formed through the Internet influence human behavior? Does it accentuate structural disadvantages? Does it call for a redefinition of "social environment" as we know it? Wellman (2001, p. 2031) claims that, "when computer systems connect people and organizations, they are inherently social, because computer networks principally support social networks."

This infusion of a technology-driven lifestyle, notably in the last two decades, has necessitated fundamental changes in the way individuals, communities, and societies interact and behave across their social and political networks. However, these changes have not been accounted for within the human behavior theoretical matrix that informs social work practice. According to Vugt and Snyder (2002), rapid globalization of the local economy and the escalating spread of information networks lead to the transformation of traditional states and communities. For social workers, these trends would inspire exciting, new areas of intervention and research in which every discipline would have the opportunity to understand different perspectives on human behavior in emerging social environments. The social network and social capital theories herald such a possibility for the future of the social work profession.

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Institutionalization:
A Theory of Human Behavior and the Social Environment

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Abstract: Institutionalism *is the syndrome first recognized and described in inpatient psychiatric facilities, which is now used to describe a set of maladaptive behaviors that are evoked by the pressures of living in any institutional setting. This article traces the development of the* theory of institutionalization, *which predicts and explains an individual's response to that particular type of environment. The article makes note of key contributors and contributions, and of empirical studies that have advanced the theory. Underlying perspectives and assumptions are identified and earlier theoretical models are reviewed and critiqued. An updated model of the theory, which includes individual vulnerabilities, objective conditions of the institutional placement, and the resident's perceptions of the environment, is presented. New directions in the field of institutional care and implications for social workers, particularly for those working in nursing home and prison settings, are discussed, along with recommendations for next steps for theory progression.*

Keywords: Institutions, institutionalization, institutionalism, normalization, deinstitutionalization, nursing homes, prisons

INTRODUCTION

Conventional wisdom suggests that institutions are no longer an important feature of American life. Two vulnerable populations, however, are likely to experience the effects of institutionalization. America leads the world in the proportion of its citizens who are confined in correctional settings, and improvements in health care suggest that, while Americans are living longer, they are also at increased risk for spending some time in a long-term care facility. In this paper, we present a very brief review of the early history of institutions in America, describe the key contributions to theory development, summarize important empirical studies that have supported and/or progressed the theory, discuss theory components, and end with new directions in institutional care, along with implications for social work.

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HISTORY

For the most part, Americans in the Colonial period relied on the services of relatives and neighbors to meet the needs of the poor, the insane, and the orphaned (Rothman, 1971). Criminals were fined, whipped, or hanged—not imprisoned. This pattern was reversed in the mid-19th century, when there appeared to be a well-intentioned effort to provide a new kind of help for several at-risk populations. Originally conceived as sanctuaries, *asylums* were established in the countryside with the intention of resocializing and rehabilitating their inmates (including not only prisoners, but also people with mental illness, mental retardation, and dependent children) in a wholesome environment far from the chaos, temptations, and exploitations of the city (Rothman, 1971). Physical separation of the asylum away from the community was consistently practiced.

Eventually, the dreams of institutional effectiveness faded, but the facilities themselves remained, suffering a gradual decline from reform to barely custodial, if not punitive, operation (Rothman, 1971; White & Wolfensberger, 1969). Despite the efforts of early reformers, including Dorothea Dix (Day, 2003), in the last half of the 19th century, there was a growing perception that it was society, not the institutional residents, that required protection (Rhodes, 1993).

THEORY DEVELOPMENT: KEY CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

In one of the first professional papers presented or published on the topic in the United States, Myerson (1939) used the term "prison stupor" or "prison psychosis" to describe the "psychologic retreat" that was "enhanced in all directions" by the very care that the mental patients received in the hospitals he visited (p. 1198). Myerson described a "motivation vacuum" and a "physiologic vacuum," both of which existed in the mental hospital setting, and he conducted a two-year experiment at Boston State Hospital that linked a reduction in the number of deaths and an increase in the number of discharges to a "widespread approximation to more normal living," which included more time outdoors, exercise, hydrotherapy, entertainment, and better food.

Bettelheim and Sylvester (1948) studied the impact of institutional placement on children and described a syndrome that they called *psychological institutionalism*. They considered this to be a "deficiency disease in the emotional sense," stemming from the "absence of meaningful, continuous interpersonal relationships" (p. 191). In the case of children, they were particularly concerned with the impact of "depersonalized rules and regulations," which seemed to lead to emotional impoverishment (p. 191).

Martin (1955) had seen the term *institutionalization* used in the clinical notes of mental hospitals, where nurses would write "well institutionalized" as an assessment of a patient's adjustment to the hospital setting, implying that the patient "has ceased to rebel against, or to question the fitness of, his position in a mental hospital; he has made a more or less total surrender to the institution life" (p. 1188). In fact, this was considered a positive step for the many mental patients whose condition (e.g., schizophrenia) could not be cured or ameliorated with the remedies available at that time. However, Martin contrasted this phe-

nomenon to the "true cooperation essential to the success of any treatment" (p. 1188).

Martin (1955) enumerated several potential contributing factors to institutionalism. He suggested that, because the hospital takes care of basic needs, the patient loses the incentive to take responsibility for them; this is the "first step" towards institutionalization. Second, "once in hospital, the patient quickly becomes absorbed into its highly organized life. The fact that any large institution needs an efficient and complex organization carries with it the danger that the life of the individual within it will also become highly organized, and this will tend to relieve him of the need to think or plan for himself in any but the most unimportant trifles" (p. 1189). Third, patients are hesitant "to criticize staff or the organization or from using initiative" out of fear of being sent to an isolation unit. Fourth, rather than inquiring into possible faults of the organization or a personal relationship, which may, in fact, have been the cause of the patient's agitation, staff take the easy way out and send patients to the isolation unit. Fifth, the doctors also foster the institutionalization process, largely unconsciously, due to the pressures of large caseloads and the failure to share their power with lower level staff, who have more direct contact with patients. In addition, although he does not call it staff empowerment, Martin suggested that lack of training in relationship building led the psychiatric nurses to focus on maintaining order in the unit, relying on the authority of the institution for enforcement. He ended his essay on a pessimistic note, suggesting that the authoritarian system that he believed caused the problem was likely to remain unchanged, and his only hope was that psychiatrists would become more aware of it.

Referring to Martin's description of institutionalization, Barton (1959) noted that he preferred the term *institutional neurosis*, because "it promotes a syndrome to the category of a disease rather than a process" (p. 11). He enumerated seven factors associated with it, including: "loss of contact with the outside world; enforced idleness; bossiness of medical and nursing staff; loss of personal friends, possessions, and personal events; drugs; ward atmosphere; [and] loss of prospects outside the institution" (p. 15). In describing the "ward atmosphere," Martin was clearly referring to the physical environment; he discussed the effects of smell and noise and recommended adding "gay colours, carpets, cushions, and curtains" to "create an air of optimism" (p. 44).

Ellenberger (1960) described the phenomenon using the French term *alienization*. He compared the process of institutionalization and the results to what happens to wild animals that are captured and put in zoos. (Today, a similar comparison might be made by evolutionary psychologists.) Ellenberger highlighted the "trauma of captivity" and the frustration of the natural territorial and hierarchical instincts of both zoo animals and humans.

Sommer and Witney (1961) focused on one step in the process of institutionalization, the transfer from the "newly admitted ward" to the "continued treatment ward," where there was a less favorable staff-patient ratio and poorer physical surroundings. However, Sommer and Witney saw the transfer as "much more than an administrative act;" the patient was rejected by staff and came to view himself as a "failure," losing hope, and accepting a "passive institutional role" (p. 113).

Wing (Wing & Brown, 1961; Wing, 1962) studied institutionalism among chronic mental patients in several hospitals that provided a contrast in social and medical care, concentrating on patients who had been in the hospital for at least two years. He clearly identified three variables related to institutionalism: the social pressures that stem from the institution, the length of time that the resident was exposed to these pressures, and the level of susceptibility that the resident brought.

Using the term *social breakdown syndrome* to describe types of behaviors in mental patients who appear "more or less independently of the underlying disorder," (p. 1481) Gruenberg (1967) listed seven steps in the process of deterioration. Step four comes with hospital admission and, in step five, the patient learns to comply with the rules to stay out of trouble. In step six, the patient becomes isolated from family and friends. In step seven, the patient identifies with his fellow patients, anticipates staff demands, and strives to "fit in," to "settle down," and to become a "good patient" (p. 1485).

Also, in the mid-20th century, while psychiatrists were describing the experiences of their patients, a number of sociologists were conducting qualitative studies of institutional life (Belknap, 1956; Caudill, 1958; Dunham & Weinberg, 1960; Goffman, 1958, 1961; Scheff, 1966; Stanton & Schwartz, 1954; Strauss et al., 1964). The most well known, Goffman, published his findings in a book titled *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (1961). Significantly, he identified the features of *total institutions* (Goffman, 1958). The four "totalistic features" he listed were:

> *First*, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. *Second*, each phase of the members' daily activity will be carried out in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and are required to do the same thing together. *Third*, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole circle of activities being imposed from above through a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. *Finally*, the contents of the various enforced activities are brought together as parts of a single overall rational plan purportedly designed to fill the official aims of the institution (p. 43).

Among the examples of total institutions Goffman cited, in addition to mental hospitals, were TB sanitariums, jails, POW camps, boarding schools, army barracks, monasteries and convents, and ships. Goffman summarized that the central feature of total institutions is that work, recreation, and sleep are experienced in the same place (Goffman, 1959, 1961).

Goffman (1958, 1961) also colorfully described admission to the institution as a process of "mortification," where residents are stripped of their social roles and normal identities. The residents then adopt the official or staff view of themselves and try to act out the role of the perfect inmate (1961, p. 63).

Wolfensberger (1972) believed that it was *deindividuation* that made institutions different from other organizations and residences. The features that charac-

terize deindividuation include numbers of residents distinctly larger than might be found in a large family, a high level of regimentation, a physical or social environment that aims at a low common denominator, and a place in which all or most of the transactions of daily life are carried out under one roof or on one "campus" (pp. 28-29). Wolfensberger was primarily interested in services for persons with mental retardation, but deindividuation can be found in facilities for other populations as well.

In 1999, Wirt identified four distinctly different explanations, or causal models, for institutionalism. The first, which he called the *predisposition model*, suggests that institutionalism results from predisposing personal traits when exposed to institutional life. The second, the *total institution* model, focuses exclusively on the destructive characteristics of institutional life. The asylum model posits that the desire to remain in the hospital is a rational choice from the perspective of the patient. The last model, the symptoms model, identifies institutionalism as either the symptoms of the illness or as the result of years of treatment, regardless of setting.

While psychiatrists and sociologists were exploring the effects of institutional placement on mental patients and people with retardation, others were examining the influence of perceptions of control in the lives of older adults and other nursing home residents. Epidemiological studies conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s demonstrated that a sense of control was among the most important psychosocial predictors of morbidity, mortality, and psychological well being in older adults (Rodin, 1986; Rowe & Kahn, 1987.) Baron and Rodin (1978) distinguished between actual control and perceived control; they defined actual control as the ability to influence intended outcomes and perceived control as the expectation of having the power to obtain desired consequences. Also, Rodin (1983) speculated that perceptions of *loss* of control might be more harmful than perceptions of *lack* of control.

As people age, acquired deficits in physical and cognitive abilities may induce perceptions of loss of control, as well as actual, objective experiences of loss (Schulz, 1980). An older person's observation of other, less competent older adults through personal contact may lead to modeling of helpless behaviors. It is particularly likely that nursing home residents will be exposed to models of dependency and passivity, in part, because staff members rarely encourage independent activities (Baltes & Reisenzein, 1986). Inside (and outside) of institutions, people in contact with older individuals tend to offer to assist with tasks they formerly implemented independently. Such assistance, although well-intended, may undermine the individual's sense of control as well as his or her task performance (Avorn & Langer, 1982; Langer & Imber, 1979).

Although these theorists were primarily interested in loss of control in old age, the basic concepts could easily be applied to other vulnerable populations (see, for example, Johnson, 1999). In fact, the studies cited in the previous paragraph seem to echo earlier observations of enforced idleness in institutions documented by Barton (1959), Martin (1955), and Wing and Brown (1961).

EMPIRICAL STUDIES THAT HAVE SUPPORTED
AND/OR PROGRESSED THE THEORY

Given the multitude of factors/features that purportedly contribute to the syn-drome of institutionalism and the many symptoms that comprise it, it is not sur-prising that few studies have examined this topic in its entirety. It may be that there are few recent studies of institutionalism, because several populations that have manifested this syndrome in the past (e.g., orphans, people with developmental disabilities, and chronic mental illnesses) are now, for the most part, either living with families or in small, community-based group homes, or are hospitalized for only brief periods of time. Institutional care of very young children is no longer practiced in this country; empirical studies of the effects of institutional care have focused on more recent practices in Romania. Although research on the effective-ness of various facility characteristics continues in this country, it is not always applicable to institutionalism, as in, for example, Landesman-Dwyer, Sackett, and Kleinman's 1980 study on the effects of size differences among group homes serv-ing the mentally retarded, when the sizes ranged from only 6 to 20 residents.

The two populations that continue to experience care and confinement in rela-tively large institutional settings are older adults and prisoners. With the latter group, the symptoms of institutionalism (e.g., passivity, compliance) are not per-ceived as problematic. For older adults, alternative models of care are being devel-oped and evaluated (see below).

In addition, researchers conducting sophisticated empirical studies face the practical challenges of finding institutions that are willing and able to cooperate with the implementation of experimental conditions, randomly assigning subjects to various treatment conditions, identifying control groups, and controlling other threats to internal validity, including diffusion/contagion of interventions across groups and reactivity (the Hawthorne effect).

KEY EMPIRICAL STUDIES FOUND IN THE LITERATURE

The four models that Wirt (1999) identified, which are discussed above, are strong-ly linked to research findings. *The predisposition model* was supported by several early studies, including Wing and Brown (1970) and Liberkakis (1981). Wing and Brown, who examined 273 hospital patients with mild-to-moderate mental illness, found that patients with schizophrenia were particularly susceptible to institu-tionalism, "because of their vulnerability to understimulation" (p. 184). Liberkakis studied 324 mental patients; he found that low intelligence, poor education, and disabilities were significantly associated with institutionalism.

In two longitudinal studies of patients in mental hospitals, Wing and his col-league (Wing & Brown, 1961; Wing, 1962) found data to support the *total institu-tion model*, with length of stay being one major predictor variable, and the length of time during the day that a patient spent doing absolutely nothing a second vari-able. In his often-cited ethnographic study of conditions and staff behaviors inside a mental hospital, Rosenhan (1973) concluded that "neither anecdotal nor 'hard' data can convey the overwhelming sense of powerless which invades the individ-ual as he is continually exposed to the depersonalization of the psychiatric hospi-tal" (p. 198).

Concerned about the effects of living in a "virtually decision-free environment," Langer and Rodin (Langer & Rodin, 1976; Rodin & Langer, 1977) conducted an experimental study and follow-up on the effects of an intervention to increase feelings of choice and personal responsibility in 91 elderly nursing home residents. Nurses' rating and health-and-mortality indicators documented significant improvement in the experimental group on measures of alertness, active participation, and sense of well-being that persisted beyond 18 months. Subsequent studies (e.g., Skea & Lindesay, 1996; Stirling & Reid, 1992) documented similar results.

Studies examining the effects of a more "normalized" environment within an institutional setting include Myerson's (1939) classic experiment in a public mental hospital, (described above), Eyman, Demaine, and Lei's (1979) work with facilities for people with mental retardation (1979), and preliminary findings on the Eden Alternative model reported in a study by Coleman et al. (2002). Eyman, Demaine, and Lei found positive changes in adaptive behavior in 245 developmentally-disabled individuals living in family-care homes and board-and-care homes, using the Wolfensberger and Glenn's Program Analysis of Service Systems (PASS) instrument (1975) to measure the conformity of service systems to normalization principles. Coleman et al. found "no beneficial effects" of the Eden Alternative in terms of cognition, functional status, or survival, although qualitative observations indicated that "the change was positive for many staff as well as residents" and implied that longer term follow-up might provide additional positive results (p. M422).

Dependent variables in empirical studies of the asylum model include patients' attitudes, "attraction to the hospital," and desires related to discharge or readmission. In his study of 358 institutionalized male veterans, Goldman (1965) found that "a sizeable segment of the population was found to have no substantial interest in ever returning to the community" (p. 322). Weinstein (1979) reviewed 38 quantitative studies of patients' attitudes toward mental hospitals and found that favorable attitudes predominated in 79% of them. Using a sample of 187 aftercare patients, Drake and Wallach (1992) found a preference for living in the hospital was associated with past hospital stays, symptoms of psychosis, and severe drug abuse. In a study of patients readmitted to the Bronx State Hospital, Rosenblatt and Mayer (1974) found that patients with a greater number of previous admissions were more likely to return to the hospital, independent of the severity of their illness. After concluding their study, Rosenblatt and Mayer reviewed two dozen other studies on recidivism and found "strikingly consistent patterns" in patient movement with 36 different populations: the more often they had been admitted, the more likely they were to return. In a recent study, Rosenheck and Neale (1998) linked reduction in hospital utilization with intensive community treatment, using data from nine VA hospitals over a five-year period, suggesting that the desire to stay in or return to the hospital is based on community deficits as much as institutional ones.

The symptoms model appears to dismiss institutionalism out of hand. Mathai and Goppinath (1985) found that hospital care does not have a significant influence on the deficits associated with chronic schizophrenia, based on their study

of 80 chronic schizophrenic and 16 manic-depressive psychotic patients; they concluded that, symptoms sometimes attributed to institutionalism are an integral feature of the disease process, rather than a result of institutionalization. Making the same point, Davidson et al., (1995) concluded that diagnosis, rather than residential situation, was most likely to account for negative symptoms.

THE THEORY OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION: CONCEPTS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND MODEL

Definitions of Concepts

Institutions are facilities where residents exercise little or no choice about their participation in activities, have little input into how they are treated, and cannot leave without being officially released or discharged. Lack of control over one's life is a major feature of institutions; the residents' needs are usurped by the needs of the institution. Goffman (1961) defined a *total institution* as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situation individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (p. xiii). Usually, total institutions attempt to resocialize the residents to become more compliant and accepting of institutional and societal norms.

We define *institutionalism* as the syndrome (group of symptoms) that results from the process of institutionalization. It is characterized by apathy, lethargy, passivity, and the muting of self-initiative, compliance and submissiveness, dependence on institutional structure and contingencies, social withdrawal and isolation, an internalization of the norms of institutional culture, and a diminished sense of self-worth and personal value (Belcher & Rife, 1989; Bettelheim & Silvester, 1948; Haney, 2001; Wirt, 1999).

Underlying Perspectives and Assumptions

As a theory, institutionalization fits clearly with the assumptions of the *ecosystems perspective*. A focus on the importance of the perceptions of those living in controlled environments, in addition to the objective conditions themselves, suggests the relevance of a *social constructionist perspective* as well.

Ecosystems introduces the construct of *goodness-of-fit*, the extent to which there is a match between an individual's needs, rights, goals, and capacities and the qualities of his or her physical and social environment (Germain & Gitterman, 1995, p. 817; Greene, 1999, p. 299). Lawton and Nahemow (1973) postulated a two-dimensional model of "competence and environmental press" to illustrate the negative affect and maladaptive behavior that results when personal characteristics and environmental demands are mismatched. Institutionalization theory suggests that it is this mismatch, or lack of goodness-of-fit between residents and their institutional environment, that is the primary cause of the syndrome of institutionalism.

In addition to the objective reality of the setting, the residents' perception of the environment and their experiences, contribute to the development of the syndrome. In addition, according to labeling theory, labels such as *patient* or *criminal* may result in institutional residents accepting and internalizing the attributes

of those roles. The impact of labeling is not limited to the label recipient, but it extends to those with whom she or he interacts. For example, once a person is labeled a psychiatric patient, staff may interpret even normal behaviors as symptoms of mental illness (Rosenhan, 1973).

A Theoretical Model

Wirt (1999, p. 264) believed that the four models he described (predisposition, total institution, asylum, and symptoms) were "competing and sometimes antithetical explanations for institutionalism." We partially concur, noting that the symptom model dismisses institutionalism out of hand. The asylum model, which focuses on the desire to return to or remain in the institution, appears to be related to institutionalism, often occurring simultaneously, but may, in fact, be a separate phenomenon, particularly as it is postulated to be based on rational choice. We are thus left with the predisposition model and the total institution model, which could easily be construed as complementary. These two models, however, do not clearly or fully incorporate the effects of residents' perception.
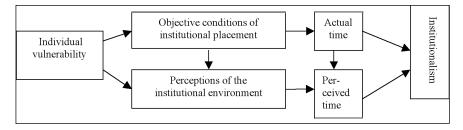

Figure 1. *A graphic illustration of how individual vulnerability, multiplied by conditions in the institutions and the resident's subjective perceptions of it, over time, results in institutionalism.*

A synthesis of hypotheses and empirical findings presented here suggests support for a theoretical model of institutionalization as illustrated in Figure 1. It is comprised of five constructs: four contributing factors, including individual vulnerability, the conditions of institutional settings, resident perceptions of the institutional environment, and time in care, and the outcome, the syndrome of institutionalism.

The individual brings to the institution certain vulnerabilities, such as poor health, limited coping skills, lack of a social support network, or mental illness. The institutional setting then imposes certain demands upon the individual. These include the surrender of personal identify at admission. With longer-term care, this is followed by isolation, regimentation, and deindividuation. The effects of the objective or actual situation are magnified by the resident's perception of events, including loss of control and fear of punishment or retribution. This is then exacerbated by the actual length of time spent in the institution, as well as the resident's perception that there is little or no hope of discharge.

The fact that institutionalism is not manifested by all vulnerable persons in different situations or by all individuals in controlled environments supports the thesis that it is the combination of extremes in some or all of these factors that produces the syndrome. So, for example, it is not surprising that the syndrome was observed commonly, if not invariably, in persons with schizophrenia who were locked for years in the back wards of state mental hospitals. On the other hand, young, mentally and physically healthy, well-trained military personnel who are captured and detained in deplorable conditions in POW camps usually do not manifest the symptoms of institutionalism, although they may suffer from other syndromes, such as PTSD.

Variables

A review of empirical studies on institutionalization and related topics reveals a number of independent and dependent variables that have been used to study this topic. We would suggest that the following variables, listed under the five constructs of the theory, are positively correlated with the probability of the development of institutionalism.

Individual vulnerability: very young or very old age, poor physical health, compromised cognitive functioning, psychiatric illness, lack of a strong social network, poor coping skills, lack of mobility, and low self-efficacy. We should note, however, that even without identified deficits, all people have basic human needs that leave them vulnerable to extreme environments. Wirt suggests, "the restrictive environment of institutional settings coupled with oppressive staff [are] capable of producing institutionalism in almost any person regardless of diagnosis, predispositions, or personality" (1999, p. 260).

Characteristics of the institution: confiscation of personal belongings, large size (resident capacity), isolated location, authoritarian staff, low staff to resident ratio, lack of staff training, disempowerment of staff, rigidity of routine, drab or standardized physical environment, lack of stimulation, enforced idleness, lack of choice and control, lack of privacy, program or unit designated for long-term residents, and absence of meaningful relationships.

Resident perceptions: lack of input into the placement decision, mortification, loss of identity, acceptance of patient or inmate label, isolation, loss of control, loss of sense of purpose, expectation of lengthy or permanent stay.

Institutionalism can be measured by the manifestation of its symptoms, which were also listed above: apathy, lethargy, passivity, and the muting of self-initiative; compliance and submissiveness; dependence on institutional structure and contingencies; social withdrawal and isolation; an internalization of the norms of institutional culture; and a diminished sense of self-worth and personal value.

Based on our understanding of the literature, we suggest that the features and characteristics within each construct are additive or cumulative. For example, a person might have multiple vulnerabilities, or an institution might have some but not all of the characteristics listed. We further hypothesize that the contributing constructs have a multiplicative effect on each other. In other words, each has a magnifying effect, rather than simply adding to the others. We also hypothesize

that there is a threshold or critical mass of effects that, once achieved, results in manifestation of the syndrome.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE

In response to criticisms of institutions, different theoretical models, and research findings, several alternative models of care and treatment have been proposed and implemented. Most of these directly address the limitations of institutions that were summarized above.

Normalization

The *normalization* model was proposed in the late 1960s (Nirje, 1994; Wolfensberger, 1972). In simple terms, normalization means making available to institutionalized people living arrangements that closely resemble those enjoyed by other citizens. This approach suggests that facilities should be small (i.e., designed for no more than six to eight residents). They should resemble valued homes in the community—there should be no signs in front that identify the residents inside as different from other citizens. Facilities should be integrated into the community so that residents can walk to or have available public transportation to the library, shopping centers, movie theaters, and parks. Residents should work and/or receive services away from the facility. There should be a continuum of options available, but residents should not have to move simply because their needs change; instead, services should be adapted so that residents can experience a sense of permanence and security in their living arrangement.

The 1980 Americans with Disabilities Act provided unequivocal federal support for the integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of American life. For several decades now, most people with disabilities have lived with their families or resided in community-based facilities, including intermediate-care facilities, foster homes, group homes, boarding homes, and supervised apartments (Segal, 1995). In 1997, 194,968 people with mental retardation were living in homes with one to six people; the average proportion of developmentally-disabled individuals living in settings of only one to six persons nationwide is 56.9%, with Vermont having the highest level at 100%, and Arkansas at the lowest, with only 10% according to data from The Arc (the national advocacy organization for retarded citizens) (Davis, 1998). Medicaid pays for a wide range of services and living arrangements for persons with IQs below 60 or those with an IQ between 60 and 69 who have an additional handicapping condition of cerebral palsy, spina bifida, Prader-Willi syndrome, epilepsy, or autism.

Studies of small, community-based group homes for people with mental retardation show that the community care movement has been largely successful (Landesman-Dwyer, 1982; Community Living, 1997). This has provided an impetus for human service providers to develop small, community-based group homes for other populations with special needs (e.g., people with chronic mental illnesses, newly released prisoners, and acting-out adolescents).

Residential Facilities for Children

At the same time that persons with developmental disabilities were being moved into community-based care, there was also strong federal support for efforts to

return children in out-of-home care to their families or to find permanent adoptive homes for them, as codified in the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (PL 96-272) (see Johnson & Harrison, 1994). Nevertheless, the rate of institutionalization of children has remained relatively stable. Schwartz (in Gambrill & Stein, 1994) reports that "the boundaries between child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems are porous" (p. 276) and that, as reforms and changing policies lead to the closing of institutions under one auspice, corresponding increases appear in the others.

During the mid-1990s, there was a renewed interest in congregate group care for socially- and economically-disadvantaged children and those who suffered instability due to multiple disrupted placements with relatives and foster families (McKenzie, 1996; Van Biema, 1994; Schuh & Caneda, 1997; Weisman, 1994). This may have been sparked, in part, by a speech by Newt Gingrich, who suggested that the babies of unwed teen mothers be put in orphanages (Van Biema, 1994). At the same time, child advocates and professionals were debating the question (Gambrill & Stein, 1994), with those opposed noting that child-caring institutions were ineffective and costly "while there is a need for a small number of facilities for violent and chronic delinquents and for children and youth who [have other serious problems] . . . the number needing such care is very small in comparison to the hundreds of thousands placed into institutions each year" (Schwartz, in Gambrill & Stein, 1994, p. 276).

Although family foster homes and small group homes provide a majority of out-of-home care for children and youth, placement in more restrictive settings remains a common occurrence. Using a national probability sampling design, James et al. (2006) have documented that 25% of youth experience an "intensive or restrictive setting during their first out-of-home care episode" (p. 96). McMillen et al. (2004) found that three-quarters of youth still in out-of-home care at age 17 had been in residential care facilities and nearly half of them had experienced episodes in inpatient psychiatric care.

There are few, if any, orphanages left in America, but they remain a significant part of the child welfare systems in other countries. Extensive studies of the effects of institutional rearing in Romanian orphanages (see Kadlec, 2002; Ellis, 2004; Parker & Nelson, 2005; Tarullo, 2005) document stunted physical growth, persistent socio-emotional deficits, and even disruptions in the development of neural circuitry in the brains of young children.

Deinstitutionalization

The deinstitutionalization movement arose in the 1960s and early 1970s in response to a series of trends, including increasing public awareness of the negative effects of institutionalization, growing costs of institutional care, scientific advances that made confinement in institutions obsolete, political, and legal pressures to treat residents in the least restrictive manner, and the development of SSI payments directly to clients (Segal, 1995). What was originally conceptualized as a solution to institutionalization eventually became a problem in and of itself, as individuals were moved from one dominant institutional form to another as many community-based nursing homes and groups homes, bowing to the pressures of economy of scale, have come to resemble the institutions they were intended to

replace (Segal, p. 710). A lack of funding has left many communities short of resources.

An example of a failure of deinstitutionalization for mentally ill people is the large numbers who are incarcerated in jails and prisons with no provision for mental health services. This problem has been recognized for more than 25 years (see Briar, 1983). With 3000 inmates receiving psychiatric services, the Los Angeles County jail system is said to be the largest mental institution in the United States (Izumi, Schiller, & Hayward, 1996). It is estimated that, as many as 20% of prisoners have a mental or psychological disorder or a developmental disability (Haney, 2001). Of the 10 million adults booked into local jails each year, approximately 700,000 have active symptoms of mental illness (The Sentencing Project, 2002). Most mentally ill offenders are arrested for minor offenses, such as trespassing, vagrancy, urinating in public, or shoplifting at the corner convenience store. Many of them also have substance abuse problems but cannot get into drug- and alcohol-treatment programs because of their mental illnesses. It has been documented that, due to budget cuts and lack of space in state mental health hospitals, some mentally ill individuals may remain in jail for up to two years—even with court intervention—before being admitted to a more appropriate facility (Bell, 2002).

The Eden Alternative

With a growing population of older adults, and particularly those older than 85, many more people are living in institutions designed to care for those experiencing the debilitating effects of very old age. A new model of care for older adults is called the *Eden Alternative* (Thomas, 1994; Weinstein, 1998). This approach was developed in response to the common, sterile, treatment-orientation of nursing homes that often results in loneliness, helplessness, and boredom according to Eden Alternative founder William Thomas. He enumerates three fundamental principles of this new kind of care: acknowledging each resident's capacity for growth, focusing on the needs of the residents rather the needs of the institution, and emphasizing quality long-term nurturing care, while providing short-term treatment as needed (Thomas, 1994). This new philosophy of care involves normalizing the physical environment of facilities with the addition of pets, plants, and children; placing the maximum possible decision-making authority in the hands of residents and those who care for them; de-emphasizing program activities by encouraging resident involvement in the daily routine of the facility; and de-emphasizing the use of prescription drugs.

In the Eden Alternative, Thomas specifically addresses staff empowerment. Several early theorists (Barton, 1959; Goffman, 1961; Martin, 1955; Myerson, 1939) noted that institutionalization affects staff (e.g., ward attendants, nurses, doctors) as well as residents. Martin said, "the staff become victims of the system" and he believed that finding staff who were "sufficiently independent and integrated" to resist the process of institutionalization was "pure fantasy" (p. 1190). Thomas believes he has found the answer to Martin's dilemma.

The Green House Project

Furthering development of his vision, Thomas has now launched the National Green House Project, a radical shift away from large institutions for older adults to

homes with no more than 10 residents each (Hamilton, 2005; Kalb & Juarez, 2005; Mosheim, 2006, Rabig et al., 2006; Thomas, 2004). This model responds positively to the research on perceptions of control (Avorn & Langer, 1982; Langer & Rodin, 1976). Green House facilities continue the Eden Alternative principles of emphasizing residents' competence through encouraging participation in daily household activities, such as cooking and gardening. A redesigned staff pattern allows the specially-trained certified nursing aides (now called shahbazim) to provide more holistic care and to take a larger role in decision-making. A two-year evaluative study of Green House outcomes is underway (Rabig et al., 2006).

Prisons

According to a Bureau of Justice bulletin (Harrison & Beck, 2007), the total number of prisoners in the United States at the end of 2005 was 2,320,359; one in every 136 American residents was in prison or jail. This reflected an average rate of growth of 3.1% per year since 1995. It was in that year that the United States became the world's leader in incarceration rates, a position it retains to this day.

While new models are being tried in the care of older adults, the American correctional system is moving in the opposite direction (Frost, 2006). There continues to exist widespread support for large, monolithic prisons and "the idea that control of prisoners means providing as miserable an existence as possible" (Cook, 2001, p. 30). Rehabilitation is largely absent in correctional institutions in the United States; instead, the prison, as an institution, is used solely to punish. The worst excesses of total institutions are found in today's "Supermax" (super-maximum-security) prisons, where inmates are typically in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day in small, windowless cells, with no privacy (they are constantly monitored by video cameras), no work, no educational opportunities, and very limited access to recreation or visitors.

CONCLUSION

Next Steps for Theory Progression

We have several recommendations for next steps. First, the Eden Alternative, the Green House model, and other residential alternatives to nursing home care can be studied holistically, in addition to investigating smaller scale interventions, such as those studied by Rodin and Langer, cited above. As the population ages, it is important that this type of research be supported and carried out. Second, institutionalism in prisons is not well understood and is long overdue for intensive study. Although *prisonization*, which implies a more oppositional stance towards the institution (Haney, 2001), has received some attention, institutionalism and its relation to recidivism, has not. Third, the theoretical model proposed in this article should be tested in a variety of institutional settings.

Implications for Social Work

The profession of social work has a long history of being involved with institutional care and confinement of vulnerable populations. Many social workers are, or will be, employed in large, group-care settings (Ginsberg, 2001). As part of their job responsibilities, they may be called upon to advocate for the rights and needs of their clients, as well as for vulnerable populations in other institutional settings.

Because many clients in institutional setting are involuntary, social workers have a special ethical responsibility to them. Often, "it is social workers who must inform those who have been institutionalized or who face institutionalization of their rights or interpret their rights for them. Many times only social workers are available to act as advocates for those who are institutionalized, insuring that their rights are recognized and respected" (Saltzman & Proch, 1990, p. 360). In a corrections context in particular, but also in other institutional settings, social workers must be prepared to advocate "for safe, humane, and equitable treatment of all individuals" (NASW, 2000, p. 57). Understanding the process and effects of institutionalization will help social workers perform these functions.

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