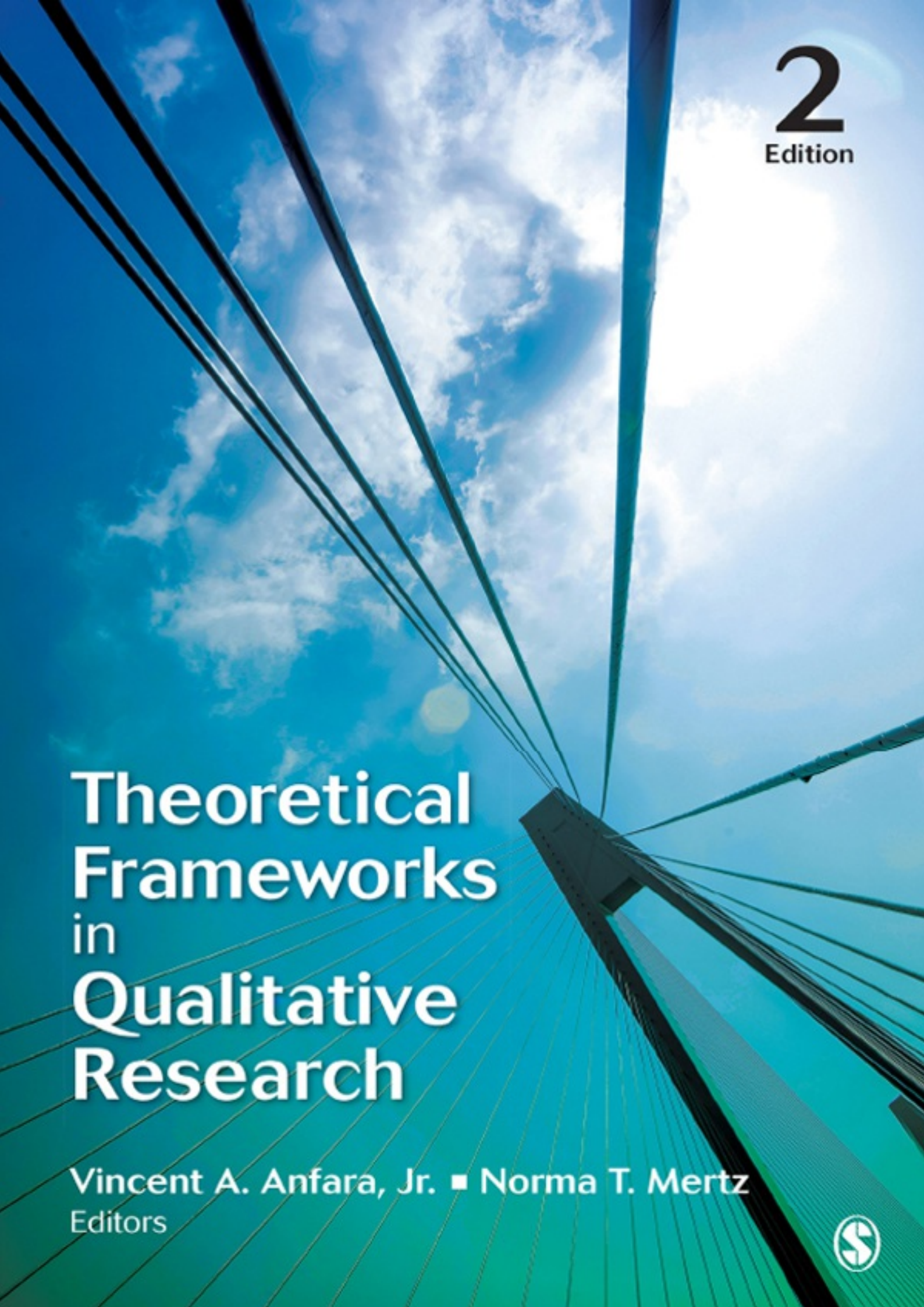
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Edition
Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. ■ Norma T. Mertz
Editors

Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research

Second Edition

In Memoriam

Vincent A. Anfara Jr., 1953–2013

Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research

Second Edition

Edited by

Vincent A. Anfara Jr.
Norma T. Mertz
University of Tennessee

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FOR INFORMATION:

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Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

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1 Oliver's Yard
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Preface to the Second Edition

When we initially set out to write a book about theoretical frameworks in qualitative research, there was little to guide graduate students and beginning researchers in their search for and use of theory in qualitative studies. Since the first edition of this book, a few thoughtful scholars have taken up the challenge and added their voices to the ongoing dialogue about the role and place of theoretical frameworks in qualitative research. Nevertheless, neither consensus nor clarity about the role or place of theoretical frameworks has emerged from the forum sufficient to justify one position or the other.

We remain committed to the position articulated in the first edition of the book. For us, the theoretical framework affects almost all aspects of a qualitative research study since it provides a lens for seeing and making sense of what to do in the design and conduct of the study. Nevertheless, we welcome the continuing dialogue about the role of theory in qualitative research.

As described in the preface to the first edition, the book grew out of our experiences as teachers of qualitative methods. When we discussed theory in class, students appeared to have a difficult time grasping the role of theory in qualitative research and asked a litany of questions about how to find a theory, how to use it, and how it affects the research. They reported that as they explored the literature on the topic, they found competing conceptualizations and even definitions. As Vince and I shared our attempts to clarify the role, place, and source of frameworks for our students, we struggled to clarify our own conceptions and to work together to answer student questions and concerns. As we did so, we became more aware of the limitations of existing books and more confident that we had a position to share with others. This led us to begin discussing the idea of writing a book that would be clear and accessible to students, and we were pleased to gain the support and encouragement for such a book from SAGE Publications, which provided us with a way to share our conceptions with a wider audience.

Beyond sharing our perspective and definition of the role and place of theory in qualitative research, conceptually, we believed that what would be most helpful to students and beginning researchers would be to hear from an array of researchers who had successfully used theory in the conduct of their research, had published such research in peer-reviewed journals, and were able to reflect on the theoretical framework they had used: how they found it, why they used it, and how it affected their research. Thus, we issued a call for manuscripts that would do just that, reflect on the use of theory in a study they had had published. From the many manuscripts we received, we selected 10 that fit our conception and provided narratives about a variety of theoretical frameworks. Based on feedback to the chapters in the first edition from students, reviewers, and researchers in the field, for this second edition, we kept six of the original chapters from the first edition, asked two of the original authors to combine their chapters to more clearly demonstrate the use of different theoretical frameworks with the same data, and solicited a few new chapters based on qualitative studies that had appeared in top-tier journals in the intervening period. We chose these additions to add breadth and

variety to the frameworks discussed. Another change we made for this second edition was to ask each of the authors, as they reviewed and revised, or produced their chapters for the new edition, to add a frontispiece to their chapter explaining what theory is discussed in the chapter and what the reader would gain from reading their chapter. Furthermore, we asked the authors to do something we had not thought to do in the first edition—to cite the study on which the chapter was based up front, following this brief abstract, so it would be easy for readers to access the study if they wished. This is thus the format for each of the contributing chapters.

We added yet another piece to the book, a few briefs from doctoral students with whom we had worked about the theoretical framework they had used in their dissertations. While just that, briefs, we thought that it would increase the number and variety of theoretical frameworks shared and do so with brevity. While not all of the students we solicited were able to respond to our solicitation, five of them did, and we are pleased to share their briefs in this edition.

We framed the contributing chapters as we had done in the first edition—first, with a chapter contextualizing the discussion of the role and place of theoretical frameworks from our perspective and, last, with an attempt to draw meaning and usefulness from the array of theoretical frameworks discussed in the book.

Taken together, we believe that the alterations and additions to this edition add significantly to the number and richness of theoretical frameworks the reader can learn about, and provide access into the thinking of the researchers as they sought, chose, and used the frameworks they did. Hopefully, this rich array will stimulate the readers' quest for such frameworks and help them use the framework they choose effectively.

Just as we began to solicit new authors for this edition and frame what we wished to do in this second edition, my collaborator and colleague, Vince Anfara, died—unexpectedly and way too young. I have tried to carry out the plan we conceived for the book and to make this second edition a tribute to our collaboration. That would not have been possible without the patience, support, and encouragement of the contributing authors and the incredibly professional staff at SAGE—in particular Helen Salmon, acquisitions editor; Anna Villarruel, editorial assistant; and Libby Larson, production editor—as well as the contribution of Shamila Swamy and her copyediting team from QuADS Prepress.

I would also like to thank Wade McGarity for his invaluable technical assistance, without which it would not have been possible for me to pull all of the pieces of this book together.

Norma T. Mertz

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Setting the Stage

Vincent A. Anfara Jr.
Norma T. Mertz

Students as well as experienced researchers who employ qualitative methods frequently have trouble identifying and using theoretical frameworks in their research. This problem is typically centered on finding a theoretical framework and understanding its pervasive effects on the process of conducting qualitative research.

Our goal is to provide guidance to students and neophyte researchers; guidance about what a theoretical framework is, about the role of theoretical frameworks in qualitative research, about identifying frameworks relevant and appropriate to one's study, and about how and where a theoretical framework influences the study. And to do so by means of discussion and an abundance of examples. In short, this is a guidebook into the mysteries of theoretical frameworks in qualitative research.

To begin our journey, we look at what theory is and review the literature that currently exists on the use of theory in qualitative research. Ongoing confusion about the nature and use of theory and theoretical frameworks in qualitative research makes it all the more important to openly address this issue, look closely at what researchers say and do, and subject their use of theory to review by others. We, thus, provide readers with the definition of theoretical frameworks that is used throughout this book and exemplified in Chapters 2 through 12. The contributors of these chapters focus on published research studies and address how they found the theoretical framework they chose and where and in what ways it affected their studies. We conclude this chapter with a discussion of the organization of the book and guidelines for readers to maximize its use.

What Is Theory?

Although Flinders and Mills (1993) argued that "precise definitions [of theory] are hard to come by" (p. xii), theory has been defined in a variety of ways by philosophers of science and scholars in the academic disciplines. Examples include Kerlinger (1986), who defined theory as "a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomenon" (p. 9). In similar fashion, Argyris and Schon (1974) defined theory as "a set of interconnected propositions that have the same referent—the subject of the theory" (pp. 4–5), and LeCompte and Preissle (1993) stated that "theorizing is simply the cognitive process of discovering or manipulating abstract categories and the relationships among these categories" (p. 239). In a somewhat different vein, Strauss (1995) noted that theory provides a model or map of why the world is the way it is. He further explained that whereas theory is a simplification of the world, it nonetheless is aimed at clarifying and explaining some aspect of how the world works.

Discussing these myriad definitions, Silver (1983) purported that formal definitions of theory rob it of its true beauty, its emotional significance, and its importance to everyday life. She defined theory as a unique way of perceiving reality, an expression of someone's profound insight into some aspect of nature, and a fresh and different perception of an aspect of the world.

Although we favor Silver's (1983) conceptualization of theory, it is evident from what she says that understanding theory and its relationship to the research process requires effort. To understand a theory is to travel into someone else's mind and become able to perceive reality as that person does. To understand a theory is to experience a shift in one's mental structure and discover a different way of thinking. To understand a theory is to feel some wonder that one never saw before what now seems to have been obvious all along. To understand a theory, one needs to stretch one's mind to reach the theorist's meaning.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THEORY

In many discussions of theory (e.g., Babbie, 1986; Silver, 1983; Turner, 1974), important points are made about its components parts—the relationship of concepts, constructs, and propositions to theory. As one moves from concepts to the level of theory, there is also a movement from concrete experiences to a level of abstract description.

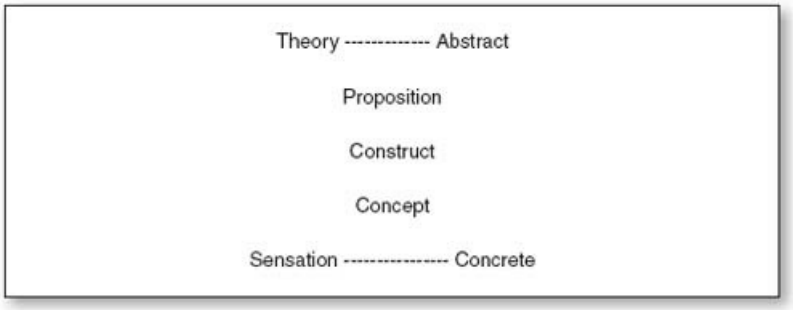
Working from the most concrete level of sensations and experiences, concepts are words that we assign to events. Concepts enable us to distinguish one event or sensation from another. Concepts also allow us to relate events in the past to ones in the present or future. Often, these concepts will cluster and form a higher-order unit of thought known as a construct. Silver (1983) provides the example of IQ (intelligence quotient) as a construct. This construct incorporates the concepts of age (the amount of time one has lived) and intelligence (the amount of knowledge one has).

Moving to the next level of abstraction, we encounter propositions. Propositions are expressions of relationships among several constructs. Because propositions are new inventions, they must be carefully defined and explained. Because one proposition is usually insufficient to explain a new insight about an aspect of reality, researchers use a set of propositions that are logically related. It is this relationship among propositions that constitutes a theory. When we develop theory, we have completed a highly abstract thought process, with ideas being removed in successive stages from the world of immediate experience and sensation. Even though they are abstract, theories are profoundly helpful for understanding the experienced world. To help understand the relationship between and among the building blocks of theory and to assist in comprehending the movement from concrete experience to abstract explanation, we offer Figure 1.1.

SOME EXAMPLES

Within the social sciences, one can find a multitude of efforts to describe, explain, or predict phenomena. The nature of theory (what it is and its component parts) might be clarified by reference to two particular theories that are familiar to most readers. Let us then briefly turn to the work of Abraham Maslow and Leon Festinger.

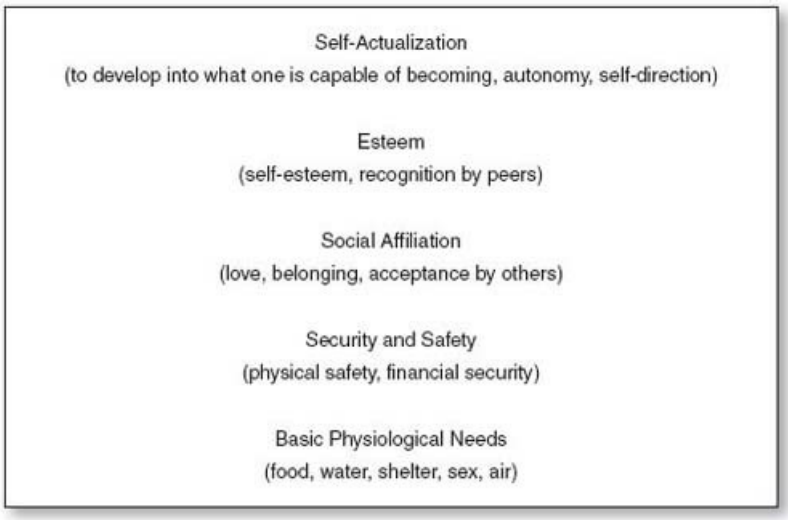
Figure 1.1 The Building Blocks of Theory



One of the most powerful ways of understanding human motivation was developed by Maslow (1954). According to Maslow, human beings have a variety of needs (concepts), some more fundamental than others. Maslow grouped these needs into five basic categories (constructs), arranged hierarchically from "lower" to "higher" (propositions). Lower needs dominate behavior when they are not satisfied. Higher needs become salient only after the lower needs have been satisfied. From these concepts, constructs, and propositions, Maslow concluded that behavior is an expression of one's drive to reduce deficiencies by gratifying the most salient type of needs (theory). This hierarchy is shown in Figure 1.2.

As a second example, let us look at Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. Published by Festinger in 1957, it has been one of the most influential and widely debated theories in social psychology. Festinger's theory begins with the beliefs one has about "the environment, about oneself, or about one's behavior" (p. 3). These beliefs (concepts) are called cognitions, and the theory deals specifically with pairs of cognitions (constructs). Pairs of cognitions may relate to each other in relevant or irrelevant ways (propositions). Irrelevant pairs of cognitions "may simply have nothing to do with one another" (p. 11). Relevant pairs of cognitions may be either consonant or dissonant. Consonant cognitions occur when elements of knowledge follow from one another. Dissonant cognitions occur when the obverse of one element follows from the other. For example, if a person knows that he or she is surrounded by only friends but feels afraid or threatened, a dissonant relationship between these two cognitive elements exists. This "uncomfortable feeling" motivates the individual to lessen or eliminate the dissonance. In stating his theory, Festinger wrote, "The presence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to reduce or eliminate the dissonance. The strength of the pressure to reduce the dissonance is a function of the magnitude of the dissonance" (p. 18).

Figure 1.2 Hierarchy of Needs as Used in Maslow's Theory of Motivation



WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD AND USEFUL THEORY?

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) discussed certain criteria that must be present for a theory to be useful in the development of scientific knowledge. A theory (a) should provide a simple explanation of the observed relations relevant to a phenomenon, (b) should be consistent with both the observed relations and an already established body of knowledge, (c) is considered a tentative explanation and should provide means for verification and revision, and (d) should stimulate further research in areas that need investigation. Agnew and Pyke (1969) recommended that good theory be (a) simple, (b) testable, (c) novel, (d) supportive of other theories, (e) internally consistent, and (f) predictive. Eisner (1993), however, framed it most cogently:

> Theory attempts to satisfy the human need for scientific rationality by providing explanations that will meet that need. The adequacy of such explanations is tested not only by their appeal, their cogency, and their aesthetic quality, but by the extent to which they can be used to help us anticipate, if not control, the future. (p. vii)

A useful theory is one that tells an enlightening story about some phenomenon. It is a story that gives you new insights and broadens your understanding of the phenomenon.

THEORIES IN THE SOCIAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES

According to Langenbach, Vaughn, and Aagaard (1994), the social sciences have more theories than do the natural sciences, especially theories that compete with each other (e.g., McGregor's, 1960, Theory X and Theory Y; Hershey & Blanchard's, 1988, "situational leadership"). Agreeing with this notion, Alexander (1987) noted that the social sciences, in contrast to the natural sciences, will always be characterized by multiple theoretical orientations and will never achieve the degree of consensus about empirical referents or explanatory schemes characteristic of the natural sciences. Indeed, because the natural sciences—physics and biology, for example—have few competing theories, disconfirming one and replacing it with another is a rather momentous event, an event Kuhn (1970) has termed a "paradigm shift." In contrast, competing theories are common in the social sciences because the nature of the phenomena being studied allows for those phenomena to be viewed from multiple perspectives, or "lenses." Each perspective could provide a

reasoned and sensible explanation of the phenomenon being studied.

As an example, consider the classical theories of play drawn from the discipline of psychology. Gilmore (1971) categorized them into the following areas: surplus energy theory, relaxation theory, recapitulation theory, and pre-exercise theory. Surplus energy theory posits that humans accumulate energy that must be released. Play uses the surplus energy the body does not need. According to relaxation theory, play allows people to build up energy that can be used later for the purposes of work. Recapitulation theory contends that humans pass through stages that parallel the phases in the development of the human race. Essentially, play helps to transcend the primitive stages of life. Finally, pre-exercise theory avers that play prepares children for their adult roles. During play, children rehearse the skills they will use as adults. Each of these theories may be a reasoned explanation of the phenomenon; none appear to disconfirm the others. All of them may coexist, providing different perspectives on play.

Theories in social science research exist at a variety of levels. The most common levels are individual theories, organizational theories, group theories, and social theories (see Yin, 1994, pp. 29–30). Individual theories focus on the individual's development, cognitive behavior, personality, learning, and interpersonal interactions. Organizational theories focus on bureaucracies, institutions, organizational structures and functions, and effectiveness or excellence in organizational performance. Group theories deal with family issues, work teams, employer–employee relations, and interpersonal networks. Finally, social theories focus on group behavior, cultural institutions, urban development, and marketplace functions. These levels cut across social science disciplines and afford myriad theories at each level.

In social science research, theories are generally drawn from the various disciplines (e.g., political science, economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology). These disciplines provide a plethora of lenses for examining phenomena. Neophyte researchers often confine their consideration of theory to theories they have frequently encountered. In so doing, they may fail to uncover the wealth of theories in the various disciplines that might be efficacious. If properly used, these varied perspectives can tremendously enhance research. More than this, these "disciplines interact and mutually enrich each other" (Suppes, 1974, p. 56).

With a basic understanding of what theory is and some sense of the different ways in which theory is used in research in the natural and social sciences, let us now turn our attention to what we know about the role of theory (specifically the use of theoretical frameworks) in qualitative research.

A Review of the Literature on Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research

Whereas there is little disagreement about the role and place of theory in quantitative research (Creswell, 1994, 2002), such is not the situation with respect to qualitative research. Indeed, there is no consensus either about the role of theory in qualitative research or about what is being discussed. Much of what we credit as warranted knowledge about qualitative research comes through the relatively small, albeit growing numbers of textbooks in the field, materials widely used by teachers of research to prepare and mentor students and neophyte researchers. Examination of the most prominent of these materials for wisdom about the role of theory in qualitative research leaves the reader with one of three different understandings: first, that theory has

little relationship to qualitative research (Best & Kahn, 2003; Gay & Airasian, 2003); second, that theory in qualitative research relates to the methodology the researcher chooses to use and the epistemologies underlying that methodology (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a, 2003b, 2013; Guba, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)—and a subset of this position, that it is related to some methodologies (Creswell, 1994, 1998, 2014; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006; Patton, 1990, 2002; Yin, 1993, 1994); and third, that theory in qualitative research is broader and more pervasive in its role than methodology (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Flinders & Mills, 1993; Garrison, 1988; Maxwell, 1996, 2013; Merriam, 1998, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Mills, 1993; Schram, 2003, 2006; Schwandt, 1993).

The categories of understandings are not mutually exclusive, and authors may lean toward more than one position. For example, Broido and Manning (2002) situated the role of theory within methodological paradigms, yet they hinted that theory has a much wider role to play. Similarly, Merriam and Associates (2002) acknowledged the part methodology plays in the "theoretical stances" researchers take, while continuing to address what they perceived as the broader, deeper influence of theory on the research process. It is, however, these differences in emphasis about what theory refers to and is about that are a source of confusion for the student and the neophyte researcher.

THEORY AS NEARLY INVISIBLE

In a widely used textbook, Gay and Airasian (2003) did not discuss, or even mention, theory in relation to qualitative research, although they noted that "some fundamental differences in how quantitative and qualitative research are conducted reflect their different perspectives on meaning and how one can approach it" (p. 9). Best and Kahn (2003) mentioned theory but confined their discussion to defining it as "an attempt to develop a general explanation for some phenomenon . . . primarily concerned with explanation and therefore focus[ing] on determining cause-effect relationships" (p. 9), normally the province of quantitative research.

Several other authors give short shrift to discussions of theory in qualitative research, while acknowledging its relevance to a particular methodology. Gall and colleagues (1996, 2006) relegated the role of theory to its development or testing, identifying it as a type of research. Although most of their discussion of theory used examples drawn from quantitative research, they suggested that it has some role in qualitative research: "Many qualitative studies are done to discover theory. The approach sometimes is called grounded theory because the researcher starts by collecting data then searches for theoretical constructs, themes, and patterns that are 'grounded in the theory'" (1996, p. 52).

THEORY AS RELATED TO METHODOLOGY

In sharp contrast to these works, where mention of theory in relation to qualitative research is nonexistent or relatively modest, there is a substantive body of work that equates theory in qualitative research with the methodologies used in the conduct of the research and the epistemologies underlying these methods. These works are well-known and are largely written about qualitative research specifically rather than about research in general. In earlier works by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba (1990), they spoke about paradigms as "what we think about the world" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15), "basic belief systems . . . that have emerged

as successors to conventional positivism" (Guba, 1990, p. 9), that is, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism, to which has been added participatory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). They speak about theories emerging from naturalistic inquiry, not framing it, and methods changing in the process of theory definition. Guba (1990), in particular, called on others to support the paradigm–methodology connection (Eisner, 1990; Schwandt, 1993) and concluded, "If inquiry is not value free, is not all inquiry ideological?" (Guba, 1990, p. 11). Interestingly enough in light of later works, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that "naturalistic inquiry is defined not at the level of methodology but at the level of paradigm. It is not crucial that naturalistic inquiry be carried out using qualitative methods exclusively, or at all" (p. 250)—clearly relating to methodology, in relatively simple terms, quantitative and/or qualitative methods.

In later works, Denzin and Lincoln (2003a, 2003b, 2013) equated paradigms with theory and argued that these paradigms "are overarching philosophical systems denoting particular ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies . . . [which] represent beliefs systems that attach the user to a particular worldview" (2013, p.11) that guides the researcher's actions. These paradigms were identified most recently as positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory (2013, p. 11). The way it works is that the researcher "approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)" (2003b, p. 30). This is a clear linking of theory to methodologies; it also suggests, however, that the study is widely affected by the linkage. Interestingly enough, the authors advised that the qualitative researcher needs to become a "bricoleur" (2003b, p. 6), taking on pieces of representations (paradigms, methods) to fit the situation and then " incorporating multiple perspectives" (2013, p. 207).

In attempting to clarify the relationship among the elements identified by those relating methodological approaches and their genesis in and from philosophic orientations (called theoretical perspectives by Crotty, 1998; paradigms by Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; theoretical stances by Merriam & Associates, 2002; theoretical traditions by Patton, 2002), Crotty (1998) differentiated among epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and method, although he held that they inform one another. For Crotty, theories of knowledge, or epistemologies (e.g., objectivism, constructionism, subjectivism), inform and are embedded in theoretical perspectives (e.g., positivism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism, postmodernism). He claimed that "the philosophical stance inform[s] the methodology and thus provide[s] a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" (p. 3). Methodologies—which include a wide range of approaches, from experimental research and survey research, to ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and heuristic inquiry, to action research, discourse analysis, and feminist standpoint research—constitute research designs that affect the choice of methods to be used, for example, observation, case study, statistical analysis, document analysis, and so on. In reality, Crotty framed the reader's understanding of the relationship the other way around, as he perceived that research is constructed from the methods "we propose to use," to the methodology that "governs our choice and use of methods," to the theoretical perspective that "lies behind the methodology in question," to the epistemology that "informs this theoretical perspective" (p. 2).

Yin (1994) argued that case study research, in contrast to other qualitative research designs like ethnography, requires identifying the theoretical perspective at the outset of the inquiry, since it affects the research questions, analysis, and interpretation of findings. In a sense, he argued, "the complete (case study) research design embodies a theory of what is being studied" (p. 28), drawn from the existing knowledge base.

It is interesting to note that whereas Yin categorized case study as a research design on a par with ethnography and grounded theory, Crotty (1998) saw case study as a method to be used in realizing methodologies like ethnography and grounded theory.

Creswell (1994, 1998), too, posited the role of theory in qualitative research in relation to research designs (methodologies or theoretical perspectives in Crotty's, 1998, categorization). In his earlier work, Creswell (1994) had argued that the role of theory varies with the type of research design. In grounded theory, for example, theory is the outcome of the research. In phenomenology, "no preconceived notions, expectations or frameworks guide researchers" (p. 94). In "critical ethnographic" designs, that is, studies with "a critical theory component" (p. 94), one begins with a theory that "informs" the study—although Creswell did not specify what it informs in the study. Interestingly enough, in referring to ethnographic designs without a critical theory component (his designation), Creswell specified that theories might be drawn from "existing theories of culture" (p. 94), outside of methodological parameters, for example, social exchange theory. In referring to how these theories might inform the study, he indicated that they might "help shape the initial research questions" (p. 94). Having said this, however, Creswell argued,

> In a qualitative study, one does not begin with a theory to test or verify. Instead, consistent with the inductive model of thinking, a theory may emerge during the data collection and analysis phase . . . or be used relatively late in the research process as a basis for comparison with other theories. (pp. 94–95)

Indeed, in depicting the research process for qualitative studies, the development of a theory or comparison with other theories comes after the gathering and analysis of data.

In a later book devoted to distinguishing among five different "research traditions" in qualitative research —biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study—Creswell (1998) acknowledged that researchers bring paradigmatic assumptions (ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological) to the design of their studies and may, in addition, bring ideological perspectives (postmodernism, critical theory, and feminism) that "might guide a study" (p. 78). Although he did not specify how the paradigmatic assumptions or ideological perspectives affect the various research designs (traditions), Creswell spoke of "another perspective" (p. 84), social science theories, which he referred to as a theoretical lens rather than an ideological perspective, and how this lens affects each of the research traditions. He contended that with ethnography and phenomenology, the researcher brings "a strong orienting framework" (p. 86) to the research, whereas in grounded theory, "one collects and analyzes data before using theory" (p. 86). With biography and case study, a theoretical lens might or might not play a part, depending on the nature of the study and the disposition of the researcher. Adding to the confusion, in a recent edition, Creswell (2014) suggested that the researcher has to "decide if theory is to be used in qualitative research" (p. 67), clearly suggesting that it is a choice and, drawing on Schwandt (1993) in a prior edition, that if it is to be used, "a priori conceptual structures composed of theory and method provide the starting point" (Creswell, 2009, p. 64).

Patton (2002) posited a set of "theoretical traditions" (a mixture of theoretical perspectives and methodologies in Crotty's, 1998, categorization) including ethnography, phenomenology, heuristics, ethnomethodology, symbolic inter-actionism, ecological psychology, systems theory, chaos theory,

hermeneutics, and orientational. Because these traditions derive from social and behavioral science disciplines, and the different questions central to these disciplines, Patton (2002) argued for the close link between theory and method: "How you study the world determines what you learn about the world" (p. 125).

THEORY AS MORE

As compelling as the work relating theory in qualitative research to methodologies and their underlying epistemologies, a body of work exists that, although not denying the influence of methodologies and their underlying epistemologies, suggests that the role of theory in qualitative research is more than that and more pervasive and influential than suggested by those who situate it methodologically. The authors of this body of work contend that theory plays a key role in framing and conducting almost every aspect of the study.

Merriam (1998) argued that "many believe mistakenly that theory has no place in a qualitative study. Actually, it would be difficult to imagine a study without a theoretical or conceptual framework" (p. 45). Referring to Becker (1993), Merriam (2009) emphasized that we would not know what to do in conducting our research without some theoretical framework to guide us, whether it is made explicit or not. She called the theoretical framework "the structure, the scaffolding, or frame of your study" (p. 66). For Merriam, the theoretical framework is derived from the "orientation or stance that you bring to your study" (p. 66) and draws on "the concepts, terms, definitions, models, and theories of a particular literature base and disciplinary orientation" (p. 67). For Merriam, then, theory affects every aspect of the study, from determining how to frame the purpose and problem, to deciding what to look at and for, to resolving how to make sense of the data collected. Indeed, she argued that the entire process is "theory-laden" (Merriam, 1998, p. 48) and that "a theoretical framework underlies all research" (Merriam, 2009, p. 66).

Echoing Merriam, Miles and Huberman (1994) spoke of what they considered to be the critical role theory plays in qualitative research. While admitting that "many social anthropologists and social phenomenologists consider social processes to be too complex, too relative, too elusive or too exotic to be approached with explicit conceptual frames," they held that "any researcher, no matter how unstructured or inductive, comes to fieldwork with some orienting ideas" (p. 17). Without at least "some rudimentary conceptual framework" (p. 17), they argued, there would be no way to make reasoned decisions about what data to gather, and about what, and to determine what is important from among the welter of what is possible. The conceptual framework "can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal" (p. 18), but it delineates the main things to be studied and the "presumed relationships among them" (p. 18). The conceptual framework is, according to the authors, constructed from the theories and experiences the researcher brings to and draws on in conceptualizing the study. These theories, implicit and explicit, include grand theories such as symbolic interactionism and "middle-range concepts such as culture" (p. 91), as well as "preconceptions, biases, values, frames, and rhetorical habits" (p. 91).

Maxwell (1996, 2013) considered the conceptual framework as one of five components of the research design that connect and interact in a nonlinear, noncyclical fashion, "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and the theories that supports and informs your research" and speaks to "what you think is going on" (2013, p. 39). "The function of this theory is to inform the rest of your design [and] it also helps you justify your research" (2013, p. 40).

In his book *Conceptualizing Qualitative Inquiry* (2003), Schram aligned the conceptual context of a study with theory, which he saw as extending "from formal explanatory axiom[s] . . . to tentative hunch[es] . . . to any general set of ideas that guide action" (p. 42). He contended that the researcher's perspective, fundamental beliefs, values, hunches, assumptions, and purposes for engaging in the study constitute "premises about the world and how it can be understood and studied" (p. 29) and play a "pervasive but subtle" role in directing the study. This role includes "how you engage with a preliminary sense of problem and purpose, how you portray your involvement with study participants, the way you define key concepts, how you address assumptions within your research questions" (p. 39), as well as "deciding which of the things you see are legitimate and important to document" (p. 29). Summing it up in a subsequent edition, Schram (2006) concluded that the conceptual context declares, "Here's how I am positioning my problem within an established arena of ideas, and here's why it matters" (p. 62)

Similarly, whereas Bentz and Shapiro (1998) acknowledged that there are "cultures of inquiry . . . general approaches to creating knowledge in the human and social sciences, each with its own model of what counts as knowledge, what it is for, and how it is produced" (p. 9), they contended,

> Research is always carried out by an individual with a life and a life-world . . . a personality, a social context, and various personal and practical challenges and conflicts, all of which affect the research, from the choice of a research question or topic, through the method used, to the reporting of the project's outcome. (p. 4)

Among the advocates of the position that the theoretical or conceptual framework in qualitative research is more than the methodologies and epistemologies underlying them, few are as vehement and articulate the position as cogently as Flinders and Mills (1993). In their book *Theory and Concepts in Qualitative Research*, they addressed the issue directly. Flinders and Mills began by asserting, "Few of us now claim that we enter the field tabula rasa, unencumbered by notions of the phenomena we seek to understand" (p. xi). They argued that theory includes "any general set of ideas that guide action" (p. xii) and that theory profoundly affects the conduct of the research. "Theory is pragmatically bound up with the activities of planning a study, gaining entry into the field, recording observations, conducting interviews, sifting through documents, and writing up research" (p. xiv). Indeed, they affirmed a statement reputed to William James, "You can't pick up rocks in a field without a theory" (p. xii).

Arguing that atheoretical research is impossible, Schwandt, in Flinders and Mills (1993), contended that it is impossible to observe and describe "the way things really are, free of any prior conceptual scheme or theory . . . without some theory of what is relevant to observe, how what is to be observed is to be named, and so on" (p. 8). It is "prior theoretical commitments and conceptual schemes" (p. 9) that guide the inquiry.

Mills (1993) defined theory as an "analytical and interpretive framework that helps the researcher make sense of 'what is going on in the social setting being studied'" (p. 103) and spoke about the implicit and explicit theories underlying the case that is the focus of his chapter—the beliefs, propositions, and theoretical conceptions that framed the study and its analysis, even though the theory was purported to be "emergent." These theories, he argued, "provide the researcher with a framework for the problem and questions to be addressed in the study" (p. 114).

A recent addition to resources that place the role of theory in the "more" category comes from a somewhat

different position (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). First, Ravitch and Riggan (2012) reject the idea that conceptual and theoretical frameworks are essentially the same thing, contending that conceptual frameworks (their focus) are composed of three elements, "personal interests, topical research and theoretical frameworks" (p. 10), the latter defined as "formal theories that have been used in empirical work" (p. 12). The authors see the conceptual framework as affecting every aspect of the study but state quite specifically that it "also guides the way in which you think about, collect, analyze, describe and interpret your data" (p. 14).

WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?

Although this review of the literature on the role of theory in qualitative research is hardly exhaustive, it does provide a basis for considering where we are with respect to the role theory plays in qualitative research. Qualitative research has often been criticized as not being guided by theory in its development and conduct. Clearly, that is not a view shared by those who write about and guide neophyte researchers in doing qualitative research. Theory has a place—an unavoidable place for all but a few of the authors we reviewed—and plays a substantive role in the research process. For those writers for whom methodologies are primarily associated with the role of theory, the epistemologies underlying these methodologies as well as the methodologies themselves serve as lenses from and through which the researcher looks at the study. It is not just the choice of a methodology that affects the study. Those writers for whom theory affects studies in more ways than that, without speaking to the matter directly, clearly imply that methodologies and their underlying epistemologies influence and guide the study theoretically. They do not stop there, however, but suggest that there is more that the researcher brings to the study, that it is *all* that the researcher brings, implicitly and explicitly, that affects all aspects of the study.

In the majority of existing texts, consideration of theory and its effect on the study is but one aspect of the larger focus of the work. Thus, they provide neither the depth of understanding nor the specificity needed to explicate the topic. If one already understands, at some deep and intimate level, the role and place of a theoretical framework, then explanations are both understandable and confirmatory. One can put the disparate pieces together and fill in the blanks in the places the texts may not have detailed. None of the texts, however, provide sufficient guidance to students, neophyte researchers, or those who may not already understand theory's role and place to enable them to "see" how theoretical frameworks affect research or to fully and appropriately identify and apply a framework to their own research.

This, then, remains the purpose of this book. But before we proceed with the use of theoretical frameworks, it is necessary to provide a clear definition of what we mean by the term *theoretical framework* and how it is used in this book.

A Definition of Theoretical Frameworks

We clearly situate our conception of the theoretical framework with those authors who see theory as "more than" (i.e., Flinders & Mills, 1993; Merriam, 1998, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Schram, 2003, 2006). Acknowledging that the term does not have a clear and consistent definition, we define theoretical frameworks as any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes, at a variety of

levels (e.g., grand, midrange, explanatory), that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena. This definition of theoretical frameworks excludes what Guba and Lincoln (1994) have called "paradigms" of social research (e.g., postpositivist, constructivist, critical, feminist). It also does not consider methodological issues or approaches to be synonymous with theoretical frameworks (e.g., narrative analysis, systems analysis, symbolic interactionism).

Examples of what we mean by theories that can be applied as "lenses" to study phenomena might include Vygotskian learning theory, micropolitical theory, class reproduction theory, job choice theory, and social capital, as well as the theories employed by the researchers who have contributed chapters to this book. The theoretical frameworks they used include varied lenses such as Black feminist theory (Collins, 1997, 2000), liminality (Turner, 1967, 1977), transformational learning theory (Merizow, 1991), the arena model of policy innovation (Mazzoni, 1991), and grief theory (Kubler-Ross, 1969), to name a few.

There are a large number and wide variety of theoretical frameworks available for qualitative researchers to consider. These frameworks originate in the many different fields of study and the many disciplines in the social and natural sciences. Thus, the well-read qualitative researcher is alert to theoretical frameworks in economics, sociology, political science, psychology, biology, physics, and anthropology, to name but a few. That researcher is also open to considering the applicability of these frameworks to the research problem chosen for study. It is, indeed, this diversity and richness of theoretical frameworks that allow us to see in new and different ways what seems to be ordinary and familiar.

As an example, Hoenack and Monk (1990) applied economic theory to a study of the costs and benefits of teacher evaluation systems in education. The economic aspects they addressed included production theory and efficiency, the economics of information, performance incentives, and the distributional effects of policy interventions. The use of this unusual theoretical framework in educational research allowed the authors to present a unique view of the phenomenon being studied. Another example is Pounder and Merrill (2001), who used job choice theory (developed by Behling, Labovitz, & Gainer, 1968; later adapted to an educational setting by Young, Rinehart, & Place, 1989) to examine potential candidates' perceptions and job intentions with regard to high school principalships.

In defining theoretical frameworks, we are cognizant that any framework or theory allows the researcher to "see" and understand certain aspects of the phenomenon being studied while concealing other aspects. No theory, or theoretical framework, provides a perfect explanation of what is being studied—a point we shall return to in the concluding chapter of this book.

Organization of the Book

The chapters that follow take you "behind the scenes" to examine the role of theoretical frameworks in qualitative research. They allow you to learn how these researchers found the theoretical framework they used in a particular study and how it affected that study. The contributors take you on their journey in using the framework and in thinking about its applicability, providing sufficient detail to allow you to assess what they saw against the published research study discussed and cited. These insights provide the reader with practical lessons drawn from real-world studies. These lessons concern not only the contributions of theory to

qualitative research but also the dilemmas and pitfalls that theory presents to researchers.

To allow the reader to compare and contrast responses across chapters, the contributors were asked to address the following items (if relevant), in approximately this order:

1. An overview of the study that formed the basis for the discussion of the theoretical framework used, including its purpose, research questions, methods employed, findings, and conclusions
2. A detailed description of the theoretical framework(s) used in the study and the discipline from which it/they originated
3. How the researcher found the theoretical framework and what convinced him or her that this was an appropriate framework to use
4. What effects the theoretical framework had on the research questions, the design of the study, and the analyses obtained
5. Other conceptual frameworks considered and why they were used or discarded
6. Any additional issues the contributors wished to discuss in relation to the use of theory in their research

The headings and subheadings in the chapters in this book correspond more or less to the above items. As noted earlier, this structure was imposed to allow readers to compare and contrast the responses of the various contributing chapter authors. Readers will note variations in the wording of some of the headings and subheadings, but the content of the primary contributing chapters addresses each of the six areas. In addition, the briefs from doctoral dissertations provide snapshots of these same topics.

Unlike in many other books, after reading this framing chapter, the reader is not required to read the succeeding chapters in any particular order. Indeed, readers are free to choose any beginning point as their interest and curiosity dictate, without fear of missing critical lessons. That is the advantage of imposing the content guidelines on the authors. You can learn these lessons from each of the chapters, although collectively the lessons are clearer, stronger, and more impactful. To help you in the process of choosing where to begin, Table 1.1 identifies the frameworks used by the contributing authors, the fields from which they were taken, and the foci of the studies that employed them.

Table 1.1 Chapters in *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research* (Second Edition)

Theoretical framework	Field of the study/discipline	Focus of the study	Chapter/ Author
Culture (Goodenough)	Cognitive anthropology	School culture & organizational change	Chapter 2 Henstrand
Arena model of policy innovation (Mazzoni)	Political science	Comprehensive state school reform policy	Chapter 3 Fowler
Black feminist thought (Collins)	Critical social theory	Mentoring experiences of African American women in graduate and professional school	Chapter 4 Patton
Transformational learning and adult development (Mezirow)	Psychology	HIV-positive young adults	Chapter 5 Merriam
Social identity and self-categorization (Alvesson & Willmont)	Sociology	Faculty experience of department reorganization	Chapter 6 Mills & Bettis
Othermothering (Collins)	Black feminist scholarship	Administrative relationships with students at HBCUS	Chapter 7 Strayhorn
Typology of grid and group (Douglas)	Social anthropology	School culture	Chapter 8 Harris
Social field theory (Bourdieu)	Sociology	Curriculum development	Chapter 9 Mutch
Grief model (Kubler-Ross)	Psychology	Organizational change	Chapter 10 Kearney & Hyle
Bioecological systems theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner)	Developmental psychology	The development of white racial consciousness	Chapter 11 Peterson

NOTE: HBCUs = historically Black colleges and universities.

The final chapter of the book seeks to close the loop by looking across the chapters and briefs to reflect on their contribution to the ongoing dialogue about the use of theory in qualitative research and what their experiences suggest. After reflecting on these chapters, we come back to our discussion of the relationship between theory and qualitative research and seek to focus specifically on the questions that continue to plague students and neophyte qualitative researchers and to provide answers to those questions using the lessons learned from the contributing authors, and to questions for which they might not have provided clear answers.

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2

Seeking an Understanding of School Culture

Using Theory as a Framework for Observation and Analysis

Joyce L. Henstrand

Ward Goodenough's theory of Culture (sic), culture pool, and propriospect is examined in this chapter in relation to its influence in a study of reform in a large high school. The lesson to be learned from the examination of the use of the theory is that it can be used to provide the framework for the design of the study and a lens for observation. The theory can also be used as a tool to manage the subjectivity of the role of a full participant observer in an ethnographic study.

Henstrand, J. L. (1991). *Teacher culture from the inside: A case study of planned change from the perspective of an active participant observer* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Oregon, Eugene.

Overview of the Study

PURPOSE

This case study of planned change at Emerson High School, a large suburban high school, was conducted to contribute to the understanding of the process of reforming secondary schools. At the time I conducted my research, most studies of reform had involved elementary schools, but the findings of these studies did not apply to the more complex high school system (Fullan, 1990; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990). The persistent resistance of high schools to systemic change and the lack of case studies focused on improving high schools (Miles, 1986) offered the opportunity to participate in the national dialogue related to improving the nation's high schools. After a search of studies on school reform, I decided to approach my investigation from a cultural perspective. In the previous 20 years, most investigations of change had been from a technological or political perspective. One example of a technological approach, the concerns-based adoption model developed by Hall and Hord (1984) to offer facilitators a formula for bringing about change in schools, assumed that if a facilitator helps individuals work through a series of predictable stages, the result will be successful implementation of reform. Politically oriented studies, in contrast, focused on examining how tensions and conflicts between individuals or among groups have slowed or prevented reform. Neither the technological nor the political approaches appealed to me. The technological change models tended to reduce the change process to a formula, assuming that most people will respond uniformly to the treatment being administered by the change facilitator, and the political approaches focused on the political aspects of conflict. Neither explained the way people experience change or the interaction of an organization's internal culture with the change process.

My interest lay in the cultural perspective because my experiences as a teacher had enabled me to witness the complexities of the change process from inside the organization. I had participated in failed reform efforts and in highly successful innovations. From my perspective, teacher values, the culture of the organization, and the leadership skills of the change facilitator were the key issues in successful reform efforts. Supporting this approach in his early work on change, Michael Fullan (1982) argued, "Neglect of . . . how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended is at the heart of the spectacular lack of success of most social reforms" (p. 4). In his classic work *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, Sarason (1982) attributed the high failure rate of school reform to a lack of understanding of school culture and advocated for increased descriptive studies of the process of change in the school culture. By providing a case study (as defined by Yin, 1984, p. 23) describing how people actually experience change, this study was intended to create a dialogue between those who experience change and those who want to know about change.

I began the case study without a thesis; instead, for a full school year, I observed the culture of a high school as reform was attempted (Fullan, 1990; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990). The essential question of the study was "What is going on here?"—a question Wolcott (1988) believes is suitable for ethnographic research. The result is a description and interpretation of change in the context of a specific school culture. It does not provide a prescription for carrying out future change efforts in other places, but it does provide cultural insight to those who seek to bring about change in high schools.

METHODOLOGY

Because I approached this case study from a cultural perspective, I chose the ethnographic research techniques of cultural anthropology and conducted my research from my perspective as a full-time practicing teacher in a large high school. As this position was unusual in ethnographic research, I not only studied theory related to the conduct of anthropological fieldwork but also wrote a rationale detailing the implications of the "native" becoming a researcher. In addition, as part of the findings, I included a detailed discussion of the implications of both being a full member of the culture and conducting ethnographic research. The theory and implications surrounding this research stance will be discussed later in this chapter.

I conducted fieldwork with a repertoire of strategies that generally followed Spradley's (1980) cycles played over many times. The strategy I used at any point in time depended on "feedback from the field, redefinition of research questions as [my] understanding of the culture [deepened], and meanings that participants [attached] to things" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1984, p. 165). The individual career history required the specialized methodology of Denzin (1970), Kluckhohn (1945), Langness and Frank (1986), and Wolcott (1983). Although the sequence of use varied from situation to situation, the strategies included the following:

Interviewing: I used James Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview to guide the informal interviews, which were useful during the early months of my fieldwork, when I was discovering major issues. During the later stages, I added formal interviews to focus on specific topics. As a model for the formal interviews, I used the long interview as described by McCracken (1988).

Observation: My natural involvement in school activities provided access to most school events. Whenever possible, I took notes verbatim. In instances in which I could not take notes, I jotted down key comments and crucial quotes as soon after the event as possible. Every evening, I reviewed my notes and filled in the gaps.

Key informants: I followed the advice of H. Russell Bernard (1988) and Jeffrey Johnson (1990) as I chose the informants.

Surveys and questionnaires: The work of Fink and Kosecoff (1985), Bailey (1987), Worthen and Sanders (1987), and Gay (1987) guided me in the development and administration of a census survey as part of a reciprocal agreement (as defined by Wax, 1952) with the School Improvement Team.

Additional strategies: I used unobtrusive measures (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966) such as archives and physical traces to corroborate evidence found through other data-gathering techniques.

FINDINGS

The case is presented in three sections that represent (1) the culture as a whole, (2) subgroups within the culture, and (3) the outlook of an individual. My goal was to provide "thick description" (Geertz, 1973), to enable readers to experience and interpret the change process during an academic year at Emerson High School. Emerging from the description is a portrait of a school that appeared to outsiders to have achieved its goal: providing multiple opportunities for success for students. That broad goal fostered multiple projects: (a) a mentor program, (b) a peer tutoring project, (c) curriculum changes in language arts and social studies, and (d) articulation of services to students at all grade levels. Although these overt accomplishments seemed to signal success, covert changes in the school culture undermined and eventually prevented the overall success of reform at Emerson High School. When the principal, George Barnes, covertly changed policies regarding student discipline, teacher support for the entire reform project eroded. Barnes, in his determination to keep students in school and in class regardless of their behavior, violated a sacred norm of the teaching staff—the belief that strong disciplinary support from administration both ensured a positive climate in the school and contributed positively to the education of the students. The frustrations that teachers felt over what they perceived as a lack of disciplinary support and Barnes's response that he had no intention of removing students from classes for either suspensions or expulsions ultimately affected teachers' responses to all of the reform projects that Barnes advocated.

Comments made by administrators and teachers throughout the process indicated basic differences in how they perceived their worlds, so that neither side understood or empathized with the view of the other. Not surprisingly, communication also suffered, and this contributed to teacher dissatisfaction. By focusing on information about events and goals, Barnes inadvertently violated another sacred norm of the teachers—their need to have information regarding expectations, follow-up on student issues, and information that affected their careers or their daily work. The opposing perceptions by administrators and teachers of what constituted good communication and appropriate discipline for students led to serious dissatisfaction among staff and erosion of support for all of the change projects.

Descriptions of three faculty groups, (1) the School Improvement Team, (2) the At-Risk Steering Committee, and (3) the department chairs, revealed further erosion in the climate of the school because Barnes's interactions with these groups increased the difficulties in reaching the school goals. Barnes created the At-Risk Steering Committee to lead school reform. He appointed new teachers and others who supported, and did not question, the school goals. It quickly became obvious that this group was steering the course of reform at Emerson High School. Veteran teachers frequently voiced their annoyance that the new teachers were influencing the future of the school more than the veterans.

The School Improvement Team, a mostly veteran group elected by their teaching peers, felt frustrated

that Barnes had assigned the task of leading the reform to the At-Risk Steering Committee. The teachers and classified staff on the School Improvement Team had been elected by their peers to represent them in areas such as determining and planning implementation of the school goals. Although the team members were generally supportive of the school goal "to provide multiple opportunities for success" to all students, they did not agree with Barnes when it came to its implementation. A prominent example was their skepticism about the program to mentor at-risk students. Responding to comments from teachers, they strongly urged that Barnes provide professional development and support on how to mentor students, but very little training occurred. Once the mentoring program began, the team members tried to inform Barnes about staff frustrations related to discipline issues. They told Barnes that they did not want to abandon the program but suggested changes that would make the program more palatable for teachers. Disagreements emerged in the meetings. Barnes grew frustrated with their questions and questioned the teachers' dedication to student success. The teachers accused him of not listening, and eventually, they withdrew active support for the innovations. Barnes stopped going to the School Improvement Team meetings. Abandoned by the principal, the School Improvement Team found a purpose for its existence by dedicating its efforts to seeking resolution of staff frustrations. The team conducted a staff survey and published results that revealed deep dissatisfaction among the majority of the staff. Barnes's refusal to change the course of action for the school led to deeper dissatisfaction and further eroded support for the reforms.

The department heads, another group of veteran teachers, were appointed by the principal to perform administrative tasks related to running their departments. Seeking to domesticate several strong critics by appointing them as department heads, Barnes reduced their open opposition because actively supporting school goals was a condition of their employment as department coordinators. Although these influential teachers were kept out of the decision-making loop, they were charged with implementing changes in curriculum and instruction within their departments. Their meetings were marked by civility and reporting on progress toward the goals. Informally, as they interacted with colleagues, they sometimes joked about issues but seldom openly opposed Barnes. In their official roles, they worked to implement the goals, but they rarely expressed enthusiastic support among their peers.

Barnes's work with the three groups promoted a phenomenon that Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) referred to as balkanization and Sergiovanni (1986) called wild centers. Normally, centers in schools provide stability and are "normal and necessary for establishing social order and providing meaning"; but they can, if left unattended, become "wild centers" that "may not only contradict administrative and organizational aspirations but may conflict as well among themselves" (p. 9). By abandoning two groups of powerful teachers, Barnes encouraged them to become wild centers, undermining his own goals.

CONCLUSIONS

Emerging from this examination of a school in the process of change is the notion that responsiveness at all levels of the organization influences the success of attempts at reform. It is no doubt important to come to an understanding of how an entire staff accepts or rejects an innovation. Equally important to understanding the change process, however, are the roles played by small groups and by individuals. In the case of Emerson High School, all the experiences of the small groups and the individuals came together to create the overall

response of the organization. To fully comprehend the culture of the school, the whole must be understood in terms of the parts, just as the parts must be understood in terms of the whole. My observations of the staff, the subgroups, and the individuals revealed three significant issues to be considered by those working to change schools.

Issue 1: Teachers and administrators have opposing ideational systems. Teachers and administrators tend to interpret the same phenomena in different ways. This viewpoint supports the notions of Wolcott (1977) and Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone (1988) on how to approach issues associated with making changes in an organization. Understanding, rather than berating, the norms and sacred values of others can more productively lead to solutions and thoughtful implementation of change. The key issue at Emerson High School was student discipline. As Barnes and his administrative team worked on discipline issues, they operated from the belief that they were redirecting students to more successful choices. Because the administrative approach did not involve traditional consequences such as suspension, the teachers viewed each incident as a personal insult that proved lack of support from the administration. In this and all the issues I observed, the subgroup of administrators tended to think in terms of the big picture and acted to move the system toward its goals. On the other hand, the teachers tended to focus on the specifics of each situation and how it affected their own classroom. This was a cultural characteristic shared by the teacher subgroups and also by the individual teachers. Barnes wondered why the teachers could not see the big picture and criticized them for focusing on small issues and incidents. A comment by one teacher represented the viewpoint of her colleagues when she stated that her job demands focus on details: daily class schedules, taking attendance, tracking hundreds of grades, and filling out paperwork. She wondered how Barnes could expect teachers to shift easily to the big picture in the context of their daily reality. The conflicting interpretations were never resolved, and they undermined the school improvement goals.

Issue 2: Teacher beliefs about reforms have more impact than facts. The beliefs of members of the culture and subgroups are ultimately more important than the facts about what actually happens. The overly broad goal at Emerson High School led to multiple interpretations of its meaning; without adequate information and direction, the teachers acted on their own perceptions. Barnes did provide the teachers with factual information, but he did not provide information that corresponded with what they desired to know, such as how the reforms would affect their work, including their relationships with students. After each factual communication, the teachers created their own interpretations. Those vested in planning, such as the At-Risk Steering Committee, tended to react favorably to the announcements. Teachers with less or no involvement in the development of the goals created interpretations that questioned Barnes's motives and assumed the worst. Barnes's explanations after the fact rarely changed any minds; the teachers clung to their own interpretations, which were closely aligned with their personal belief systems. The reactions of teachers in subgroups helped reify the interpretations of the general population.

Issue 3: School reforms affect the lives of teachers as well as students. In the flurry to improve schools for the benefit of students, it is easy to forget that teachers have needs too. Seymour Sarason (1990) argues that "schools are no less for the growth of staff than for students" (p. 150) and claims that ignoring this has contributed to the failure of many reform efforts. The case of an individual teacher, Linda Nelson, illustrates

how not to nourish a talented and productive teacher. Although Nelson was publicly acknowledged for her contributions, her work was rewarded with extra responsibilities and increased committee work. She resented the lack of compensation for the extra tasks, grew disillusioned, and finally left the profession to pursue a different career. Another example is the impact on teachers related to changes in disciplinary tactics. When teachers sent students to the office because of severe disciplinary infractions (e.g., swearing at the teacher), they expected to be supported by the administration, with appropriate consequences for the student. When the offending students were returned to the classroom with no tangible consequence, the teachers felt that their authority had been undermined. Furthermore, they reinforced their interpretations in the subgroups and at informal gatherings. The reform was making life better for students but worse for teachers. Not surprisingly, teacher support for the reform eroded.

Although the people and events of Emerson High School will not be exactly replicated in another organization, their story offers an insider's view of the culture of a suburban high school grappling with change. Leaders in reform should take the time to study and understand each school's culture, including the variations in the ideational systems of teacher groups and individuals. Using that knowledge, the needs of both adults and students can be addressed during the process of change.

My Use of Theory

Prior to commencing the fieldwork, I studied theory in two distinct areas: (1) sociological and anthropological theory that would potentially guide both the gathering and the analysis of data and (2) theoretical discussions by anthropologists regarding the research role of an active participant observer. In the first case, I was seeking a theoretical framework that would "guide and clarify" my observations, data collection, and analysis (Wolcott, 1995, p. 183). In the second case, I sought justification for my research role, which involved being a "native" who becomes a researcher rather than the classic stance of a "stranger" seeking to understand the natives. In both areas, the theoretical stances I chose were critical in every phase of the work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical orientation of cognitive anthropology, and more specifically the work of the cognitive anthropologist Ward Goodenough (1981), guided my data collection and analysis. Other theoretical frameworks influenced several aspects of the study and will be explained later in this chapter, but Goodenough's framework was the major influence. My search for a theoretical stance began when I was a doctoral student at the University of Oregon and enrolled in a course in educational anthropology offered by Harry Wolcott. I developed an interest in ethnographic research, with its emphasis on description and interpretation. Eventually, I took a class from Wolcott called "Culture Theory" and wrote a paper that explored the appropriateness of various sociological and anthropological theories in anthropological research. I found multitudes of theories and continued my reading after I completed the class. I settled on Goodenough's cultural framework for the case study of Emerson High School because it allowed me to examine the multiple roles of teachers in the school culture and explained the relation of individuals, small groups, and the whole in the process of change (Henstrand, 1993).

According to Tyler (1969), cognitive anthropology "focuses on discovering how different peoples organize and use their cultures" (p. 3) and perceives that "culture resides in the minds of people rather than in the material phenomena of the system. When they study a culture, cognitive anthropologists seek to understand the organizing principles underlying behavior" (p. 3). They ask, "What material phenomena are significant for the people?" and "How do they organize these phenomena?" (p. 3). Tyler stated that cognitive anthropologists are also interested in both differences between cultures and differences within cultures. Their "prime inroad" for understanding groups and their cultures is language (Agar, 1987, p. 432).

Goodenough (1963), one of the leading early scholars of cognitive anthropology, "took language as [his] point of departure for studying culture" (p. iii). Culture "consists of standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it" (pp. 258–259). Culture is not the material artifacts or observed traditions; rather, it is "what is learned, . . . the things one needs to know in order to meet the standards of others" (Goodenough, 1981, p. 50). Public culture is not taken as "a given simply to be described; [he] takes it as a phenomenon to be explained" (Goodenough, 1981, p. 59). Language is the primary vehicle for learning from members of the culture pool.

Goodenough's (1981) definition of culture not only includes the Culture (with a capital *C*) of the entire society but also allows for subgroups and individuals. The Culture includes the values and traditions that are known to all members of the society. Subgroups consist of smaller groups or clusters that, in addition to sharing the values and traditions of the culture, have values, traditions, and language unique to the members of their group. Individuals have their own personal idiolect or version of the language and their own private version of the shared culture. Furthermore, Goodenough argued, "no two individuals have exactly the same understanding of it in all respects" (p. 97). The individual outlook that Goodenough labeled "propriospect" grows "out of his own experience [as] each individual develops his private, subjective view of the world and of its contents—his personal outlook" (p. 98). The "sum of the contents of all of the propriospects of the society's members" (p. 111) becomes the culture pool. On the other hand, each propriospect can contain pieces from many different cultures. Thus, the concept of "propriospect" not only allows for differences between individuals but also accounts for an individual person being multicultural and choosing an appropriate operating culture at will.

Goodenough's (1981) model of culture accounts for gradual change (culture drift), rapid change, innovation, and response to change. Culture drift occurs as younger individuals shift their ideas, beliefs, values, recipes, and traditions away from those taught to them by their elders and toward other influences. Faster change can occur when members of the culture reevaluate and accept change in ideas, beliefs, values, recipes, or traditions. If the changes cause dissonance between the public culture and peoples' beliefs, a crisis may develop, with turmoil among members. Some customs may acquire such deep commitment from the members of the culture that

> people demand of one another that they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform these routines. They demand cooperation of one another in their performance, and they prohibit behavior that interferes with them or that jeopardizes the arrangements and stockpiles on which performance of these customary routines depends, investing them with moral rightness and even sanctity. (p. 90)

Individuals may withdraw from the changes, or change may be blocked in the culture.

Making Goodenough's (1981) model of culture the organizing framework for my study was a relatively simple choice for me. I had spent more than a year (Henstrand, 1993) investigating multiple anthropological and sociological theories of culture. Although they offered insights that expanded my knowledge and influenced my work in small ways, I had not "connected" with any of them. Structural and functional theories tend to concentrate on the phenomenal world by looking at social structure and function. They are more concerned with the relationship of structure and function than with the belief systems of members. Most of the analyses focused on a unit of measure. For instance, Durkheim was more interested in societal forces than in the individual, and Radcliff-Brown analyzed change in terms of the whole social structure. In contrast, Weber and Malinowski focused on individuals as their unit of analysis. In addition to the limitations of their unit of analysis, structural and functional theories lack constructs for talking about change. Functionalism, in particular, focuses on explaining the continuity of culture rather than change. Because I was studying planned change, structuralism and functionalism seemed limited in usefulness for my work.

In contrast to the limitations of the structural and functional theories I studied, Goodenough's (1981) model provided a means to understand the complexities of the social system I found in the high school. His model included a framework for analyzing the total group, smaller clusters within the group, and individuals. I was not forced to place individuals in a single category but could identify overlapping roles and relationships. In addition, Goodenough offered a framework for understanding change in a social system.

Goodenough's (1981) concept of propriospect also offered a valuable tool for analysis. According to Wolcott (1987, 1991), "propriospect" draws our attention "to the individual acquisition of cultural competencies in which each of us is engaged throughout the course of a lifetime" (1987, p. 51). The concept avoids taking an evaluative stance because the interest of the researcher is on the contents of the propriospect. Finally, it "draws attention to the idea that multiculturalism is exhibited in normal human experience" (1987, p. 32). Because every propriospect contains a different combination of pieces from the operating culture and from other cultures, diversity is a natural state.

One additional theoretical approach, interpretive anthropology, also affected my study. Interpretive anthropology includes both culture theory and the practice of studying culture. Rooted in phenomenology, structuralism, structural linguistics, semiotics, and hermeneutics, interpretive anthropologists avoid creating categories like the functionalists and refuse to identify universal truths. The only reality that they claim is their own interpretation of their text. In fact, discussion of the texts themselves is an important characteristic of the movement. A major representative of interpretive anthropology, Clifford Geertz (1973) took a semiotic view of culture. He agreed with Max Weber "that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun," and he took "culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 5). Ethnography is not to be defined by its methods, such as seeking an informant or keeping a diary; rather, it is a "kind of intellectual effort . . . an elaborate venture in . . . 'thick description'" (p. 6). The ethnographer develops an interpretation or constructs meaning from the descriptions of even minor aspects of the culture. Though this may appear on the surface to be similar to Goodenough's (1981) framework, Geertz specifically separated himself from Goodenough. Goodenough believed that culture is manifested in the mind. In contrast, Geertz (1973) believed that "culture is public because meaning is" (p. 12). Furthermore, Geertz argued that cognitive anthropologists' belief that

mental phenomena can be analyzed by formal methods such as mathematics and logic "is as destructive of an effective use of the concept as are the behaviorist and idealist fallacies to which it is a misdrawn correction" (p. 12). Geertz did not expect that there will ever develop "a perfection of consensus" but believed instead that there would be a "refinement of debate" (p. 29). The "vocation" of anthropology is "not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others, guarding other sheep in other valleys, have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said" (p. 30). Despite Geertz's adamant argument separating cognitive and interpretive anthropology, more recently cognitive anthropologists have come closer to interpretive anthropology by seeing culture as public and symbolic (Dougherty, 1985).

Effects of Using a Theoretical Framework

When I originally set out to discover a theory or theories, my goal was to find theories that would guide my data collection and analysis, clarify my ideas, unify my work, and justify my research role as a participant observer. As a novice researcher, I knew that tackling a year of ethnographic research in a high school involved observing and analyzing myriad events and relationships. I wondered, "How can I make sense of it all, or, for that matter, any of it?" Because my goal was to discover what was going on in a comprehensive high school that was attempting major change, I needed a lens that would help me filter the input and develop a defensible interpretation. Theory provided me with that lens and influenced nearly every aspect of my work. Goodenough's (1981) model of culture and change guided my data analysis and organization of the written case. Geertz (1973, 1987) and interpretive anthropology influenced me on a holistic level by guiding my thinking about interpretation and description. Both aided me in defending my research role.

Goodenough's *Culture, Language, and Society* (1981) provided the basis of the organization of the case study into three major categories: (1) the social group as a whole, (2) smaller subgroups of teachers, and (3) one teacher operating within the larger group. When I reviewed the research on teacher culture, I discovered that most work discussed teachers as a single culture. For example, Wolcott's *Teachers Versus Technocrats* (1977) represents school culture as a moiety system, with teachers represented as one half of the moiety; Lortie's *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (1975) provides an analysis of teachers as a type; and Sarason's *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (1982) treats teachers as a group. Because of my long-term experience working in schools, I knew that subtle differences exist among teachers, and I wanted my study to expose the variations in teachers at the same time as it described the commonalities of teacher culture. Goodenough's (1981) concepts of Culture, culture pool, and propriospect provided the framework for looking at both the big picture and the subtleties.

When I entered the field to live as a full participant observer for a year, I worked to ensure that I was able to collect data that represented all three major categories. I had not yet chosen the individual teacher who would be the representative for one propriospect, but she revealed herself to me rather quickly. A leader on the School Improvement Team, she enjoyed the respect of the principal, teaching colleagues, and students. Early in the year, she supported the concept of the reform, and she was always candid about her opinions even as they shifted. She readily accepted my proposal to be the subject of a major section of the study, and unlike the other teachers, she was not afraid of possible consequences when she voiced her opinions. Moreover, she

provided an opportunity to test Goodenough's (1981) hypothesis that each propriospect shares characteristics with the culture and with the subgroups to which it belongs, and also possesses characteristics from outside the group that are unique to itself.

The subgroups emerged quickly as well, perhaps because, as a full participant, I was familiar with the working teachers' committees and their roles. As I gathered data, I was careful to ensure that I observed each group in situations in which the group was intact. As I observed each group, I asked, "What characteristics do the members of this group share with the culture?" and "What characteristics are common to members of this group but not present in all others in the culture?" I also asked, "What unique functions did the members of this group serve in the reform efforts?"

Finally, I gathered data that would reveal characteristics common to all teachers. This was done primarily by observing the teachers in large groups and by partnering with the School Improvement Team to conduct a census survey that enjoyed a 100% response rate. My guiding questions were also derived directly from Goodenough's (1981) theory. I sought to discover, primarily through examination of both written and oral language, the common understandings that constituted membership in the culture. This included "standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it" (p. 62). These were standards that cut across all subgroups and were present in individual propriospects. One section of the study, "A Year at Emerson High School," describes the culture pool, and the conclusions of the study focus on the standards that are understood by members of the culture pool.

The concept of propriospect was, in particular, valuable for observation, analysis, and description in the case study. Because I operated in the role of a full participant observer, I was keenly aware of issues of objectivity. Using the concept of propriospect, I was able to analyze the operating culture of individuals without being evaluative of the worldview. Propriospect was a tool for understanding the partial overlap of viewpoints of teachers and administrators without contradicting the discussions of their different cultural orientations. Because propriospect is a collection of all experiences, teachers and administrators did share a number of experiences; their propriospects, however, were not identical because they each had experiences unique to their roles in the school. In addition, propriospect was an aid in understanding teachers' individual and collective responses to change. As explained earlier, most teachers responded strongly to the changes in discipline implemented by the principal. The change in disciplinary practices no longer aligned with the belief systems of the teachers, resulting in turmoil. According to Goodenough (1981), some customs are so deeply held that "they prohibit behavior that interferes with them, . . . and . . . [this invests] them with moral rightness and even sanctity" (p. 90). Teachers talked about the changes as being morally incorrect, and as their frustration increased, the teachers' sense of being morally correct increased. Informal conversations revealed an expectation that all teachers would share the same view. Goodenough's theory helped develop my insight into how conflicts between public culture and personal beliefs can result in the upheaval and resistance that I observed at Emerson High School.

Geertz's (1973, 1987) writing appealed to me at a more intuitive level, which is not surprising considering my academic background. Like Geertz, I studied literature as an undergraduate, and I was drawn to his emphasis on description of the public aspects of the culture. As both a student and a teacher of literature, I had been schooled in the idea that no reality is the same for all people; the only reality I can claim is that of

my own personal interpretation. Despite Geertz's statements drawing a line between cognitive and interpretive anthropology, my personal interpretation found the approaches to be complementary rather than contradictory. Reading that cognitive anthropologists were moving closer to Geertz's view of culture as "public" helped justify my blending of the two. Although Goodenough influenced my organization, Geertz's concept of thick description influenced the way I collected data and what I included in the written case. When I was taking field notes, I was always conscious of recording sufficient detail to ensure that my writing would be rich with description. As I observed social situations or conducted interviews, I recorded words verbatim. When that was not possible, I recorded key phrases and returned to the text later on the same day to complete the dialogue and add description. When I was present at key meetings, I was particularly conscious of taking detailed notes of the conversation and of the reactions of the participants. Because I carried a small notebook with me at all times, I was able to describe informal situations and record conversations. In the final report of the case, I presented most of the information as a narrative, a story of the year at Emerson High School, with an emphasis on dialogue. Consciously working to provide "thick description" so that my interpretation would be clearly supported, I also wanted to provide enough description for my readers to be able to form independent interpretations. Also, like Geertz, I fully acknowledged that the account is a personal interpretation. In fact, in the last paragraph of the study, I stated that "I cannot promise this represents anyone's truth except my own" (Henstrand, 1991). To tie the description back into my use of cognitive anthropology in my organization and analysis, I concluded with a reference to Goodenough's (1981) concept of propriospect to support my research role and description as one "propriospect in the culture pool of Emerson High School" (Henstrand, 1991, p. 270). In my own mind, at least, I synthesized the two approaches in my interpretation and conclusion.

Theory and My Research Role

Theory not only contributed to the design, data gathering, and analysis of my study but also, quite unexpectedly, was critical in supporting my decision to take on the role of a complete participant observer and in managing several problems that arose as a consequence of that role. Before I chose the subject of my study, I had assumed that I would follow the advice and practice of traditional anthropologists and sociologists, who advocated that researchers engaging in participant observation should be outsiders to the culture being studied. Becoming too involved with the "natives" was considered a major breach of the research role because it generally involved losing the analytical perspective of the researcher (Agar, 1980; Becker, 1958; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Wax, 1971). My assumptions changed when I had the opportunity to return to my work as a teacher and, simultaneously, conduct ethnographic research for a case study of planned change. In other words, I planned to be a "native" who would take on the role of a participant observer. I returned to the literature to seek justification and support for becoming a complete participant observer.

I found that researchers had begun to support the position that full membership in the social system can be advantageous (Adler & Adler, 1987; Jorgensen, 1989; Peshkin, 1988; Wolcott, 1988). Bronislaw Malinowski (1922/1984, 1939/1987) was one of the first anthropologists to conduct his fieldwork as a

participant observer. He claimed that living with the natives enabled him to develop a better understanding of their thinking and lifestyle. In the 1920s, a group of sociologists known as the Chicago School also adopted participant observation to study subgroups of American culture, such as medical students or drug addicts; however, they also advocated the traditional stance by warning against overinvolvement with the subjects (Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Wax, 1971). More recently, existential sociologists have broken away from the traditional stance of researcher as stranger. Researchers within the theoretical school of existential sociology believe that people often act on the basis of emotions. The job of the researcher, therefore, is to penetrate the surface to discover insights into the emotions of the humans they study. This necessarily leads to the involvement of the researcher with the subjects. Not troubled by the possible subjectivity of the researcher, existential sociologists believe that the ability to engage in self-reflection is more important than seeking objective detachment: "They reject the claim that over familiarity leads researchers to assume the self deception of the members. Self deception is not caused by involvement per se, but by deep-rooted emotional conflicts within the individual" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 23).

Proponents of ethnomethodology also advocate for the involvement of the researcher with the group being studied. To understand contextual meanings and avoid distorting the vision of the world, ethnomethodologists believe that they must participate "to the fullest degree" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 32). For them, "going native is the solution rather than the problem" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 32). They do not worry about the possibility of researchers altering the setting because "good faith members will only alter settings in ways similar to other members, so their actions are condoned" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 32). Armed with the support of at least two theoretical approaches and of contemporary researchers such as Adler and Adler (1987) and Alan Peshkin (1988), I decided to go into the field as a complete participant observer.

During my fieldwork, I followed Peshkin's (1988) advice: I did not try "to exorcise my subjectivity" but rather to "enable myself to manage it—to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome—as I progressed through collecting, analyzing, and writing up my data" (p. 17). At first, I used research strategies and personal reflection to manage the subjectivity. I chose an overt stance so that everyone would know what I was doing. Using Peshkin's subjective *I*s, I continuously monitored my own interactions to maintain the same membership role I had before I began the fieldwork, and I took verbatim notes whenever possible. As I progressed into the year, however, I found that my conflicts of conscience required more than simple solutions. Taking on a theoretical perspective helped me manage those conflicts.

The personal conflicts started when I realized that the reform was not going well and I observed conflicts between teachers and administrators. Divisive behavior had nearly became a norm in the organization. Despite the fact that colleagues knew I was conducting field research, I worried about publishing negative behaviors in my study. I worried when I memorized key phrases from informal conversations and ran back to my office to record what I had heard. I also worried about being disloyal to my colleagues and wondered if they felt that they were being exploited. Referring to theory was my chief means of coping with these issues.

The theoretical frameworks of Goodenough (1981) and Geertz (1973, 1987) helped me manage the subjectivity of my research role, including numerous conflicts with my conscience as I recorded unflattering behavior by members of the school. For example, as a teacher in the building, I found that I shared many of the frustrations of my colleagues related to the changes in the discipline system. Many of my colleagues made inflammatory comments that actually reflected my own feelings when I was in my teacher role. I struggled

with recording their negative comments, even though they were said in public. On the other hand, I had a good working relationship with the principal. I worried about recording behaviors and words that might bring criticism his way.

To manage my subjectivity, I consciously retreated from my role as teacher and stepped into my role as researcher by applying the theoretical model to the situation. If, for example, I observed colleagues at the lunch table commenting energetically about the lack of discipline in the school, if I stayed in my role as teacher I would tend to fully engage emotionally. During the fieldwork, however, I consciously moved into the role of researcher. For example, I would apply Goodenough's model for culture to the situation by looking for the operating standards that were being revealed by the participants. In committee meetings, instead of becoming emotional over the conflict I saw, I consciously worked to understand which standards the groups shared with the culture and what impact the groups had on the culture. I was, therefore, able to step back from seeing the people as friends and colleagues and consciously assume the role of researcher.

Using theory also presented challenges. Commitment to the use of theory required that I develop knowledge of various anthropological and sociological theories and read examples of the theory being used well. This required time, and I had to cope with the comments made by several of my fellow PhD candidates urging me to do something simple so I could finish the degree. Because the PhD program was more about learning than jumping a hurdle to my next job, I spent a full year reading research theory before I gained enough knowledge to choose a theory and start the fieldwork. Once I announced that I would use theory, I was accountable to apply the theory appropriately. Not only did I frame my data collection and analysis around Goodenough's theory of culture, but I also had to ensure that my analysis of the high school's Culture, culture pool, and individual propriospects remained consistent with the theory's framework. At one point, Wolcott suggested that my use of propriospect was rather superficial. Because Wolcott's (1987) article on propriospect had initiated my inquiry into Goodenough's theory, I returned to *Culture, Language, and Society* (Goodenough, 1981) to increase my understanding, and then, I added a clarification to my writing. I continued to return periodically to Goodenough's texts to renew my understanding and reflect on the application to my research.

Conclusion: A Professional and Personal Reflection

Despite the challenges of time and accountability, using theory benefited both the process of doing the research and the product that emerged. The initial research for culture theory and the review I wrote clarified my thinking and provided the groundwork for the design and completion of the study. Before I discovered a theory that helped me frame my understanding of the culture at Emerson High School, I was unable to start the study. The school appeared to be a chaotic collection of actions and voices; I did not know how to look at the situation or how to interpret what I saw. The application of Goodenough's (1981) theory of culture provided a lens through which I could observe and record. In addition, using theory enabled me to manage the subjectivity involved in the full participant observer role I assumed as the researcher.

The importance of using theory in qualitative research goes beyond the benefits I experienced in doing the study. Conscious and consistent use of theory by researchers should improve the stature of qualitative research

in education. Researchers have long debated the relative worth of qualitative and quantitative research; qualitative research is often criticized for its subjectivity and lack of precise measurements. A leading cultural anthropologist, Geertz (1973) argued in favor of developing and using strong theory because theory helps elevate anthropology to the level of a science: "There is no reason why the conceptual structure of a cultural interpretation should be any less formulable, and thus less susceptible to explicit canons of appraisal, than that of, say, a biological observation or a physical experiment" (p. 24). Similarly, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) supported the establishment of a theoretical framework for qualitative research, especially ethnographic studies. The use of theory, they believed, increases rigor and makes qualitative research more understandable when read in other disciplines. By using theory to frame and justify my work, I hope I have contributed to elevating qualitative research to the level of a science.

The discovery and use of Goodenough's (1981) theory of culture also benefited me on a personal level. In my career as a public school administrator, I have held the positions of high school principal, director of instruction, and superintendent. All of my positions have involved leading organizations through large-scale change. Like those who have led organizational change, I have come to know only too well the struggles that occur. Despite paying attention to change models and attempting to work systematically through the process, leaders report resistance, blockage, and unintended consequences for many actions. As I have worked toward school and district reform, Goodenough's theory of culture has given me the tools to understand the variations in behavior within organizations, ranging from the large group to smaller groups or individuals. When applying a large-scale plan for change, I, like others, have framed it in terms of the large culture and devised activities and professional development based on the large group, but I have come to realize that this large-scale planning is not enough. After seeing reforms fail, I have become conscious of the roles of subgroups, not only for their official purpose within the organization but also for how the beliefs of their members affect the organizational change process. I now work to understand their jointly held and individual views and to maintain communication that addresses issues of importance to members of the culture. Perhaps most important, I seek a partnership with members of the organization in the planning process so that the implementation of reform respects the sacred values and needs of teachers and other staff. These efforts, in my experience, contribute to successful change over time because they attend to the individual propriospects present in the organization.

Attending to theory in research design and implementation in the field of education still tends to be relatively rare, perhaps because of both the time involved in developing an understanding and the accountability that comes with applying theory during the process of research and analysis. In addition, doctoral students who intend to pursue careers as practitioners might view the use of theory as an exercise that will not yield personal benefit. I believe, however, that the intentional application of a theoretical base not only improves educational research but also benefits the practitioner. As I started my research, I did not expect my exploration and application of theory to go beyond its usefulness in the completion of my dissertation. But I learned that knowledge of theory has relevance in the real world of teaching and administering schools. The use of theory enabled me to "join [my] work to some larger issues or accumulation of data" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 189). My study was moved from simply an account of what happened in one school to a more comprehensive generalization and understanding of culture and culture change. Moreover, as a researcher who returned to the role of educational practitioner, the use of theory has deepened my understanding of the culture in which I

operate.

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3

Struggling With Theory

A Beginning Scholar's Experience With Mazzoni's Arena Models

Frances C. Fowler

As a beginning researcher, I had struggled to find an appropriate theory to ground my dissertation research, and I faced a second struggle as I began my first major research project as a new assistant professor. Eventually, I selected Mazzoni's arena model of policy innovation, a theory derived from the political science literature. By using it, I learned how a good theory helps a researcher focus a study, plan data collection, and develop an approach to data analysis. Since Mazzoni's theory did not fully explain the phenomenon I was studying, I was also able to suggest some ways in which it needed to be revised.

Fowler, F. C. (1994). Education reform comes to Ohio: An application of Mazzoni's arena models. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 16*, 335–350.

Overview of the Study

In 1990, after successfully defending my dissertation at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I began to work as an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. At that time, I was familiar with Tennessee and Tennessee politics, but Ohio was new territory for me. My introduction to Ohio and its education politics came during my first weeks in the state. Both my students and my colleagues talked—or, more accurately, complained—a great deal about Senate Bill (S.B.) 140, the Omnibus Education Reform Act passed by the Ohio General Assembly in 1989. By and large, the state's educators were extremely angry with this law, which contained a hodgepodge of reforms, including three forms of school choice and mandatory phonics instruction. Most of them claimed that it had been "railroaded" through the state legislature without any meaningful input from educators or their organizations. In my classes, the students (who were almost all practicing Ohio teachers and administrators) often referred to S.B. 140 with considerable cynicism, calling it a classic example of the arrogance of contemporary politicians, who do not believe that educators know anything important about children or schools despite their years of professional practice. One student shared with me an amateur video that someone had shot at a regional meeting of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Ohio superintendents' organization. In it, superintendent after superintendent lambasted S.B. 140 and the legislative body that had enacted it. Angry comments and bitter laughter punctuated many of the speeches.

Later during that first year, some of my students and I attended a briefing session about the law, given by a high-ranking Ohio Department of Education official. In the course of the meeting, he informed his audience that "the train is leaving the station; you can get on board or be left behind." After this meeting, I

stood with a group of Miami University graduate students as they angrily dissected this official's statements. Because I was greatly intrigued by this conflict-filled situation and the theoretical questions it raised, I launched a study of the passage of S.B. 140 in January 1991. My overall purpose in this study was to assess the extent to which the educational community was correct in believing that the law had been rammed through the legislature with little or no input from educators.

Earlier, during the fall of 1990, I had come across Tim Mazzoni's two "arena models" of policy innovation in education. In his first model—a conference proposal that I reviewed for the Politics of Education Association—he recounted how he had developed a model for major policy changes, hypothesizing that they usually result from a shift from the "subsystem arena," which is made up of education interest groups and politicians with a special concern for education, to the "macro arena," in which the general public exerts pressure on politicians to develop new policy.

After applying this first model to his study of the passage of a Minnesota law that enacted interdistrict open enrollment, however, Mazzoni (1991) found that the changes in Minnesota's education policy had resulted largely from the pressure exerted by high-ranking political figures, or the "leadership arena." For several reasons, which I will detail below, this second theoretical stance seemed ideally suited for my study. Using Mazzoni's concept of decision-making arenas and the shift from his first to second model, I developed two research questions: (1) To what extent did the Ohio events surrounding the passage of S.B. 140 conform to Mazzoni's first arena model? (2) To what extent did the Ohio events conform to Mazzoni's second arena model?

I chose the qualitative case study as my research method, drawing heavily on the work of Yin (1984), who defined a case study as an investigation of a contemporary social phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple data sources. I investigated the passage of S.B. 140 by the Ohio General Assembly, situating it within the social and political context of Ohio in the late 1980s. I gathered several types of data. First, I obtained a copy of the legislation. Next, I photocopied all the newspaper articles on S.B 140 that had been published by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Columbus Dispatch* in January 1988 (when Governor Richard Celeste had called for school reform in his State of the State Address) and from December 1988 to July 1989 (when S.B. 140 was under consideration by the legislature and was eventually passed). I also photocopied relevant articles from the publications of Ohio's major education interest groups, such as the two teachers' unions and the Ohio School Boards Association, during the same time periods. In addition, I obtained the three separate legislative commission reports that had been published during the period under study, as well as reports of briefing sessions about the law by the Ohio Department of Education. After I had thoroughly analyzed the documentary data, I conducted 20 in-depth, semistructured interviews with the policy actors who had been involved in the passage of the law. They included leaders of the major education interest groups in the state, such as the Ohio Education Association, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators; two people who had served on legislative commissions; several members of the state legislature; and a member of Governor Celeste's staff.

My major conclusion was that Mazzoni's (1991) first arena model, which hypothesized that education policy innovations are made in response to pressure from the general public, or macro arena, did not fit the Ohio data at all. In fact, I found that Ohio's macro arena had remained inert throughout 1988 and 1989 in spite of the governor's energetic attempts to stir it to action. Mazzoni's second arena model, however, which

attributed key roles in policy innovation to high-ranking leaders, came close to describing what had happened in Ohio. Summing up my findings, I wrote in my article,

> When the policy process shifted away from the subsystem arena, it moved largely to the leadership arena. Ohio's innovative education reform was defined, initiated, formulated, and pushed through the legislature by various high-ranking state and national leaders. The players in the subsystem and macro arenas were reduced to reactive positions from which they provided relatively minor input. (Fowler, 1994, p. 347)

In other words, my study revealed that the state's educators were largely correct in believing that S.B. 140 had been "rammed through" the legislature.

I also found, however, that there were some weaknesses in Mazzoni's (1991) theoretical framework. I felt that he had overestimated the independence of the commissions that legislatures often appoint before developing new legislation. I also thought that he had defined the leadership arena too narrowly; my study suggested that the top business leaders in the state as well as the top political leaders could participate in it. Finally, Mazzoni had not mentioned the importance of the national political climate in shaping what happened in Minnesota, perhaps because Minnesota has pioneered the development of numerous innovative educational policies and therefore has helped mold the national political climate rather than being shaped by it. In Ohio, however, the national education reform movement had clearly led the state's politicians to put education reform on their agenda; in fact, the three forms of school choice included in S.B. 140 had been directly copied from Minnesota's law.

In 1992, I presented a preliminary version of my study (Fowler, 1992b) at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, and in 1994, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* published an article based on it, titled "Education Reform Comes to Ohio: An Application of Mazzoni's Arena Models." This was the same journal that had published Mazzoni's article on his arena models in 1991.

In the intervening years since I first used Mazzoni's arena models, I have used his theoretical framework for two other studies, both quite recent (Fowler, 2002, 2005). In addition, Feir (1995) used Mazzoni's framework in his investigation of state education policy innovation. Finally, in 2004, a doctoral student who was using Mazzoni's arena models as the theoretical framework for her dissertation study of the passage of a piece of higher education legislation contacted me, seeking advice about her interview protocol.

Mazzoni's arena models are used rarely, for two reasons. First, the politics of the education field has shifted strongly toward research on policy rather than on the political process that produces it and, second, the field tends to be rather atheoretical, a weakness that those of us who work in the politics of education deplore. The theory itself is highly regarded and was part of the reason why Division L of the American Educational Research Association accorded Mazzoni a lifetime achievement award when he retired in 2001.

Description of the Theoretical Framework

To understand Mazzoni's (1991) arena models of policy innovation, one must first understand some fundamental facts about the American political system at both the federal and the state level. The founding fathers of the United States were quite skeptical about the intellectual maturity of the general public, seeing it

as being susceptible to rapidly changing political fads and as more likely to be swayed by emotion than by reason. They were also suspicious of centralized power, which, because of their experience of living in a British colony, they perceived as corrupt and tyrannical. As a result, they designed a form of government that is very conservative in the sense of being very resistant to policy change. American institutions such as the U.S. Electoral College, the bicameral legislature, the separation of powers, judicial review, the executive veto, and other such "checks and balances" were adopted primarily to achieve this effect. And when the states developed their own constitutions and governance structures, with few exceptions they followed the federal model of separated powers with numerous checks and balances. The founding fathers were quite successful in their endeavor; the American political system is, to this day, extremely resistant to change, especially when compared with the more widely used parliamentary system of government (Fowler, 2004). As a result, most change in American politics is gradual, or incremental. This means that American politicians typically use the strategy of passing a limited and weak version of the policy that they really want and then spending years (or even decades) gradually amending it to bring it closer to their ideal. This type of slow tinkering with policy is called incrementalism.

Occasionally, however, American governments do adopt policies that represent an abrupt change from the past. An example would be the New Deal administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which passed numerous laws setting up radically new policies, such as public works programs and Social Security. Because such changes—known among political scientists as policy innovations—are rare, they hold a special interest for those who study politics. Mazzoni's (1991) arena models were designed to explain how policy innovations came about in education during the 1980s, a period of extensive education reform, which started out as incremental change but became more radical with the passage of time. Drawing on the political science literature, he hypothesized that policy decisions are made primarily in two different arenas: (1) a subsystem arena, which consists of the education committees of both houses in a legislature, the state department of education, and the representatives of the major education interest groups and (2) a macro arena, which is made up of the general public, top political leaders, and the mass media. He theorized that incremental changes occur when political decision making remains within the subsystem arena but that for a policy innovation to occur the conflict over the issue must expand to the macro arena (Mazzoni, 1991). In other words, he believed that popular pressure is instrumental in bringing about policy innovations in education.

Mazzoni (1991) tested his model by applying it to a real-life case—the 5-year struggle to pass an interdistrict open enrollment policy in Minnesota. His analysis of the events in Minnesota revealed that in that state the political elites had been considerably more active in pressing for the adoption of a school choice law than had been the general public, or the macro arena. In fact, he wrote, "There was no public clamor in Minnesota for educational choice nor any parent movement having that as an objective" (p. 120); indeed, surveys conducted in the state indicated that a "clear majority" of Minnesota's citizens opposed school choice. Nonetheless, the legislature passed a law that put such a policy on the books. As a result of his findings, Mazzoni revised his model, adding two more arenas: (3) a leadership arena and (4) a commission arena. The leadership arena included "top-level government officials and . . . the private groups or individuals—if any—who control them" (p. 125). The commission arena is a decision-making site created by the government when it sets up a commission, task force, or study group. In Minnesota, Mazzoni found that the Governor's Discussion Group included representatives of numerous constituencies and that it had ultimately

recommended the adoption of a school choice policy. In his final version of the theory, Mazzoni argued that for an innovative educational policy to be adopted, the central policy debate had to shift out of the subsystem arena but the shift could be to any of the other three arenas, or to a combination of them. He concluded by saying,

> Though the revised model corrects the most obvious shortcomings in the initial model, there is much work still to be done. Other likely arenas—for example, state courts, education agencies, interest group coalitions, and private elite networks—need empirical investigation and comparative analysis for their innovative potential. (p. 132)

Origins of the Framework and Why I Chose It

In this section, I will explain where Mazzoni's arena models originated, how I first encountered his framework, and my reasons for deciding to use his models.

ORIGINS OF MAZZONI'S MODELS

As a professor of educational administration with a specialty in the politics of education, Mazzoni was well read in political science and related fields. The reference section in his 1991 article lists no fewer than 43 books or articles from the political science literature; in addition, he lists 24 books or articles from the politics of education literature, 3 from organizational theory, and 2 from sociology. Mazzoni was not just a prolific reader, however; in spite of the demands that his position as department chair at the University of Minnesota placed on him, he maintained an active research agenda, publishing numerous articles on educational politics and policy making in Minnesota. Therefore, his arena models grew out of years of reading, observation, and reflection on how changes in education policy come about. A closer analysis of the works that he specifically cites in the section of his article that describes the arena models suggests that his political science reading was especially critical in shaping his theory: All but 3 of those 17 sources are from the political science realm.

The term *arena models*, however, appears to have been borrowed from a sociological piece, Hilgartner and Bosk's (1988) "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arena Model," published just 3 years before Mazzoni's own article. In this work, the authors present a model of how publicly recognized social problems first attract attention, grow in perceived importance, and eventually are displaced in public consciousness by other problems. In elaborating their theory, they describe how social problems compete for attention and resources in "arenas" such as the mass media. Hilgartner and Bosk define *arena* differently than Mazzoni (1991), who specifies that by an arena he means "a middle-range term, referring to the political interactions characterizing particular decision sites through which power is exercised to initiate, formulate, and enact public policy" (p. 116). Mazzoni seems to have developed his understanding of the term from political scientists such as Allison (1971), who refers to the "apparatus of government" as "a complex arena" (p. 144), and from Schattschneider, who refers to "the arena of conflict where political alternatives are determined" (cited in Cobb & Elder, 1983, p. 5).

As I read through other sources cited by Mazzoni (1991), I was able to find additional clear influences on his thinking. For example, Allison (1971) organized his book about decision making during the Cuban missile

crisis of 1962 around three "conceptual frameworks" or "lenses," which he calls "models." Bardach (1972) used the term *subsystem*; Cobb and Elder's (1983) description of the "expansion" of a political issue resembles Mazzoni's description of what happens when a shift from the subsystem arena to the macro arena occurs. The closest parallel, though, comes from Cobb, Ross, and Ross's (1976) models of agenda building. (In political science, "agenda building" is the process by which specific social issues attract the attention of the government and are placed on the list, or "agenda," of issues that the government seeks to address through its policy making [Fowler, 2004].) Cobb et al. proposed three models of agenda building. Under the "outside initiative" model, groups or individuals who do not work in the government succeed in calling enough attention to a problem to cause the government to place it on its agenda for action. This model seems to involve what Mazzoni calls the macro arena. Alternatively, an issue may be identified within the government itself, but politicians and government workers mobilize the general public to become interested in it and push for action. This model is reminiscent of Mazzoni's shift from the subsystem arena to the macro arena. Cobb et al.'s final model is one in which an issue is identified within the government but politicians and government workers never bring it before the general public; instead, they seek to resolve it without public involvement. This model resembles Mazzoni's description of incremental policy making within the subsystem arena.

One question that particularly interested me as I reviewed Mazzoni's sources was "Why did Mazzoni initially develop a model that did not accommodate the possibility of policy innovations imposed by a leadership elite?" Having cut my own political teeth in a Southern county where an entrenched "good old boys'" network constantly tried to impose its will on everyone else, I found this hard to understand. One possible explanation, of course, is that Mazzoni is an idealist who believes that in a democracy all decisions are made democratically. Another is that Minnesota politics is more open and democratic than policy making in some other states. In fact, this is probably true since Minnesota's political culture resembles that of New England, which is known for the town meeting and unusually "clean" politics. In contrast, Southern politics is characterized by the heavy influence of elites (Fowler, 2004). My review of Mazzoni's sources, however, suggested another reason. Many of the books that he drew on were written during the 1960s or 1970s, when some of the major policy innovations in American life were brought about by the civil rights movement. As a result, the authors he used had firmly in their minds the spectacle of huge masses of citizens mobilizing to march, demonstrate, conduct sit-ins, and in other ways pressure the government to break with the racially discriminatory past. In other words, they had in mind the mobilization of a vast macro arena to bring about civil rights reforms. Therefore, they may have tended to overestimate the extent to which the general public mobilizes around innovative policy issues, and this overestimation may have affected Mazzoni's perspective as he developed his arena models.

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH MAZZONI'S ARENA MODELS

During my first 2 years as an assistant professor at Miami University, I was the program chair of the Politics of Education Association, then a special-interest group of the American Educational Research Association. Therefore, early in the fall of 1990, I received about 25 conference proposals, which I scanned for appropriateness and then sent out for review. One of these was a paper proposed by Mazzoni, then a professor of educational leadership at the University of Minnesota and a well-known scholar in the politics of education.

As I read the summary of his research on the adoption of school choice policies in Minnesota and his description of his arena models of policy innovation, I became very excited. His work fit in well with the intellectual journey on which I had recently embarked, and because S.B. 140 had included three forms of school choice patterned on the Minnesota legislation, which Mazzoni had studied, I believed that I had found a conceptual framework that I could use to study the passage of S.B. 140 in Ohio.

WHY I CHOSE MAZZONI'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I encountered Mazzoni's (1991) theoretical framework at a time when I was wrestling with some of the great theoretical issues in my field. My dissertation had been a historical policy analysis of government aid to private schools in France between 1959 and 1984. At that time, the dean of my college insisted that dissertations presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD be based on an established social theory (EdD dissertations, in contrast, could be atheoretical). Because I was in the PhD program, one of my key challenges during the early development of my dissertation study had been finding an appropriate political science theory to use. I can still remember the sense of relief that I felt when, after months of scanning various political science works, I read two books by Robert Dahl: *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy* (1982) and *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (1985). Based on what I already knew about the development and implementation of the French policy, I could see how Dahl's pluralist theory could illuminate my research and facilitate my interpretation of the French data. What I did not know at the time was that pluralist theory—which posits that in democratic societies policies grow out of compromises between competing political pressure groups—is controversial and that many political scientists have seriously challenged its validity. The theory worked reasonably well for my dissertation; I even titled my study *One Approach to a Pluralist Dilemma: Private School Aid Policy in France, 1959–1985* (Fowler 1990). Even before I reached my defense, however, I was aware of some of its shortcomings. In particular, because France has a much stronger central government than does the United States, its politics is not as pluralistic as American politics. So I realized that some of the events that had occurred in France could not be fully explained by pluralist theory. My awareness of its shortcomings was painfully intensified by several critical comments made during my dissertation defense by the sole political science professor on my committee. After recovering from my anger at him, I faced the fact that before I attempted to write any articles based on my dissertation, I needed to resolve some of the theoretical issues raised by pluralism.

Moreover, while doing my dissertation research, I had also become familiar with another social theory that is prevalent in contemporary political science. This was rational choice theory, which I encountered while doing my literature review. This review covered most of the literature on the debate over school choice in the United States, and I found that many American proponents of school choice based their position on rational choice theory. Basically, rational choice theorists believe that most social and political phenomena can be understood as activities that play out in competitive markets. If individuals in those markets simply make decisions based on their own self-interest, an "invisible hand" will guide society to the best outcome possible. Thus, in advocating school choice, these proponents argued that parents should be able to choose their children's schools because education is just another market commodity like food or automobiles. If people were allowed to choose schools based on their own self-interest, the result would be greatly improved

education. For philosophical and religious reasons, I strongly disagree. When reading such arguments, I often became so angry that I just skimmed over the articles that contained them so that I could go on to more congenial reading. Finally, realizing what I was doing and how unscholarly it was, I forced myself to go back and read every word of the articles based on rational choice theory! I emerged from this experience convinced that rational choice theory was far more problematic than pluralist theory, but I wanted to have a stronger reason than my emotional reaction for rejecting it, especially since it was—and still is—one of the dominant theories in political science. In short, I realized more than ever that I needed to have a well-thought-out theory to base my own work on.

My theoretical struggles were complicated after I accepted my position at Miami University in February 1990. At that time, I began to read the works of two of my future colleagues, Henry Giroux (1981) and Peter McLaren (1980), who wrote within the tradition of critical theory, a form of Marxism. I found their work and the Marxist frameworks they used intriguing. Their descriptions of social injustice in capitalist societies were insightful and contained a great deal of truth. I also thought that Giroux and McLaren were right to emphasize the importance of thinking through the influence of the structure of the economic system on social and cultural phenomena. Critical theory and other forms of Marxism, however, also posed some serious theoretical problems for me. I was prepared to believe that the economy was important but not that it determined everything else in society, as most Marxists believe. I did not believe that the historical evidence supported this position. In addition, I was troubled by the fact that Giroux, McLaren, and other Marxists diagnosed the ills of American society brilliantly but offered few concrete ideas about how to bring about positive changes. Moreover, they seemed rather naively ignorant of practical politics, and therefore, I did not see how they could bring about reforms even if they had concrete ideas about what reforms were needed. Thus, though interested in their work, I was not convinced that Marxism offered an adequate explanation of political phenomena.

By the fall of 1990, then, I was struggling with some major theoretical questions. With the old adage of "publish or perish" in mind, I wanted to base some articles on my dissertation, and I knew that I needed a more solid theoretical grounding to do so. At that point, I was also preparing to teach my first politics of education class, and Miami University students were relatively sophisticated theoretically. It was imperative, therefore, that I decide which of the grand social theories available in academia was the truest and learn more about it so that I could use it to shape my own work.

Therefore, during my first year as assistant professor, I launched a program of intense reading. First, I explored a more recent work by Dahl (1989) and also discovered an important book by another pluralist, Charles Lindblom (1977). Much to my gratification, I learned that they had revised their original theory to respond to the criticism that they tended to overlook the disproportionate power of business in the politics of capitalist countries. Their revised theory, which they called "neopluralism," recognized that business groups essentially trump all other groups in capitalist democracies and therefore have a greater influence on policy than any others. Since this revamped version of the theory seemed to address many of the weaknesses of pluralism that had concerned me, I based an article on it, using neopluralistic theory and the French experience with school choice to argue that, contrary to the claims of the rational choice theorists, school choice could only succeed in the United States if it was carefully regulated (Fowler, 1992a).

Meanwhile, as I prepared to teach the politics of education for the first time, I encountered two more

social theories. The first was a political theory called "elite theory," originally developed by two Europeans of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—the Italian political scientist Gaetano Mosca (1939) and the German sociologist Robert Michels (1966). They argued that in any group or society a small elite rises to the top and rules, making most of the important decisions. Searching for contemporary American representatives of this perspective, I found the works of Thomas Dye (1976, 1990) and G. William Domhoff (1983, 1990). They argued that a small number of wealthy Americans who control several interlocking institutions run the country. Finally, I encountered the theories of the German sociologist Max Weber (1964). While recognizing the importance of the economy and economic leaders, especially in capitalist countries, Weber also insisted that other forces, such as the government, the military, and widely believed ideologies, significantly influence what happens in society. I found the most convincing modern presentation of Weber's ideas in Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* (1986). In this book, the author draws on the sweep of Western history from prehistoric times to 1760 to build his argument:

> A general account of societies, their structure, and their history can best be given in terms of the interrelations of what I will call the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military, and political relationships. These are overlapping networks of social interaction, not dimensions, levels, or factors of a single social totality. . . . They are also organizations, institutional means of attaining human goals. (p. 2)

Looking back after 15 years, then, I can see why Mazzoni's (1991) theoretical framework appealed to me. It was not a grand social theory; that is, it did not seek to explain everything in society, as rational choice theory, Marxism, or Weberian theory do. It was a middle-range political theory that was even more limited than pluralism or elite theory because it sought only to explain how policy innovations come about in education. It was, however, potentially compatible with pluralism, neopluralism, elite theory, Weberian theory, or even Marxism. In fact, it actually provided a way for me to begin to test all of these theories against the concrete data of a particular case, for one of Mazzoni's models hypothesized that the macro arena (read "political pressure groups") was instrumental in bringing about policy innovation, whereas the other attributed the major role to leaders (read "elites"), who might even be business leaders, as the Marxists and Weberians would predict. I shaped my article as a test of Mazzoni's arena models, but it was also a personal test of the various theories with which I was then grappling.

Having described the theoretical struggles of my early academic career in some depth, it seems only fair to tell the rest of the story. My study of the passage of S.B. 140 indicated that elite figures were far more instrumental in the passage of the bill than were pressure groups, and I found that this elite group included both political and business leaders. This study, in conjunction with other studies and much additional reading, led me to conclude that the most accurate grand social theory is Weberian theory. I also concluded that elites do run all societies but that societies vary in the degree to which these elites can be both influenced and replaced through democratic processes. One of the problems faced by every democratic society is how best to devise structures that make it possible for the macro arena to challenge policy elites when truly fundamental change is needed.

Effects of the Framework on My Study

Using Mazzoni's (1991) models as my theoretical framework shaped my study in four ways. It helped me focus my research, develop my research questions, plan my data collection, and structure my data analysis. I will discuss each of these effects in turn.

FOCUSING THE STUDY

Unless a scholar is doing a qualitative project based in grounded theory, he or she is well advised to use a theoretical framework not only because it situates the author within a scholarly conversation but also because it helps focus the study. I well remember how I felt about my dissertation project before I had identified pluralism as a suitable theory for framing it. Over a period of 4 years, I had gathered a huge amount of data: I had several books, numerous articles, copies of the French legislation and the accompanying rules and regulations, and hundreds of pages of parliamentary debate, arranged in folders and stacked all over my spare bedroom. Frankly, I felt overwhelmed and did not know where to begin to narrow the subject down so that I could reduce this project to a manageable size. As soon as I read Dahl's two books (1982, 1985) and began to apply pluralistic theory to my data, an amazing thing happened. The theory acted as a giant sieve; most of my data simply fell through it like sand, leaving behind a number of solid rocks that I could analyze from the perspective of pluralism. Clearly, I could ignore the sand and focus my attention on the rocks as I continued collecting data and framed my research questions.

This was one of the reasons why I was so determined to find a suitable theoretical framework for my study of the passage of S.B. 140. It was the first study that I undertook after obtaining my PhD, and I knew that having a theoretical framework would enable me to narrow the subject and focus on only those aspects of it that were truly relevant to my theory. I must confess, however, that I did not completely let the framework do its task of sifting my data. In one of my interviews, a female respondent made some insightful comments about the fact that most of the educational practitioners on the commission on which she had served were women and suggested that because they were women they were silenced and marginalized by the male business leaders who served with them. These comments had nothing to do with Mazzoni's (1991) arena models, but I believed that they made an interesting contribution to what might be called the micropolitics of commissions. Therefore, my initial conference paper about my study (Fowler, 1992b) and the first draft of the manuscript that I submitted to *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* (Fowler, 1994) included a page or two that presented these comments and discussed them. Not surprisingly, one of the blind reviewers of the article pointed out that that section was superfluous; and the editor asked me to omit it in my revised version. In other words, the theoretical framework so clearly focused my study that even other people could easily distinguish relevant from irrelevant material! I should point out, however, what this means. A theoretical framework both illuminates and conceals. This is why it can be helpful to apply more than one framework to a set of data.

DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Another advantage of using a theoretical model is that it facilitates the development of research questions. Those questions should always be firmly grounded in the framework, and any questions that might be interesting but do not relate to the framework should be eliminated. In the case of my study of the passage of

S.B. 140, I conceptualized my project as a test or application of Mazzoni's (1991) arena models. Therefore, my two questions were rather obvious. I asked to what extent each of the two models accurately described what had happened in Ohio. With these two questions and the qualifying words "to what extent," I could only reach three possible conclusions. The Ohio data would either conform to the first or the second arena model or would not conform to either. Thus, I would either accept one of the models or reject Mazzoni's framework as not fitting the Ohio data at all. Reaching the latter conclusion would imply that the framework had extremely serious weaknesses as a model of policy innovation.

In retrospect, I probably should have used more than two research questions, basing the additional questions on each of the arenas. This is, in fact, the approach that I used in my two more recent, and as yet unpublished, studies using the theoretical framework. Such questions would have focused my attention more clearly on what was happening in each arena and might have led to a more sophisticated analysis of my data. I was a novice, however, and my two questions functioned adequately.

PLANNING DATA COLLECTION

My theoretical framework was enormously helpful in planning data collection. It provided me with four distinct areas to explore: (1) the activities of the legislative subsystem, (2) the commissions (if any), (3) the macro arena, and (4) the leaders. Therefore, in identifying the data I would need, I simply asked myself who would be active in each arena and where they would have left usable documents to attest to their activity. This strategy permitted me to rather quickly find obvious documents such as the legislation, the legislative history, and the publications of the interest groups that had been involved. Once I had used these sources to develop a time line, I knew which of the state's newspapers I most needed to consult and the relevant time frame within which I had to search for articles. This was crucially important because in the early 1990s it was much more difficult to search newspapers than it is today! The Internet, search engines, and tools such as LexisNexis either did not yet exist or were not widely accessible. As a result, I had to visually scan microfilms of all the issues of the two newspapers that were published during the relevant time periods. This effort, however, was well worth the time and eyestrain involved. The newspaper coverage was not only helpful in permitting me to identify what the top leaders had done and what had happened (or, rather, not happened) in the macro arena, but it also alerted me to the fact that there had been a commission arena, something I had not realized until then. Indeed, three commissions, each representing a different faction of the legislature, had met, and each had produced a report. I therefore proceeded to procure copies of the commission reports.

The second stage of my data collection consisted of 20 semistructured interviews. Using my documentary data, I identified a number of people I might interview, including members of the legislature, people who had served on commissions, leaders in education interest groups, and members of the governor's staff. I also used my theoretical framework in planning my interviews, for I deliberately chose to interview members of the subsystem arena first. My rationale was that they would be more accessible to me, who as a professor of education in a public university was relatively close to them in background and interests. I also believed that their recommendations could help me select the best people to interview from the other arenas and help me obtain access to them. As it turned out, my rationale was correct; my first set of interviewees identified several key people from the other arenas whose names had not emerged in the documentary data—such as the chief

of staff for the Republican caucus in the legislature—and helped me set up interviews with them.

GUIDING DATA ANALYSIS

Finally, the theoretical framework guided my data analysis. In planning the data analysis, I relied heavily on Miles and Huberman's (1984) *Qualitative Data Analysis*. One of their suggested techniques was to compare and contrast data from different "sites." Mazzoni's (1991) arena models provided me with four obvious sites: (1) the subsystem arena, (2) the macro arena, (3) the leadership arena, and (4) the commission arena. Therefore, in analyzing the data, I identified who the major players had been in each arena and listed them. I also identified all the events that had happened in each arena as well as which stages of the policy process had occurred there. Two themes cut across all four arenas. The first was the great lack of confidence in professional educators manifested by political leaders from both parties. They saw professional educators, from the classroom up to the superintendent's office, as bumblers who were out of touch with the real world. Not surprisingly, the other theme was that the educators felt betrayed. It seemed to them that the rules had changed in the middle of the game and that they had suddenly become the state government's whipping boys. These themes illuminated the arena shift, suggesting why it had occurred. In the final stage of analysis, I asked myself the key questions: Did an arena shift occur? If so, what was the nature of the shift? My finding, of course, was that the policy process had indeed shifted away from the subsystem arena. It had not, however, shifted to the macro arena but to the leadership arena.

Other Theoretical Frameworks Considered

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the various theories that I encountered and struggled with during my years as an advanced doctoral student and a beginning assistant professor. As I searched for a theoretical framework for my study of the passage of S.B. 140, I considered and rejected three of them. My reasons for rejecting them were both intellectual and pragmatic.

First, I considered using Dahl's (1982, 1985) theory of pluralism, a framework that is widely used among political scientists who study the policy process and one with which I had grown very familiar during the writing of my dissertation. My experience conducting my dissertation research and the biting comments of the political science professor on my committee, however, led me to hold grave reservations about using it. These reservations were intensified because I already knew enough about how S.B. 140 had been passed to suspect that pluralist theory would not work well for my case study. As I understood the situation, the basic belief that lay behind the complaints of my students and colleagues about the way the law had been passed was precisely their conviction that some sort of pluralistic process that gave considerable weight to the views of educators' organizations should have been followed. Obviously, it had not been. Therefore, I doubted that pluralist theory would illuminate what had actually happened in Ohio.

Two other theories that had some appeal to me were elite theory and Marxism. Unlike pluralist theory, both of these theories included a definite role for leaders, especially business leaders. I could not, however, visualize how I could conduct a qualitative case study using either of these theories. I suspected that if a highly elite group, such as a few prominent CEOs, had been behind the passage of S.B. 140, they probably had kept

a low profile. Therefore, it might not be easy to identify them; even if I were able to learn their names, I feared it would be difficult to obtain access to them for interviews. Moreover, phrasing an interview protocol in such a way that it got at the deeper issues behind elite and Marxist theory also seemed problematic. I could not imagine asking people lower down in the political hierarchy than the elite or capitalist leaders questions like "What capitalists (or corporate leaders or political elites) were active behind the scenes in pushing for S.B. 140?" In my opinion, it is no accident that people who do scholarship in these traditions rarely do qualitative case studies. Elite theorists usually do documentary or computer research to identify top leaders in various institutions and trace their interconnections, whereas Marxists typically study broad social trends, such as privatization or the de-skilling of teachers as revealed in curriculum materials.

To be frank, another issue was completely pragmatic. I was a beginning assistant professor who knew that she would go up for a third-year review in 2 years and a tenure and promotion review in 5 years. Both reviews would involve external reviewers from my field. As I perused the top-tier journals in which I hoped to publish, such as *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Education Policy*, and *Educational Administration Quarterly*, I became aware that none of their articles were based on either elite theory or Marxist theory. In fact, with the exception of Laurence Iannaccone and Frank Lutz's (1970) dissatisfaction theory, I know of no scholars in my field who have ever used elite theory, and at the time, only one person seemed to be working in critical theory. Actually, much of what is published in my field—both then and now—is atheoretical, although various versions of systems theory are frequently used. Therefore, I feared that these journals would not publish articles based on those two theoretical traditions and decided that Mazzoni's middle-range theory of arena models, which could easily be seen as compatible with systems theory, was more likely to be publishable. On the other hand, my perusal of possible publishing outlets suggested that those journals most likely to publish a study based on elite or Marxist theory probably would not be interested in a piece about the passage of a law—in general, they are interested in broader, more general analyses.

Using Multiple Frameworks

It is not uncommon for qualitative studies to be based on more than one theoretical framework, as researchers often find that no single framework adequately explains all their data. My study of the passage of S.B. 140, however, was, for the most part, based just on Mazzoni's (1991) arena models. I employed multiple frameworks only in the sense that I used both versions of his arena model. I chose to do so because I was interested in testing both models and also because doing so permitted me to highlight my central finding: the extremely important role played by government and business leaders in the passage of Ohio's S.B. 140. I should also point out that in conducting my data analysis, I employed a framework called the "stage model of the policy process." This is a schematic, six-stage heuristic framework that is commonly used in political science texts and courses (see Figure 3.1).

I applied it to all four policy arenas because it simplified my determination of which political processes had played out in each. As a heuristic model, it merely describes political phenomena; it does not seek to explain them.

Refining the Framework

As a beginning scholar, I did not fully understand how theoretical frameworks are used in qualitative research. Since I was a neophyte and Mazzoni was approaching the end of a distinguished career, I accepted his models as being indisputably valid and authoritative, even though in his own article he had written, as I quoted above, "Though the revised model corrects the most obvious shortcomings in the initial model, there is much work still to be done" (Mazzoni, 1991, p. 132). Many years later, I am not sure what I thought that statement meant, or even if I noticed it at the time. Regardless of what Mazzoni himself had said, I approached my data analysis with the implicit assumption that one of Mazzoni's models had to fit the Ohio data, or there would be something seriously wrong with my study. I did not approach the data with the idea that my study might contribute to the refinement and further development of Mazzoni's arena models.

Figure 3.1 The Stage Model of the Policy Process

As a result, when I wrote the first draft of the article (Fowler, 1994) that I submitted to *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, I exaggerated the extent to which Mazzoni's (1991) second model fit my findings. Although there were obvious discrepancies between my findings and the second model, I did not acknowledge this in the article. Instead, I claimed that my study confirmed the accuracy of Mazzoni's second model. Much to my surprise, one of the blind reviewers pointed out several of these discrepancies and suggested that instead of asserting that my study supported Mazzoni's second model unequivocally, I should raise some questions about his model and suggest possible revisions of it. With a reviewer and an editor's recommendations to give me courage, I did indeed critique the second model and suggest ways in which it might be refined. Later, I learned through one of Mazzoni's former doctoral students that he had actually appreciated my critique!

As a more mature scholar, I now realize that theory develops through just such thoughtful critique and refinement as I carried out in the revision of my article. No single researcher can apply a given theory to every conceivable case. The development of useful theoretical frameworks depends on numerous researchers using them in various contexts and suggesting further elaboration or refinement. If enough scholars contribute to this process, a sophisticated body of theory can be developed, laying a solid foundation for the growth of a field of knowledge.

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4

Black Feminist Thought and Examining the Experiences of Black Graduate Women in the Academy

Lori D. Patton[1]
Nadrea Njoku
Juhanna Rogers

Patricia Hill Collins's Black Feminist Thought is the focus of this chapter. The theory was used for its powerful capacity to frame the mentoring experiences of Black women in graduate and professional schools. Three key lessons extend from the use of Black feminist thought and other emancipatory epistemologies. First, despite the existence of scholarship that essentially erases the experiences of Black women, theory can be used to explicitly and unashamedly center the voices and experiences of marginalized populations. Second, theory can be critical for disrupting dominant narratives that often treat populations as a monolithic group and fail to acknowledge individual and group perspectives. Third, Black feminist thought expands beyond mere theory and embodies praxis, a body of knowledge, and a way of life.

Patton, L. D. (2009). My sister's keeper: A qualitative examination of significant mentoring relationships among African American women in graduate and professional schools. *Journal of Higher Education, 80*(5), 510–537.

Overview of the Study

A number of scholars have written about the importance of mentoring in educational contexts (Hansford, Ehrich, & Tennent, 2004; Healy & Welchert, 1990; Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, 2007; Quinlan, 1999; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). Moreover, they have offered their perspectives on how mentoring should be defined and how the process of mentoring should be understood. Yet very few account for issues of identity, namely, race and gender, and how they may shape the formation, development, and maintenance of mentoring relationships (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Crawford & Smith, 2005; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004, 2008; Schroeder & Mynatt, 1993; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Even fewer scholars have devoted specific efforts toward examining the experiences of graduate students of color as they seek mentors during their journey toward earning an advanced degree (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Patton & Harper, 2003). The purpose of the study highlighted in this chapter was to examine how African American women in graduate and professional schools experienced mentoring during their academic travails. I[1] was most interested in their sense making about mentoring and how they defined it, how they perceived the mentoring relationships in which they were involved, and what they characterized as significant and/or valuable about having a Black woman as a mentor.

Qualitative research, a phenomenological approach, was used to conduct this study on Black graduate women and their experiences with mentoring. I used purposeful sampling to identify eight participants, with

whom I conducted semistructured interviews. After conducting a thorough analysis of the interview transcripts and identifying thematic categories, I engaged in meaning interpretations of the categories and wrote up a set of findings. These findings were shared with the participants via member checking and with peer debriefers to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and to solicit feedback on my interpretations in order to strengthen the study and accurately represent the experiences of the participants.

Four key findings emerged from the study. The first finding, "Expectations and Perspectives of Mentoring," describes the participants' definitions of mentoring and mentoring relationships, as well as the expectations they had of mentors and the challenges associated with identifying suitable mentors. The second finding, "Perspectives of African American Women as Mentors," focuses on the participants' views regarding the value and importance of having mentoring relationships with African American women. As noted in the article, "Respondents reported that an African American female mentor had a deeper understanding of the issues present in the academy and could understand many of the challenges that participants faced because they had experienced similar situations" (Patton, 2009, p. 523).

"Perspectives on White Mentors" was the third finding and highlights how the participants made sense of mentoring relationships with White faculty in their respective programs. In describing both positive and challenging experiences, some participants discussed having a lack of trust in White faculty mentors and feeling less comfortable with them. Others indicated that their mentoring relationships with White faculty were successful. They were receiving the information and support they needed and perceived themselves to be less of a threat to White professors given the territorial nature of research in the academy. The last finding was "Perspectives on 'Other' Mentoring Relationships." This theme revealed how the participants sought relationships with mentors beyond academe. They viewed relatives (particularly their mothers), sorority sisters, and other women as mentors and found support in these relationships. The participants indicated that these types of relationships helped them value the importance of mentoring and serve as mentors to women following in their footsteps. Overall, the findings of this study were quite powerful in representing the participants' experiences. The findings also demonstrated how Black feminist thought (BFT), the framework used in this study, can serve as a critical lens through which mentoring in the academy can be understood with greater depth and nuance, particularly in elucidating the experiences of Black women.

Black Feminist Thought

Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* (2009) is acknowledged for leading the call to define and interpret BFT. BFT is a form of "critical social theory" that serves as an interpretive framework for analyzing and understanding the experiences of Black women in the United States. Collins asserts that illuminating the diverse experiences of Black women and empowering them lie at the core of BFT. BFT's relevance as critical social theory is deeply linked to social justice projects specifically meant for the liberation of Black women and to those projects that connect Black women to other groups that face oppression (Collins, 2000[2]).

While many theoretical perspectives emerge from a particular discipline, BFT is different in that it stems from the voices and experiences of Black women who have, historically and in present-day contexts, fashioned an epistemological perspective that does not rely solely on disciplinary discourses rooted in the academy.

According to Collins (1997), BFT is " specialized knowledge created by African-American women, which clarifies a standpoint of and for Black women" (p. 243). She commends Black women (e.g., Sojourner Truth, Fannie Lou Hamer, Shirley Chisholm, Elaine Brown, etc.) throughout history for raising their voices and engaging their intellect in ways that demonstrated activism in the face of overwhelming oppression and efforts to keep them silent.

Collins (2000) describes three strategies through which the suppression of BFT has been filtered via Black women's oppression: (1) the denigration and exploitation of Black women as laborers, service providers, and domestics; (2) political oppression through the denial of equal rights, particularly the right to vote, inequitable access to quality schooling, and poor treatment in the judicial system; and (3) the persistence of "controlling images" and stereotypes (e.g., mammies, video hoes, welfare queens) that have been created and maintained as a rationale for the subordination of Black women. The persistence of these suppressive strategies does not suggest that Black women refuse to fight back. Indeed, Black women have a tradition of resistance to oppressive conditions, but their voices and perspectives often remain invisible, and invalidated, for the sake of preserving the dominant group's (viz., White/male/middle-class) interests. "This dialectic of oppression and activism, the tension between the suppression of African-American women's ideas and our intellectual activism in the face of that suppression, constitutes the politics of U.S. Black feminist thought" (Collins, 2000, p. 3).

BFT, philosophically, is based on the premise that race, gender, class, and status influence the lived experience of Black women in particularly unique ways. For example, Collins (1989) asserts,

> The unpaid and paid work that Black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggest that African-American women, as a group, experience a different world than those who are not Black and female. (p. 747)

The experiences of being simultaneously an insider and an outsider illustrate the positionality of the culture of Black women as they exist on the margins. Collins (2012) describes Black women's culture as a prop used in the main-stage production of a White man's world. Subsequently, Black women's ability to navigate both the inside and the outside positions in society is contingent on their capacity to operate at the periphery.

BFT consists of four interrelated elements: (1) thematic content, (2) interpretive frameworks, (3) epistemological approaches, and (4) significance for empowerment (Collins, 2000, p. 17). Collectively, these elements provide a nuanced understanding of how Black women are uniquely situated in U.S. political contexts. For the purposes of this section, we describe the thematic content of BFT, which refers to its six distinguishing features, and follow with a brief review of the remaining elements.

The first distinguishing feature of BFT is the "dialectical relationship" that connects African American women and their intersecting oppressions with activism rooted in a Black feminist response. The need for BFT will always exist as long as Black women are forced to live at the intersections of oppression due to racism, sexism, classism, gender, and so on. "As a critical social theory, Black feminist thought aims to empower African American women within the context of social injustice sustained by intersecting oppressions" (Collins, 2000, p. 22). This empowerment emerges through activism that is not only reflective of the individual experiences of Black women but also echoes a collective voice that requires a sense of

consciousness among Black women and further solidifies a unique standpoint.

The second feature of BFT recognizes the diversity that exists among African American women. This feature disrupts essentialist notions regarding who Black women are and what they represent. Given the diversity among Black women, it follows that they have a range of experiences that define who they are and how they respond to the challenges of living in the United States. How one woman experiences the legacy of struggle in this country is not necessarily how the other will experience those same struggles. The beauty of BFT, and this feature in particular, is that the differences among Black women are affirmed, validated, and considered to contribute to a collective standpoint. Collins (2000) states, "Not every *individual* Black woman consumer need experience being followed in a store as a potential shoplifter" (p. 26) to know that there is underlying disparity in how Black women are treated as they carry out their daily lives. There are common threads that reflect the disenfranchisement of Black women. These common threads emerge from the range of Black women's diverse experiences. The differences that constitute Black womanhood ensure that they respond in different ways based on the context and that for some there may neither be a clear recognition of a standpoint nor a desire to resist certain oppressions. How each Black woman responds is determined by where and how she sits at the intersections of oppressive systems.

BFT's third feature focuses on the dialogical relationship between Black feminism in practice and BFT as a critical social theory. The theoretical and philosophical foundations of BFT and the social action that stems from these foundations are mutually shaping. As Collins (2000) notes,

> Black feminist thought encompasses bodies of knowledge and sets of institutional practice that actively grapple with the central question facing U.S. Black women. . . . Within these parameters, knowledge for knowledge's sake is not enough—Black feminist thought must both be tied to Black women's lived experiences and aim to better those experiences in some fashion. (p. 31)

In other words, the dialogic to which Collins refers depends on knowledge production that consistently defines and redefines Black feminism. Such knowledge production must be clearly linked to goals rooted in social justice for Black women.

The fourth feature that distinguishes BFT relates directly to the notion of knowledge production and whose knowledge holds value. Collins maintains that African American women are the key contributors to BFT and it is their intellectual prowess that provides the content and structure of BFT. Black women intellectuals can be found in and beyond the academy. According to Collins, the possession of academic credentials does not make a Black woman an intellectual. It is her commitment to constructing, defining, and bolstering a standpoint for, by, and about Black women that shapes a genuine contribution. "Placing the ideas of ordinary African-American women as well as those of better-known Black women intellectuals at the center of analysis produces a new angle of vision on Black women's concerns" (Collins, 2000, p. 18). Black women are critical to BFT because they are the most capable of speaking to the experiences of women in this group, a perspective that women who are not Black can't claim. Black women are also vital to BFT because they are the most likely to remain committed to the fight for social justice during the most difficult struggles. Black women must be the lead authors of BFT and aware that their engagement in defining this standpoint enhances their capacity to dismantle oppression in its various forms. Black women intellectuals and the knowledge they produce must be at the core of BFT to establish a collective standpoint that works in concert

with other social justice projects.

The fifth characteristic of BFT acknowledges that the realities of Black women are dynamic and constantly shifting. BFT as critical social theory and Black feminism as practice are mutually bound—thus, neither can exist in isolation. To be effective and to maintain a dialogical relationship, both must adapt to the societal realities that prompt change. BFT must critically reflect, and in some cases deconstruct, the changes in society as well as the evolution of the conditions in which such realities occur. It is incumbent on Black women intellectuals to understand that change is inevitable and that some conditions are beyond their control but that through the development of a standpoint, Black women will be empowered to critique and analyze change to reveal the ways in which they are most affected.

The last feature of BFT relates to Black feminist activism and its union with other efforts devoted to social justice. While the diverse experiences of Black women create a unified standpoint, their collective identities do not exist in a vacuum. The societal ills that plague African American women also have relevance to other social justice movements. Through a commitment toward advancing the empowerment of Black women for social justice, BFT, in practice, promotes community for all people. For BFT to realize its truest potential, Black women must use their intellectual resources, their voices, and engage in activist struggles in solidarity with others for socially just causes.

Two interpretive frameworks that Collins (2000) relies on to elucidate BFT are intersectionality and the matrix of domination. Intersectionality emphasizes the need to examine the experiences of Black women from a lens that not only recognizes how they are oppressed due to their raced, gendered, and classed identities but also requires that such analyses reflect how these identities intersect in ways that create unique experiences that situate the oppression in these women's lives. Without intersectional analysis, most examinations tend to focus on a single axis of oppression, leaving knowledge gaps that could reveal a more complex and nuanced understanding of Black women's experiences. Crenshaw (1989) contends that those on the margins, possessing multiple oppressed identities, are often "theoretically erased" (p. 139). Thus, Collins uses an intersectional framework in an effort to upset dominant discourses that have been more additive with regard to issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, class, and nation and argues for analyses that reveal a range of tightly woven patterns of interrelated dimensions of identity and their implications for Black women. According to Collins (2000), the matrix of domination "refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression" (p. 18). In explicating the meanings that shape the matrix of domination, Collins reminds readers that intersectionality, or the manner in which intersecting forms of oppression are situated, becomes the localized reality for those experiences within a given matrix. In other words, there are various matrices that reflect dominance, power, and oppression. How the matrix operates is contingent on the intersecting oppressions that constitute it and the context in which the matrix occurs. The concepts of intersectionality and matrix of domination are significant in BFT because they are mutually constitutive, allowing Black women to develop a particular standpoint that they can collectively build and implement along with an activist agenda to resist oppression.

The epistemological approaches that shape BFT are rooted in Black women's experiences and their particular ways of knowing. The forms of knowledge created by Black women (historically and in present-day contexts) have been and remain subjugated and will often be refuted in the face of claims grounded in

Eurocentric epistemologies. However, the knowledge production of Black women, or Black feminist epistemologies, breathes life into BFT, while simultaneously rejecting dominant notions of truth, acknowledging personal experience as a form of knowing, validating the importance of dialogues grounded in a caring ethos, holding individuals accountable for their knowledge claims, recognizing Black women as agentic knowledge producers, and viewing Black women's standpoint as a valid truth. Last but not least, BFT is significant for the empowerment of Black women in two important ways. BFT's acknowledgement of intersectionality and the diverse ways in which Black women get situated, in combination with the agency they exercise on individual and group terrains, provides an alternative lens for understanding the links between how oppression is experienced by these women and how they resist it. BFT also serves as a vehicle through which Black women can formulate and substantively analyze the shifting nature of power and its implications for knowledge validation. These constructions of BFT position it as a viable framework not only to support and empower Black women to speak on and engage in activism for Black women but also for related social justice efforts.

Searching for an Appropriate Framework

I learned about BFT during my doctoral studies at Indiana University. At the time, my doctoral minor was in African and African American studies. I always possessed an intense desire to learn more about scholarship on African American women. It was during one of my courses that I learned about BFT and was thoroughly intrigued by Collins's ability to forge a perspective that had not been readily available in most of my doctoral-level courses. When I first read *Black Feminist Theory* (the first edition) and exposed myself to other works of Collins, I was immediately convinced of its value to my scholarly interests.

When I decided to conduct a study on mentoring in the lives of Black graduate and professional women, I wanted to frame the work in a way that would really inform the voices and perspectives of the study's participants. I also sought a framework that would guide my interpretations of the findings. While there were certainly other theoretical frameworks I could have used (discussed later in the chapter), I chose BFT as the most appropriate framework because of its emphasis on validating the experiences of Black women, disrupting oppression, and promoting empowerment.

Since the focus of the study was on the mentoring experiences of Black women in graduate and professional schools, I believed that the study could serve as a venue through which their experiences could be shared and subsequently validated. The notion of validation is particularly significant given that the dominant narratives about mentoring tend to be prescriptive, narrowly conceived, and unidirectional. As the findings of the study illustrated, this was not the experience of many of the participants. BFT was also significant in framing the study due to the study site, a predominantly White, public, research university (very high research, according to Carnegie Classifications) in the Midwest, comprising very little racial diversity among students, staff, and faculty. Thus, the institution provided a context in which racism and other forms of oppression were very intricately linked to the campus climate and departmental culture where these women pursued their education. Finally, BFT was an appropriate frame for the study because it was geared toward foregrounding the voices of the women in the study. The study served as a conduit for them to feel a sense of

empowerment and ownership in the research process. The study was also empowering for me as a Black woman serving as the primary investigator, allowing space and opportunity to engage in dialogue with the women about their experiences and to make sense of their perspectives on mentoring.

Grounding Research in BFT

BFT was woven throughout the study, inclusive of the research questions, literature review, data collection and analysis, and implications for future research and practice. As a framework, BFT shaped the research questions and validated my decision to focus specifically on African American women. My initial thoughts were to examine the mentoring experiences of women of color in graduate and professional schools. However, after careful thought, I decided to focus on Black women in particular because there were so few in graduate school and even fewer represented among the faculty ranks. A narrower focus would allow me to capture the women's experiences with greater depth and clarity. I believed that what I learned from these women would have implications for later studies that examined mentoring relationships. Collins also focuses on Black women in BFT while recognizing that the epistemology could certainly and should link to other communities, experiences, and social justice projects.

I identified three central research questions: (1) How do African American women in graduate and professional schools define mentoring? (2) How would these women characterize their current mentoring relationships? (3) How would they describe the significance and the option of having a same-race/same-gender person as a mentor? Again, BFT was significant in how I framed and phrased the research questions. The research questions demonstrate how I foregrounded the women's perspectives and allowed them to serve as the core data source—hence BFT's insistence on the validation of Black women's voices. As I crafted these questions, my awareness of my positionality as a researcher remained intact. While BFT was used to frame the study, it was also a personal form of knowledge that I had come to see as part of my own understandings about Black women and their relationships, graduate school education, and the context of White campus environments. I had no preconceived notions regarding how the participants would respond, but I was sure to engage in my own self-reflexive process and consider how my positionality would influence the study. Two key ideas in BFT were relevant for me at this point of planning the study. First, given my own positionality as a Black woman, I was mindful of what Collins (2000) shared: "By identifying my position as a participant in and observer of Black women's communities, I run the risk of being discredited as being too subjective and hence less scholarly" (p. 19). While I demonstrated honesty about my own positionality, I did not impose my beliefs on the participants, as my goal was to allow their beliefs and ideas to emerge from the data. Second, as I conducted this study, I was reminded of Collins's (2000) assertion regarding one of the distinguishing features of BFT—that is, not all Black women will recognize, understand, or even acknowledge a collective "legacy of struggle." She contended that our differences ensure that we interpret and respond in very different ways. As a result, I welcomed the diverse perspectives that I hoped would stem from the study.

My review of the literature was also firmly grounded in BFT. Collins (2000) discussed the dominance of Eurocentric values as the basis for how knowledge is constructed. It came as no surprise to me that as I combed the mentoring literature, I found very few articles that spoke to the experiences of people of color, let

alone African American women and their meaning making with regard to mentoring. I shaped the introduction and literature review by first offering a historical backdrop of Black women in postsecondary contexts and the limited lens through which their experiences have been examined (e.g., through the perspective of White women or Black men). I then suggested that one possible explanation for the successes of Black women is their participation in mentoring relationships. I spent some time emphasizing some of the benefits that may accrue in mentoring relationships where those involved share similar cultural backgrounds and interests. I then examined the literature broadly, making the case that the body of work has been framed through a White, male viewpoint. Harris, as cited in Patton (2009), stated,

> By limiting the examination of mentoring based on one universal definition, the personal, complex nature of the mentoring experience by under-represented groups such as African American students, who do not fit into a male-oriented, competitive, individualist profile, will be excluded. (p. 512)

Because much of the mentoring literature is so narrowly framed, I focused the literature review on the limited scholarship I could find that captured the experiences of women graduate students and African American graduate students and administrators. Though the body of knowledge on mentoring provided very little information about African American women specifically, I thought it important to spend less time on traditional notions of mentoring in order to feature the small cadre of research that in some way addressed women (gender) and African Americans (race). What was missing at the time I conducted the study was an intersectional approach to mentoring that could capture how their experiences were not just raced or gendered but were simultaneously representative of both.

The data for this study involved individual, semistructured interviews with eight women who shared their perspectives about mentoring and how it shaped their graduate school experiences. Four of the participants described themselves as having an African American woman mentor, while the other four discussed how they established mentoring relationships in the absence of African American women in their respective programs and departments. I sought to understand the ways in which the participants similarly understood mentoring and its associated processes. In addition to their shared experiences, I also paid careful attention to how the participants' perspectives diverged. My decision to implement qualitative methods was purposeful and allowed me and each participant to connect as Black women. As I noted in the publication of the study, BFT was central to my conversations with these women:

> Although my purpose was to interview them, we ultimately participated in an exchange of experiences, found common themes in our interactions with departmental faculty and African American female mentors, and encouraged each other to continue successfully in our academic endeavors. (Patton, 2009, p. 518)

The analysis of the data and the interpretation and discussion of the findings were also rooted in BFT. For example, I used member checking with the participants to clarify their statements and to ensure accurate representation of their perspectives. I also relied on the expertise of Black women scholars who served as peer debriefers. The findings of the study revealed that each of the women experienced mentoring in different ways and defined it according to those experiences. They saw the value of having a Black woman mentor, and when one was not available, they sought Black women beyond their departments. Moreover, the women noted that

having a mentor overall was important but that having White mentors, particularly male, engendered feelings of mistrust and prohibited the development of more genuine relationships.

My discussion of the findings was linked back to BFT and the distinguishing features within the framework. For example, some of the participants relied on "othermothering," or the practice of seeking mentors beyond the academy who could support them in school (Case, 1997; Edwards, 2000; Guiffrida, 2005). Findings such as this relate to Collins's definition of Black women intellectuals in that being an intellectual is not limited to those who physically work in the academy. A Black woman intellectual could be a mother, aunt, community member, and so on, as long as she brings value and experience to the mentoring relationship through the knowledge she imparts to a mentee. Throughout the discussion of the findings, I purposefully made connections to BFT to remind readers of the framework and to engage them in the process of seeing the findings via a BFT lens.

Other Frameworks and Perspectives

I considered two different frameworks for the study. The first was Weidman, Twale, and Stein's (2001) model of graduate and professional student socialization. I deemed this model a potential framework because it deals specifically with the socialization process for graduate students. The authors discussed the socialization process as one that was nonlinear, which I thought could provide a more flexible lens in terms of understanding how Black women experienced socialization. The authors also addressed issues related to how mentoring gets situated in the socialization process. For instance, they noted, "Graduate and professional socialization necessitates shared conscious experiences and links with fellow students, faculty mentors, and role models as well as subject mastery and knowledge application" (p. 5). In this model, the university, particularly institutional culture and socialization processes, sits at the center to constitute the core socialization experience. Surrounding the core are four elements that contribute to socialization:(1) a student's background, (2) the professional communities to which the students belong or with which they get involved, (3) personal communities such as relatives and job/internship supervisors, and (4) the outcome of the socialization process, which is represented by an individual who exits with an evolving professional identity. The authors explain that socialization by its very nature is a dynamic process. They also pay particular attention to issues of diversity and institutional culture, noting that

> women and people of color have either not been represented at all or have been severely underrepresented in the doctoral and professional ranks, either by choice or as a result of the social climate prevailing in those departments and fields. (p. 41)

To address this issue, enhancing opportunities for mentors and role models is among their top recommendations.

In general, the model certainly has value for framing a study on African American women in professional and graduate programs and their mentoring experiences, but I decided that this framework was not the most applicable, because my study was specifically examining mentoring relationships. While mentoring is certainly one aspect of socialization, the socialization process itself is much bigger, and Weidman et al.'s (1991) model seemed to go beyond the scope of my study. Moreover, despite the authors' acknowledgement of issues

regarding diversity, my study needed to have a framework that intentionally and explicitly situated oppression as experienced by Black women. Finally, I thought that the most important element in selecting a framework was to choose one that focused specifically on Black women or stemmed from their unique experiences. The model of socialization offered by Weidman et al. does not attempt to do this. So my ultimate decision was to select a different direction in which Black women's voices were foregrounded, rather than using mentoring as a factor in graduate student socialization.

Critical race feminism (CRF) was also a framework I considered. While there is no agreed-on definition of CRF, most scholars would agree that it stems from critical race theory (CRT). CRT grew out of the legal field in the 1960s and has since found its way into other fields such as education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT refers to a framework and represents a community of scholars committed to fighting racial injustices, whether they emerge in legal, educational, social, or political arenas. One of the earliest critiques of CRT (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) was that it focused too heavily on the experiences of African Americans and that not enough of the scholarship dealt with issues facing women of color. Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) work on intersectionality helped take CRT in a new direction and ultimately served as the foundation of CRF. In addition to intersectionality, anti-essentialism is also an important concept in CRF. Anti-essentialism (Grillo & Wildman, 1997; Harris, 1990) upsets the notion that all people of color, particularly women, have one monolithic experience. Anti-essentialism also challenges dominant paradigms in which Black women are erased under the presumption that White women's experiences represent the experiences of all women and Black men's experiences represent those of all African Americans. CRT and CRF as lenses grapple with the tensions inherent in claiming anti-essentialism while also arguing for a unique voice possessed by people of color. I deemed CRF as a potential framework for its commitment to social justice and its emphasis on intersectionality and anti-essentialism. I believe that both concepts are relevant to the experiences of Black women in the academy. However, I did not use it as a framework because many of the ideas of CRF are captured in BFT and BFT was a more cohesive and comprehensive framework overall.

Additional Considerations

One of the most crucial themes to emerge from this study was the participants' desire to serve in a mentoring capacity to other African American women who followed similar educational trajectories. Their desire to mentor other African American women was reflective of BFT and Collins's assertion that activism and empowerment are core elements of the framework. In this instance, mentoring served as part of an activist agenda through which Black women in the study would empower themselves and future generations of Black women. What these women shared also represents what I have done in my faculty career in terms of mentoring Black women in graduate school. I believe that what the participants planned to do and what I currently do are examples of how theory not only translates to practice but also becomes praxis. Both Nadrea and Juhanna served as coauthors on this chapter because they too have used BFT in their work and in their personal lives to engage in peer mentoring with other African American women in graduate school. I invited them to write portions of this chapter because they aspire to careers in the academy, wanted to gain additional writing experiences, and believe in the power of BFT to serve as a transformational tool in how African

American women maneuver academic spaces and politics regardless of their status as faculty, students, or staff. Thus, this chapter represents a mentoring opportunity for them to engage in the process of writing for publication. While the bulk of this chapter was about my decision to use BFT as a framework, I think it is critically important to give readers an opportunity to hear from Nadrea and Juhanna about mentoring and BFT in their experiences as Black graduate women at the doctoral level.

Juhanna: Courage to Define and Resist

Throughout my graduate school experience, I have encountered several forms of aggression that could have marginalized and stifled my growth as a woman, mother, and emerging scholar. The most alarming experiences were incidents with Black men. While I expected racialized and gendered treatment from White colleagues, being undermined by Black men was more complex because I deemed them "Black like me." I struggled to name the conflicting feelings I had mentally and emotionally. After careful thought and reflection, I realized that I was ignoring the role of gender and its intersections with race and how such interactions often resulted in micro-aggressions (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). BFT helped me understand that the marginalization I experience is not just a White thing or a race thing. My mentoring relationship with my advisor, another Black woman, opened my eyes to intraracial and gendered oppression. Eventually, I grew confident enough to confront people and discuss incidents as they arose. In short, I was resisting by speaking up. Speaking up empowered me to challenge others instead of internalizing their perceptions of me. My mentoring relationships with Black female faculty and peers reinforce the significance of BFT, a theoretical framework that validates the lived experiences of a Black woman.

Nadrea: Finding Value

Semester after semester, I would say to myself, "This semester can't be any worse than last semester." However, as each one passed, they got worse, and I felt like I was losing myself in the process and my self-esteem was declining. I received feedback from faculty that my writing was insufficient and too subjective. Such feedback compounded the increasing stress and pressure I felt to be accepted as a budding scholar. I measured my success by counting the number of times a proposal was accepted to the "right conference" or a paper was accepted to the "right journal." I was succumbing to a situation best described by Lorde (1984) when she stated, "If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive" (p. 137). I was allowing others to define who I should be as a scholar, but their definitions were limited by mainstream values and rewards that did not align with my own beliefs about who I was, who I am, and who I am becoming. Reading BFT helped me take personal accountability (Collins, 2000) for myself and my actions and to seek and obtain substantial relationships with other Black women as mentors and peer mentors. Prior to internalizing and translating BFT into my everyday practice, I did not place a high value on the gendered and racialized experiences of the African American female faculty and peers in my graduate program. I refused to see connections between their lives and my own because I thought it would be painful. I now realize how much I was losing in the process. After weaving BFT throughout my worldview, I found value in those around me, but most important in my own story. I now value the mentorship of Black women faculty and fellow peers and believe that they are beneficial and essential to my personal and scholarly growth.

Our Sister Circle: Vital Actions in Implementing Our BFT Perspectives

Our sister circle is a place to exercise resistance, to encourage self-definition, and to have a safe space to address academic and personal emergencies. This circle comprises peer mentors and faculty members, most of whom are African American women. The faculty members guide us through the politics of academia, provide insights on professional development, and serve as examples of the type of scholars we aim to be. Equivalent to othermothers, these faculty and administrators are the people we call on when we are facing challenges and roadblocks that we do not feel equipped to manage.

Using the relationships between Black female faculty at our university as a model, we mirror their system of support with other African American women in our program. As Collins (1986) stated, "The notion of sisterhood—generally understood to mean a supportive feeling of loyalty and attachment to other women stemming from a shared feeling of oppression—has been an important part of Black women's culture" (p. S22). The sister circle is our opportunity to develop and maintain dialogical relationships in which we comfortably verbalize incidents in our academic experiences without concern of judgment or skepticism (Collins, 2000). The sister circle is the prescription we use to heal and empower each other. The benefits of being in relationships with other Black women—affirming each other's humanity, uniqueness, and right to exist (Collins, 2000)—aid in our active resistance against dominant ideologies that

attempt to limit our capacity to engage in self-definition (Collins, 1986). In practice, when we consider the principles of BFT and our commitment to our sister circle, we exercise humility, resource sharing, and providing a space for us all.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we shared the benefit of using BFT as a critical lens for framing research on the mentoring experiences of African American women in graduate and professional schools. BFT as an overall framework is useful in studies focusing on Black women's experiences because of its emphasis on Black women's empowerment and activism, challenging the various forms of subjugation and oppression that Black women face, centering the voices of Black women as knowledge producers and contributors, and ostensibly connecting to other social justice projects. BFT should not be viewed as theory only. Its value extends beyond theoretical implications. It is a Black feminist epistemology, or a body of knowledge that naturally extends into praxis and informs the multiple ways in which Black women exist in and resist a world that attempts to devalue their standpoint. BFT certainly has a place in the ongoing research on Black women in all arenas and is vital to ensuring that Black womens' experiences remain foregrounded.

Notes

1. "I" refers to the lead author, Lori D. Patton.
2. The overview of BFT throughout this chapter is in reference to the second edition of Collins's book, published in 2000. Unless otherwise noted, readers can assume that the information about BFT is from this edition.

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5

Transformational Learning and HIV-Positive Young Adults

Sharan B. Merriam

The theoretical framework of a study can be compared with the scaffolding or framing of a building–it's the underlying structure to which all other parts are anchored. In this chapter, I explore how the literature of adult learning and adult development from the field of adult education was used to structure research with HIV-positive young adults. At the center of our theoretical framework is Mezirow's (1990, 1991; Mezirow & Associates, 2000) theory of transformational learning, which posits that meaningful learning in adulthood can lead to a change or transformation of one's perspective or worldview. This chapter illustrates how all components of the research process–the specific literature and previous research consulted, how the research questions were framed, and the data collection and analysis strategies employed–were shaped by the theoretical framework of transformational learning and adult development.

Courtenay, B. C., Merriam, S. B., & Reeves, P. M. (1998). The centrality of meaning-making in transformational learning: How HIV-positive adults make sense of their lives. *Adult Education Quarterly, 48*(2), 65–84.

Courtenay, B. C., Merriam, S. B., Reeves, P. M., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2000). Perspective transformation over time: A two-year follow-up study of HIV-positive adults. *Adult Education Quarterly, 50*(2), 102–119.

Overview of the Studies

The first study of HIV-positive young adults was conducted in the 1990s (Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998). The purpose of the study was to understand how meaning is constructed in the lives of those diagnosed as HIV positive. In-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of 18 HIVpositive men and women. Using the constant comparative method, an inductive analysis of the data revealed a process of meaning making that involved a period of initial reaction to the diagnosis, a catalytic experience that sets into motion the meaning-making process, and three distinct yet interrelated phases of reflection and activity. The findings not only provided a clearly delineated description of the meaning-making process, they also revealed unique contributions that underscore the centrality of meaning making in transformational learning. Two years after the original study, my colleagues and I located 14 of the original 18 participants and interviewed them as to whether they had maintained their change in perspective uncovered in the original study (Courtenay, Merriam, Reeves, & Baumgartner, 2000). In other words, we were interested in finding out whether a perspective transformation is sustained over time. With the advent of protease inhibitors (PIs) in the 2 years between the studies, we wondered whether, with the threat of imminent death removed, the participants would revert to previously held, self-oriented, and materialistic views of the world. Through an inductive analysis of the interview data, we found that for all 14 participants, the perspective transformations that they had undergone 2 years earlier had held. Second, there were changes in meaning schemes that included the adoption of a future-oriented perspective, greater attention to care of the self, and integration of the HIV-

positive status into their self-definition (Courtenay et al., 2000).

The Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework lay at the intersection of adult learning theory, in particular transformational or transformative (the terms are used interchangeably) learning, and adult development theory. Transformational learning theory as presented by its chief architect, Jack Mezirow (1991, 2000), posited that significant learning in our lives involves meaning making that can lead to a transformation of our personality or worldview. This type of learning is developmental in that it involves "movement toward more developmentally progressive meaning perspectives" (1991, p. 192). Mezirow (1991) had proposed a 10-step process, beginning with a disorienting dilemma that sets in motion a self-examination of one's underlying assumptions, followed by sharing these thoughts with others, which leads to exploring new roles, relationships, and actions; trying on new roles; and finally "a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective" (p. 169).

Though popular and much referenced in the field of adult education, Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformational learning had been little tested when we began our study in the mid-1990s. (Transformational/transformative learning theory has become perhaps the most studied and written about adult learning theory in the past 20 years, culminating in the recently published *The Handbook of Transformative Learning*, edited by Taylor and Cranton [2012].) We were indeed intrigued by the theory's capacity to explain how adults make meaning of their life experiences, and how this meaning making can bring about powerful changes or transformations in their view of themselves and their world. This type of learning

> produces more far-reaching changes in the learners than does learning in general, and . . . these changes have a significant impact on the learner's subsequent experiences. In short, transformational learning *shapes* people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize. (Clark, 1993, p. 47)

Two years after the completion of the first study (Courtenay et al., 1998), using the same theoretical framework of transformational learning and adult development, we conducted a follow-up study of the original participants. In our first study, we found that all of our participants had undergone a transformation in their perspective, as we would have predicted from Mezirow's (1991) theory. Also part of his theory, but untested, was that such changes in perspective are permanent. He is quite clear about this, saying that "the transformative learning process is irreversible. . . . We do not regress to levels of less understanding" (p. 152). Other developmental theorists concur. Kegan (1994), for example, said of cognitive development, "Each successive principle subsumes or encompasses the prior principle. . . . The new principle is a higher order principle (more complex, more inclusive) that makes the prior principle into an element or tool of its system" (p. 33). We wanted to examine the permanency of the perspective transformations after a 2-year period. Also, in the intervening 2 years, PIs had become widely used, causing remission/suppression of HIV. Thus, we wondered if the changes in perspective seen in the first study held or, given a new lease of life through PIs, whether the participants reverted back to their old perspectives.

Our theoretical framework of transformational learning and development also led to a second question, that of ongoing changes in meaning schemes and perspectives. The literature suggests that meaning making is an ongoing process and that although "at any one point in time, a meaning has to be fixed," it is "not the only meaning possible for all time" (Usher, 1993, p. 170). Mezirow (1990) proposed that changes in meaning schemes (specific beliefs, assumptions, values, feelings, and concepts) are quite common in dealing with everyday experience. It is the "accretion of such transformed meaning schemes" (p. 13) that can lead to changes in the larger perspective. We were thus interested not only in whether the participants' perspective transformations had held but also in the nature of ongoing meaning making. We wondered, for example, if the introduction of PIs may have served as a "disorienting dilemma," effecting yet another perspective transformation.

THE DISCIPLINARY BASE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transformational learning theory is firmly situated in the literature of adult learning theory and adult development. It focuses on how adults make meaning of their life situation and, in turn, how this meaning making affects development. The theory has its roots in constructivism, which maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience. Mezirow's (1990) version of transformational learning in particular also draws from the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who proposed three types of learning, one of which is emancipatory and involves rational discourse. In Mezirow's model (1995), the key to transformational learning is critically examining underlying assumptions and engaging in "a special form of dialogue" where we "do our best to be open and objective in presenting and assessing reasons and reviewing the evidence and arguments for and against the problematic assertion to arrive at a consensus" (p. 53).

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Our interest in the theoretical framework of transformational learning drove all aspects of our study, from identifying the focus of our investigation, to sample selection, to interpretation of our data. Our central research question centered on uncovering the *process* of meaning making—that is, we wanted to know how meaning is restructured such that one's sense of self, one's world-view, or one's perspective becomes transformed. We thus needed to select a situation where we could be fairly certain that a person's perspective would be disrupted and challenged. We reasoned that being diagnosed with a terminal illness would constitute a "disorienting dilemma" of such great magnitude that one would be propelled into a struggle to make meaning or sense out of the diagnosis. Furthermore, it was believed that this meaning making would assume a particular urgency if the diagnosis meant that one's life might end at an unnaturally early age. Hence, our *sample selection* was guided by our research question about the process of meaning making, which was directly derived from the theoretical framework of transformational learning. We chose young adults under the age of 45 who had been diagnosed HIV positive and whose T-cell count was 500 or less, indicating a compromised immune system. The interviews were conducted in late 1995 and early 1996, before the advent of PIs; an HIV-positive diagnosis at that time constituted a death sentence.

The theoretical framework also drove the data collection. Having selected a sample of HIV-positive young

adults, we wanted to explore *how* they made sense of this catastrophic news—that is, how does a young adult make meaning of this threat to his or her existence? In-depth interviews were the only way we could access their meaning-making process. The 10-step process that Mezirow (1991, 1995) outlined informed our interviews, but only to the extent that his process gave us a starting point. We wanted each participant to tell us his or her story of making meaning of the diagnosis.

Data analysis proceeded simultaneously with data collection, as is recommended in qualitative research designs. As mentioned above, although the meaning-making process delineated by Mezirow (1990) informed us, we remained open to hearing about our participants' experiences. Our findings confirmed some aspects of Mezirow's process but expanded others. For example, whereas Mezirow posits that a period of self-examination follows the disorienting dilemma, we found that there was first an initial reaction characterized by cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Sam remembered thinking, "My life's only a fourth over. So suddenly that window on the future came slamming shut, shades drawn, black curtains" (Courtenay et al., 1998, p. 70)! On hearing the diagnosis, Tracy entered a crowded metropolitan area "and I was just thinking of how was I going to do this [suicide], was I going to jump in front of a bus or the train or a car" (Courtenay et al., 1998, p. 70)?

This initial reaction period lasted from 6 months to 5 years. Becoming dislodged from this initial reaction period involved some catalytic event initiated externally by family, friends, or a support group, or internally by realizing that to not get on with life meant self-destruction. Jamie talked about a friend who came to his house and yanked him out of bed:

> And she said, "Do you want to die? Just lay there and I'll kick you to death right now, and if you don't want to die then get up and live." . . . And it just clicked and I said, "That's right; you know that's the answer." That was the real turning point for me, when I realized that death was easy and anybody can do it. . . . And so I just made up my mind that day that living life well is what I wanted to do. (Courtenay et al., 1998, p. 71)

The initial reaction and the catalytic event uncovered in our study are two important components of the process not present or, if present, not explicated in Mezirow's (1991, 1995) theoretical framework. In his model, a self-examination and critical assessment of assumptions underlying one's worldview follow the disorienting dilemma.

Our findings with regard to the *process* of meaning making served to underscore some of the weaknesses of using Mezirow's (1991, 1995) model of transformational learning as the theoretical framework. First, Mezirow's model has been critiqued as being overly rational (Taylor, 2000); indeed, we found, not unexpectedly given our participants' diagnoses, that there was a highly emotional, affective, and spiritual component in their meaning making. Second, Mezirow has been criticized for describing perspective transformation as happening in isolation, separated from other aspects of the individual's life context. Our data showed that even the initial reaction to the diagnosis was affected by whether or not the individuals suspected that they might be HIV positive, by their lifestyles, or by supportive others in their lives. Context shaped the entire meaning-making process.

Despite these shortcomings, the framework overall did help us understand the meaning-making process and the resultant change in perspective that each of our participants exhibited. Being diagnosed HIV positive brought about a self-examination of their purpose in life. Participants reported recognizing the importance of

all life and of their need to make a meaningful contribution through service to others. Characterized by empathy and altruism, their new perspectives included but went beyond Mezirow's (1991) description of the outcome of a perspective transformation (an empowered sense of self, a more critical understanding, and more functional strategies for taking action).

To address these questions, it was necessary to interview the same participants as in our initial study. We were able to locate 14 of the original 18 participants. In preparation for the interviews, we reread, studied, and discussed the original interviews. This

> reacquainted us with each respondent's particular story and the nature of his or her perspective transformation; second, phrases or statements were occasionally read back to the participants during the second interviews as memory prompts, or for their comments. The interview schedule contained open-ended questions regarding how participants were making sense of their lives today, the impact of protease inhibitors, current physical and emotional health, the extent to which they were still involved in service-oriented activities . . . and so on. (Courtenay et al., 2000, p. 106)

Two major findings emerged from this follow-up study. First, as we speculated, the perspective transformation proved irreversible. People continued to make meaningful contributions, manifested through numerous service activities largely related to HIV/AIDS education, and to appreciate their lives and the lives of others. They maintained the more integrated, inclusive, and discriminating perspective that they had attained earlier. Interestingly, they themselves recognized the irreversibility of their perspective transformation. Joe, for example, had been an avid comic book collector until he was diagnosed HIV positive. Once he began taking PIs and realized that he might "be around another 20 years to enjoy this" (collecting comic books), he "indulged" in it again.

> But I'd changed too much. . . . Ultimately, I realized these are just things. If I'm collecting it to have just number 1 through 20 or something, you know, why am I doing it? It didn't have the same meaning anymore. . . . It was one of those unimportant things, ultimately. (Courtenay et al., 2000, p. 110)

With regard to our second question of ongoing meaning making, there were changes in meaning schemes. The dramatic changes in health brought about by PIs resulted in the adoption of a more future-oriented perspective on life. Jamie, who, for example, had lived life in "2-year increments" prior to PIs, commented that "now, suddenly, things are different . . . I mean, it's much easier to plan to die than it is to plan to live." He realized that "knowing you might live, . . . you've got to consider consequences way down the road" (Courtenay et al., 2000, p. 112). Other meaning scheme changes were manifested by paying greater attention to issues pertaining to care of the self and integration of one's HIV-positive status into self-definition (Courtenay et al., 2000).

Thus, the theoretical perspective of transformational learning and adult development structured both of these research studies. The questions asked (What is the process of meaning making? How stable is a perspective transformation?) were directly derived from transformational learning theory as proposed by Mezirow (1991, 1995). To best answer these questions, we chose a sample (HIV-positive young adults) that would be driven to meaning making, and we explored this process through a qualitative research design that involved in-depth interviews with this purposefully selected sample. We used concepts from the framework in analyzing and interpreting our data and then tied our findings back into the literature derived from the

theoretical framework.

Related Theoretical Frameworks and HIV-Positive Young Adults

Transformational learning theory is developmental in that changes in one's perspective occur, changes that are "more developmentally progressive" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 192). But in addition to developmental changes in perspective, there were a number of developmental issues that were inherent in the design of the study and in the particular selection of participants. Our overarching theoretical framework of adult learning and development was based on several assumptions. First, life experiences in conjunction with the individual and social contexts in which they occur provide the potential for learning and development. Second, although development refers to systematic change over time, we assumed that the desired direction of development was toward positive, growth-enhancing, mature responses, a position Bee and Bjorklund (2004) labeled "developmental progress" (p. 14). We saw this research as an opportunity to address several of these related developmental questions. In particular, we asked questions about the development of coping mechanisms, faith/spiritual development, and psychosocial development. We saw each of these three areas as subcomponents of the overall theoretical framework of adult development.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COPING MECHANISMS

Coping with the stress of being diagnosed HIV positive was one of the developmental issues we investigated with this same sample of 18 HIV-positive young adults (Reeves, Merriam, & Courtenay, 1999). Using an ego-psychological approach that is developmental in nature, it is posited that some defense mechanisms are more mature than others. Vaillant's (1977, 1993) model presents a hierarchy of defense mechanisms, with humor and altruism being among the more mature mechanisms and repression and denial among the less mature ones. Prior to our study, research on coping with life-threatening illness, including HIV, focused on either identifying specific coping mechanisms or plotting the relationship between coping and psychological stress (Reeves et al., 1999). We were interested in a *developmental* focus—that is, how coping strategies evolved over time.

In our interviews with the 18 HIV-positive young men and women, we included questions about their coping with the diagnosis and, ultimately, the disease. We asked about their initial coping mechanisms and how those may or may not have changed over time. From the data, we evolved a model representing "a developmental progression over time, from coping strategies that are more reactive, evidence less control, and are more self-centered to those that are more proactive, evidence more control, and are more other-centered" (Reeves et al., 1999, p. 350).

The participants reported adopting affective coping mechanisms ranging from complete denial to intense anger immediately after the diagnosis. Behavioral coping included self-destructive behaviors such as "excessive use of drugs and alcohol, sexual acting out, and 'automatic pilot' reactions" (Reeves et al., 1999, p. 351); less destructive behaviors involved keeping as busy as they had been before the diagnosis, learning about treatments, and so on.

After varying periods of time, the participants came to realize that their initial coping mechanisms were

not effective in dealing with this life-threatening disease. This realization initiated a transition period in which the participants squarely confronted their HIV status, began taking control and responsibility, and began getting involved in activities such as joining a support group. Finally, more mature coping mechanisms evolved for living with HIV, such as the use of humor, faith, altruism, seeking the support of others, and seeking a balance between attending to their HIV status and other things in life.

Approaching coping mechanisms from a developmental perspective allowed us to see a "clear developmental progression—from reactive to proactive, less control to more control, and self-centered to other-centered" (Reeves et al., 1999, p. 358)—not revealed in other studies. Furthermore, the transitional period bridges the period between coping with the initial reaction to being diagnosed HIV positive and learning to live with HIV. Whereas our findings might be interpreted as "transformational coping" (Aldwin, 1994), which posits change in positive or negative directions, our findings are more in line with the adult development literature that popularly construes development in a positive, growth-oriented direction (Bee & Bjorklund, 2004).

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

An adult development theoretical framework posits change over time. But to be manageable, research using an adult development framework must be further delineated to focus on some specific aspect of development. In the examples above, the foci were on the cognitive process of meaning making, and on the development of coping mechanisms. Using the same sample of HIV-positive young adults, we were also able to ask about the development of faith. As with meaning making and coping, there are specific models of faith development that helped frame our inquiry. Reich (1992), who reviewed many of the models of faith development, concluded that factors such as a supportive family climate or an active prayer life "favor religious development" (p. 181); a life crisis such as a life-threatening illness was not one of the factors listed. Fowler (1981), however, in his well-known model of faith development does acknowledge that "growth and development in faith also result from life crises, challenges and the kinds of disruptions that theologians call revelation. Each of these brings disequilibrium and requires changes in our ways of seeing and being in faith" (pp. 100–101). Whereas others have studied the link between a traumatic event and faith (Easley, 1987), and even HIV status and faith development (Backlund, 1990; Marshall, 1991), these studies did not explicitly delineate the nature of this development. Our research focus, then, was on how a particular life-threatening event, an HIV-positive diagnosis, influenced faith development.

In our interviews with the 18 HIV-positive men and women, we incorporated questions dealing with faith development by asking about the meaning of life for them, their faith, their purpose in life, and their concept of God or a higher being before the diagnosis, and then how those views had changed (if they had) after the diagnosis. We found that there were three ways in which the HIV-positive diagnosis had brought about change in their religious faith. First, there was a shift from an unreflective, assimilated religious practice to a faith they have formulated and assumed ownership of. As John, a former Episcopal priest said, "I probably would have continued to play this game and to me it was a game. . . . The illness made me get real about what I believed" (Courtenay et al., 1999, p. 209). Second, their concept of God shifted from an authoritarian, punishing "bully" to a loving and caring God with whom they have a personal relationship. Finally, they

reported a shift from a focus on the self to realizing that their real purpose in life was to help other people, and this shift was part of their new understanding of faith. As Joe reported, "To me true faith and belief in humanity is going out and doing something that's, well, for others" (Courtenay et al., 1999, p. 212).

Tying our findings back into the theoretical framework of faith development and, in particular, Fowler's (1981) model, our study illuminated movement in Fowler's stages of faith development from Stage 3, characteristic of most adults, to Stages 4 and 5. Stage 3 has much more to do with the expectations of others (as was characteristic of our participants before their HIV-positive diagnosis), Stage 4 is characterized by reflection and taking responsibility for one's beliefs and actions, and Stage 5 is an acceptance of other worldviews and the centrality of other people, rather than self-absorption.

In summary, as with the development of coping mechanisms and more mature perspectives, a particular model of faith development informed this aspect of the research. Because we were interested in delineating a process, however, and not testing a model or hypothesis, we approached the question inductively and qualitatively. Our findings contribute to our understanding of how a life-threatening event affects development.

ERIKSON'S STAGES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As a final example of how one's theoretical framework permeates the research process, we refer to Erikson's (1963, 1968, 1982) eight-stage model of life span development. Social, psychological, and biological factors interact in shaping a person's development from infancy to old age. Erikson (1959), while stating that there is a "proper rate" and a "proper sequence" of development (p. 52), agreed that his model also allows for "variations in tempo and intensity" (Erikson, 1963, p. 272). Although each of the eight stages becomes prominent at a particular segment of the life span (e.g., trust vs. mistrust in infancy or generativity vs. stagnation in middle adulthood), the stages are not bound by chronological age; in fact, the tasks of all eight stages are present throughout life. There is a sense of developmental progression, however, as various stages "unfold" at various points in the life cycle. Erikson (1963) also posits that resolution of one stage depends on successful resolution of the previous stages. Successful resolution means achieving "a favorable ratio" (p. 271) of the positive over the negative for each stage.

Although there are hundreds of studies using Erikson's model or aspects of his model as the theoretical framework, and these studies are generally supportive of the timing and nature of the eight stages, only a few studies involved terminally ill participants. Two studies involving HIV-positive individuals employed instruments to measure the amount of resolution of the eight stages (Marshall, 1991; Thomas, 1994). Ahmed (1992), however, speculated that AIDS may well interfere with the resolution of life stages, in particular the young adult and middle adult stages as 91% of persons with AIDS are between 20 and 49 years of age.

Rather than asking a static question about someone's stage of development as measured by an instrument, we were interested in how facing death affected the *movement* through Erikson's stages of development. Are earlier, unresolved issues revisited? Is there an accelerated movement through all the stages? Do people skip to the final stage? Do they work on multiple stages simultaneously? Our inductive, qualitative analysis of the interview data was informed by Hamachek's (1990) criteria for each of the three adulthood stages. These criteria, consisting of 10 "behavioral expressions" and three "implicit attitudes" for each adulthood stage, were,

according to Hamachek, "logically and clinically deduced from Erikson's discussions" (p. 678). Although we acquainted ourselves with his criteria, we were not using them to necessarily label our participants as being in one stage or another; rather, we were interested in the *developmental* question of their engagement with and movement among the stages.

Our analysis yielded three findings with regard to how facing death affected movement through Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. First, all the participants revisited Erikson's fifth stage of development—which typically manifests itself in adolescence—that of identity versus role confusion. This renegotiating of identity included coming to terms with a body that was deteriorating as a result of contracting a virus through (possibly) socially stigmatized practices, figuring out "where one is going" in terms of goals and commitments, and deciding whose approval "counted." Kenneth, a 31-year-old African American, for example, talked about "learning me. I really didn't know me [before HIV]; I'm learning about being me today." Steve no longer defined himself by his possessions and what others thought; identity now came from within, "from my identity not having to be the way I looked and what I drive and how much I make. That my identity is something else, my identity is not those appearances" (Merriam, Courtenay, & Reeves, 1997, p. 226).

Our second finding with regard to Erikson's stages was that the three adulthood stages were dealt with *simultaneously*, with evidence of positive resolution for each stage for most of the participants. The three adulthood stages are intimacy versus isolation (dealt with in young adulthood), generativity versus stagnation (characteristic of middle age), and ego integrity versus despair (the main task of older adulthood). Because our participants were under 45 years of age, we would expect that they would be grappling to varying degrees with intimacy and generativity issues. Their HIV-positive status made issues of intimacy particularly poignant. Jamie, for example, thought about who he would want to be with him should he end up in a "hospital bed fixing to take my last breath." . . . "There is still one person that I want there that I don't have yet, and that's a life partner" for that "piece of intimacy that I don't have with everybody else there [at his bedside]" (Merriam et al., 1997, p. 227). Elise, in fact, made HIV her "partner; it's closer than my physical partner, closer than my husband. It's there. It's always with me" (Merriam et al., 1997, p. 227).

With regard to generativity versus despair, even the youngest members of our sample were concerned about the world, about others, about making a contribution. Twenty-six-year-old Dawn left a promising career in Washington, D.C., to work for an AIDS education agency. The week we interviewed her, she had spoken publicly on AIDS prevention at two universities and "to a gym full of 700 ninth graders, and then an hour later, 650 eleventh graders" (Merriam et al., 1997, p. 228). She also noted the gap in services for HIV-positive women and wrote a grant that was funded to address this issue. Joe, who had left a lucrative computer company job because he "didn't want to end up dead in the middle of a board meeting somewhere talking about quality assurance," used his skills to edit and print an online newsletter for HIV-positive readers:

> If I know I can touch somebody in [the] rural [area of the state] somewhere and get that feedback that "you touched my life," that's a significant job to me, not how much money I get from it, or how much fame I get from it or anything like that. Is it gonna make some kind of significant change in society that will benefit other people, even if it's just one person at a time, and it's just one guy who helps? (Courtenay et al., 2000, p. 109)

Ego integrity versus despair is Erikson's eighth and final stage of the life cycle. With the realization that death is inevitable, one reviews one's life and comes to accept "one's one and only life cycle . . . that . . .

permitted of no substitutions." Furthermore, "the possessor of integrity is ready to defend the dignity of his own life style" (Erikson, 1963, p. 168). The "virtue" of this stage of life is wisdom. All of our participants seem to have achieved a sense of peace and acceptance. Thirty-seven-year-old Tracy recounted for us how she explained to her son why she wouldn't change anything about her life: "Listen to me," she said to her son,

> Everything that I have went through in my life has brought me to the place that I am in today. I said, the only thing you're looking at is me using drugs and me being HIV positive, I said, but part of that was part of my growing, part of my learning to live, part of my healing within. If any of them pieces was missing out of that puzzle, then I wouldn't be where I'm at and I wouldn't be the person that I am. (Merriam et al., 1997, p. 229)

Our third finding is that ego development is an interactive process. In our study, grappling with intimacy and generativity enabled and supported the resolution of the tasks of identity and ego integrity. That is, as the participants reached out and connected with others (intimacy) in a caring and compassionate manner (generativity), service to others and the world became central to their self-definition (identity). "Simultaneously, they evolved a sense of integrity—they accepted who they had been and who they had become, realizing they had the 'wisdom' to be of help to others" (Merriam et al., 1997, p. 231).

In summary, Erikson's model of psychosocial development structured our inquiry by shaping our research question: How does the threat of death affect movement through the stages of development, in particular the three adulthood stages? What we discovered was that the movement is not as linear or sequential as Erikson's theory implies. Our participants were involved in an interactive process of development that meant *simultaneously* dealing with intimacy, generativity, and ego integrity, the last of which was integrally related to identity. Whether these findings are idiosyncratic to young adults diagnosed as HIV positive at a time when such a diagnosis meant certain death or whether other catastrophic life events would trigger the same pattern of development remains to be investigated.

Some Reflections on the Role of Theoretical Frameworks in Research

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate how one's theoretical framework structures all aspects of a research study. Even to ask a question about some phenomenon assumes some perspective, worldview, or disciplinary orientation. Identifying a theoretical framework not only makes that worldview explicit but also provides the tools, in terms of concepts and models, for structuring the investigation. The studies reviewed here all reflect an adult developmental theoretical perspective—that is, we were interested in movement, in change, and, in particular, in the *process* of change. Because we were interested in change, we purposefully selected a sample of adults—those diagnosed HIV positive—whose pre-HIV status would have been disrupted and challenged, thus initiating change.

The fashioning of a specific research question from the larger framework of adult development involved focusing on a particular aspect of development; this focusing process is necessary to make the inquiry manageable and coherent. Mezirow's (1991, 1995) developmental theory of transformational learning thus structured our questions about the process of perspective transformation as well as the permanency of this transformation and ongoing meaning making. We also looked at coping mechanisms and faith changes from a

developmental perspective, citing relevant models in these areas. Finally, in a sense, we "tested" Erikson's theory of psychosocial development by asking questions of our participants about the presence and movement of these stages in their lives. All of our research questions were thus derived from the theoretical framework: *How* do adults make meaning? *How* do coping mechanisms become more mature? *How* does faith develop? *How* does one engage in psychosocial development in the face of death?

These questions determined the research methodology. They could only have been investigated through a qualitative design that allows for participants' perspectives and understandings of a phenomenon to be revealed (Merriam, 2007; Patton, 2002). Although a scale or instrument might identify a participant's present state with regard to cognitive development, coping, faith, or ego development, none would be able to access the *process* through which one moved from one state or stage to another. In-depth interviews using questions derived from our theoretical framework were used to "answer" our research questions. And how we answered our research questions was, in turn, driven by our theoretical framework—that is, we used the concepts and models from the literature to inform our analysis of the data. These findings were then discussed in relation to the literature from which the theoretical framework was derived.

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6

Using Multiple Theoretical Frameworks to Study Organizational Change and Identity

Michael R. Mills
Pamela J. Bettis

This chapter examines the use of different theories within the same research project. Organizational identity and identification and liminality were used to study faculty members' experiences and understandings of the reorganization of departmental structures at a public research university. The use of multiple theories helped expand the foci of our research and analyses and deepened our understanding of reactions to organizational change.

Bettis, P. J., Mills, M., Miller, J., & Nolan, R. (2005). Faculty in a liminal landscape: A case study of college reorganization. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 11*(3), 47–61.

Mills, M., Bettis, P. J., Miller, J., & Nolan, R. (2005). Experiences of academic unit reorganization: Organizational identity and identification in organizational change. *Review of Higher Education, 28*(4), 597–619.

Introduction

The research project presented in this chapter emerged from the changes taking place in our daily work lives. The two of us were colleagues from different departments in a college that undertook a major reorganization, which resulted in our being members of the same, newly created department. Although the reorganization of departments, colleges, and entire universities is a common practice in the academy, very few faculty members have formally studied these changes. Our circumstance created an excellent opportunity to examine how faculty members responded to the reorganization, made sense of these changes, and constructed new forms of identity in their new organizational home. This was the origin of our study.

We produced two articles from the study, cited above. Each employs different theoretical frameworks we found useful in understanding how faculty made sense of the reorganization. Generally speaking, both articles are based on social construction and sense making as the process by which people create their social worlds and their identities. This broad theoretical orientation, along with a more specific interest in identity, is what guided early formulations of the project, the research questions, and data collection. As the project proceeded, we refined and focused our conceptualization of the research by referencing more specific theoretical formulations from our varied academic backgrounds to explain the data and findings. The first article used organizational identity and identification to frame the data and interpretations. The second article used the concept of liminality and produced a different perspective on the reorganization and faculty members' responses to it. After an overview of the study, both theoretical frameworks are discussed in greater detail.

Study Overview: Who Are We and Who Am I in This New Department?

As the college reorganized, a new department, which we called the Department of Educational Studies (DES) in our articles, was created. In the move from the planning to the implementation phase, Michael saw the opportunity to study important aspects of the faculty experience of these events. He put together a team of five faculty members, one from each of the former departments that contributed members to the new unit. Thus, our research team was born. The guiding research questions for the study were as follows:

a. How did university faculty members experience and make sense of their professional lives, identities, and work during a major reorganization in their college of education?

b. What contributed to or distracted from faculty members' identity construction and organizational identification as faculty members from different academic programs came together in a newly organized academic department?

Michael asked that all five of us maintain a journal about matters surrounding the reorganization during its first year. Our specific instructions were to write about the issues the department faced and the interactions we had with faculty in formal (e.g., committee meetings) and informal (e.g., hallway conversations) situations as well as our own reactions and feelings about what we experienced. Furthermore, he provided specific prompts during the academic year to focus some of our journal entries, such as "How has your former department manifested itself in the workings of the department, college, and work life?" and "Compare your role in the current structure with your prior role in your former department." Research team members responded to these prompts and wrote journal entries that described different facets of their work lives, including college, school, and departmental meetings; the status of their research endeavors; and their yearly evaluations. The text of the journals became the study's major data source, along with various documents (memos, e-mails, committee reports, etc.) related to the reorganization.

During the second academic year of the reorganization, we focused on the analysis phase of the project. Four of us (by now one member had dropped out due to time constraints but allowed us to include his data) coded the journal and document texts and analyzed the text fragments to establish connections and contrasts. The analysis process began with members of the research group reading their own and another full journal and coding sections of text with terms that characterized the main idea being expressed. We compiled our initial lists of codes into one list, comprising 178 codes. As a group, we then narrowed the codes to a set that would encompass all of the selected text sections to be as comprehensive and inclusive of the journal topics as possible; that collapsed list consisted of 48 agreed-on codes. These 48 codes included descriptors such as faculty governance, gender, emotional demands, decision making, redundancy/inefficiency of meeting, paradigm wars, collegiality, and values of professional life. The two of us then used these 48 codes to recode the entire 150 pages of single-spaced journal entries and assorted documents using a qualitative data analysis software package. As the next step in the analysis process, we gathered the codes into 12 groupings based on the similarity or relatedness of the topics. Then, each set became the focus of a group meeting to interpret, derive themes and differences, and apply theoretical formulations based on the content of the text units. Michael produced a written summary of the conversations, which became the subject of further conversation, sorting and recombining the interpretations within and among the original code groupings.

In the first article derived from this study (Mills, Bettis, Miller, & Nolan, 2005), the findings and analyses highlight the dysfunctional interaction patterns of the new department, as indicated by the mode of debate, lack of trust, and fragmentation within the unit. We describe a departmental faculty that had substantial difficulty working together toward important collective decisions regarding matters such as curricular consolidation and promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines. Themes in our analyses include truncated communications, conflict avoidance, dysfunctional decision-making processes, and our own withdrawal from participation in the unit. Under these conditions, the department became a weak unit within which to develop an organizational identity and identification. Given the lack of mutual processing of issues, faculty members were impeded in their ability to negotiate an agreement on the identity of the unit. This inhibited sense making, which, in turn, hampered our identification with the new department.

In the second article from the study (Bettis, Mills, Miller, & Nolan, 2005), our findings highlight the changing nature of our work during the reorganization and the ways in which the reorganization manifested the changing social, cultural, and economic changes affecting higher education institutions. We describe the uncertainty in which faculty members worked as the organizational expectations changed; the contradictions that faculty faced in terms of attempting to collaborate with new colleagues who were trained in very different ways; the fragmentation, anxiety, and lack of trust within the unit; and the withdrawal of faculty members from a commitment to the new unit. We wanted to move beyond a description of the reality of academic reorganization and faculty identity. We hoped to not only describe but, more important, explain why faculty held particular perceptions of reorganization and their professional identities. We sought to contribute to the scholarly literature on faculty life during reorganizational activity as well as to understand our own lives as academics.

Theoretical Framework: Organizational Identity and Identification

We started the study with the notion that the new unit would have to create a new organizational culture and become home to people who had not previously shared an organization. In effect, culture is the internal and symbolic context for organizational identity. Thus, the same processes of social construction and sense making are involved in developing and perpetuating both organizational culture and organizational identity. As such, both constructs become susceptible to reinterpretation and shifting meanings as the context for identity is reframed. Much as recent conceptions of culture have moved beyond an integrationist view to emphasize the internal variation and fragmentation (Martin, 1992), the conception of organizational identity has also moved beyond something that people take to be central, distinctive, and enduring about an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985) to thinking about organizational identity as a social construction susceptible to change and incoherence (Gioia, 1998).

Organizational culture and identity, in turn, become prime considerations in organizational identification. In effect, the affiliations we use to define ourselves are often the organizations in which we participate (Pratt, 1998). Organizational culture sets the context for organizational identity, which, in turn, says a lot about who the organization members are and how they would like to think about themselves. Through organizational identification, organization members get psychological needs such as safety, affiliation, self-enhancement, and

self-actualization fulfilled, while the organization gets members who are more likely to act in ways congruent with the organizational goals and needs. The process of identification is complicated, however, because neither the individual nor the organization has a singular identity, or even consistency among multiple aspects of identities.

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) suggested that we have not moved much beyond these recognitions to more fully grasp the identity constitution processes in organizations. They attempt to address that shortcoming in the interpretive literature, and they provide an overview of four ways individuals' identities are influenced and changed in organizations. The interactions within organizations serve to define (1) the employee by directly defining characteristics; (2) action orientations by defining appropriate work through motives, morals, and abilities; (3) social relations by defining belongingness and differentiation; and (4) fit with the social, organizational, and economic terrain.

In addition to this general framework, our article (Mills et al., 2005) used more specific theories focused on Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) third item—explanations of identity formation via belongingness, known as social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT). These formulations focus on how group norms, stereotypes, and individual prototypes serve to define identities and influence identification with groups, and examine factors such as groups' homogeneity, prestige, distinctiveness, and permeability. These theories have been more formally derived and tested in broad sociological contexts, and a body of literature has grown out of attempts to extend the insights of SIT and SCT (see Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, for an overview of the theories and literature) to the identities of organizations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Gioia, 1998) and identification within organizations (Pratt, 1998). Working from these theories, researchers hypothesize that clear and distinct differences between groups, a high salience for organizational categories in accounting for the differences between groups, and membership in an attractive or prestigious group will enhance identification with a social group and organization (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Pratt, 1998). Conversely, identification with an organization is likely to be more difficult if members are highly heterogeneous or if they are too much like members of other organizations, and the theories incorporate notions of ambivalent identification or disidentification.

Of particular interest for our study, these theories have also been used in research on mergers in organizations. Mergers are problematic because the social foundations for prior identifications usually remain intact, reducing the need for individuals to develop commitment to a new group identity. Instead, "employees of merged organizations tend to act on the basis of their premerger identity . . . rather than on the basis of the identity implied by the merger" (Van Knippenberg & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 251). This literature suggests that issues of in-group and out-group membership and status differentials, for example, will cause problems for organizational identification among members of the "out" or lower-status organization. Success in organizational mergers has been connected to conditions that promote interaction, such as equal status, inter-group cooperation, egalitarian orientation, and personal acquaintance.

Given these conceptual foundations, our article focused on the organizational factors that promote identity formation and identification within organizations and how those were or were not manifest in the new department created by the college reorganization.

Locating the Theoretical Framework

The theories of organizational identity and identification have developed within the field of organizational studies, which was a major component in Michael's doctoral program and is the focus of his teaching in higher education administration. Much of his past research revolves around the concept of social construction of reality and sense making in organizations. Identity is directly involved in these processes, and the view of identity in organizational studies parallels the development of the concept of identity as a social construction in other social sciences. In this sense, the focus on organizational identity in this study does not stem from a theory in the specific sense of a formal model of relationships between variables or constructs. Rather, it is better thought of as a framework within which the topic is being discussed in the academic literature. It is this interest in questions of organizational identity and their association with organizational culture and sense making that preceded and motivated the entire research project.

In an edited book, Whetten and Godfrey (1998) chronicled the development of approaches to identity in the field. The chapters in that book helped shape our initial steps in applying the concepts in our study. It helped us bring together the postmodern formulation of identity and how it applies to organizational identity and the concept of identification. We continued our review of related literature as the research project progressed and, in the interest of being comprehensive and responsive to the literature, further investigated the notion of organizational identification and the more formal theoretical formulations of SIT and SCT in organizational studies. These theories specifically were the subject of a review article (Hogg et al., 1995) and an edited book (Hogg & Terry, 2001) that included good summaries of the literature. Several directions within that literature, including the application in instances of organizational mergers and the development of a notion of "disidentification," led to optimism about the theories' applicability to our project. As discussed later in this chapter, however, that optimism later dimmed in the analysis phase of the project, when it became clear that the theories were not rich enough to explain some aspects of our findings.

In sum, locating the framework arose from Michael's prior knowledge of the literature in the field. Furthermore, the location of a couple of extensive literature reviews helped summarize specific theoretical formulations and pinpoint sets of literature for deeper review. (For review pieces since the time of our research, see Bartel, Blader, and Wrzesniewski [2007] and Roberts and Dutton [2009].)

Effects of the Theoretical Framework on the Research

As indicated previously, the focus of the research from the beginning was on questions of identity and identification in a shifting organizational context; so we conceived of ourselves as the subjects of our research project. This made journaling appear to be the natural choice for our data-gathering technique. We also wanted to avoid a situation in which the research project would significantly alter the course of the department's development. Thus, we made a deliberate attempt to keep the research project, other than the journaling, as low impact an activity as possible during the year of data collection. This meant that another data-gathering technique, such as constituting ourselves as some version of a focus group at various points during the year, seemed to invite too much influence on the events we were studying. In fact, we only met as a

group twice during the year, and while we did discuss substantive issues (they were hard to avoid!), the main focus was to encourage continued attention to the journaling task. We also responded to a set of common questions in our journals, as described above.

The concern for organizational identity and identification focused journal entries on instances of interaction when members of the department were discussing issues and negotiating new understandings and expectations for their department and themselves (or finding ways not to do so). Our journaling often focused on work issues in which there were explicit discussions of the values and norms the department would embody. These instances related to both the meaning of membership in the department and how members defined their identification with DES. We also used our journals to discuss how we were feeling about the events we experienced and whether they engendered our own association with the department or the people in it. Typically, the reorganization work was either tedious or acrimonious, so the journals included frequent expressions of our disengagement with DES.

For example, Michael described a faculty meeting in which committee members prepared briefing papers on issues to be resolved while drafting P&T guidelines (Mills et al., 2005).

> The P&T committee members kept quiet unless prompted by the faculty to discuss a topic. Even then, they seemed reluctant to speak and did not say much to help the conversation. Predictably, we spent a lot of time on the first few items and the later items got little attention at the meeting. The result is that we sometimes voted on questions that we may not have fully understood or appreciated the complexity of, and we did not always have the benefit of a full discussion to inform our vote. Thus, this exercise in pseudo-democracy really turned out to limit our ability to have full and informed input into some important decisions. The result is that I feel, and I have heard others express, that we still have not had sufficient time to discuss and deal with the issues that the P&T document raises. This also served to limit the value of the vote and conversation for the members of the committee, since they now have to interpret written votes on paper, and they do not have the "rich media" of face-to-face conversations to inform them of how the faculty thinks about an issue. (*Mills, Bettis, Miller*, & *Nolan, 2005, p. 608*)

It is easy to see how the attention to certain events and the way in which they are framed in the journals reflect the theoretical framework for the study, as the journal entry noted the missed chances at interaction that could have promoted a greater sense of shared participation in the department.

As noted previously, at five points during the year, Michael asked the group members to respond to specific questions in the journals. The questions were meant to prompt reflection on common subject matters in the journals, and the effects of the theoretical frames are evident in the questions themselves. In the analysis phase, the specific theoretical frameworks also played explicit roles in the project direction. As described previously, the coding process was inductive and inclusive, and it allowed the influence of the theoretical frame on the data collection process to roll through to the coding and sorting of the textual fragments. Thus, for example, the codes selected focused on matters such as (a) topical areas that promoted interaction in the department (e.g., P&T guidelines, selection of a chair, curricular integration), (b) modes of participation and communication among former and new colleagues, (c) roles in the new department, (d) our professional identities, (e) the view of DES from inside and outside, and (f) the status and relations of the degree programs that constituted the department. All of these issues highlight aspects of building an organizational identity for the department and our identification with it.

Eventually, the focus on interaction and sense making in the process of identity formation led the analysis to focus on how difficult it was to interact and create a new identity for the department. We were also led to

stress missed opportunities for (and even avoidance of) communication and interaction to build a departmental identity and the retreat of faculty into the separate programs that constituted the department. Thus, in the analysis of our journals, the themes and concepts of the theoretical frameworks took on greater and more direct relevance to the data and our modes of understanding them.

Critique of the Organizational Identity and Identification Frameworks

The events in DES reinforce the SIT/SCT position that mergers encourage the airing of differences and separation within a new unit because they heighten attention to the differences and tensions between subgroups. In addition, the general connection between the permeability of subgroups and the success of mergers is supported by negative example, since in this unsuccessful merger the unit quickly becomes characterized as a collection of separate programs rather than a coherent department. The role of prestige factors in this case, however, is more complicated than the SIT/SCT literature suggests. For example, the literature says that low-prestige groups would emphasize alternative characteristics related to their identity that would de-emphasize the characteristics on which they were relatively weaker. In this case, research orientation and productivity—elements of academic prestige—were central issues in the conflict over P&T standards. Both high- and low-prestige programs within the department, however, opposed including stricter standards in the criteria language, opting instead to emphasize the values of autonomy, collegiality, and egalitarianism—also highly prized among academics—in order to reinforce the independence of the various programs in the department. Thus, in this context, prestige was less of a factor in members' orientation to and identification with the new unit than these theories suggest, and egalitarianism promoted subgroup autonomy rather than group permeability.

Ultimately, the DES case urges us to think beyond the models and hypotheses of the SIT/SCT approaches to organizational identity. Even while acknowledging the multiplicity and variability of identity in both people and organizations, SIT/SCT conceptions still focus identification on the primacy of defining or prototypical characteristics and assume an integrationist view of a dominant organizational culture and identity. A broader and more comprehensive view of identity suggests, however, that there are inescapable multiplicities, complications, and even contradictions in identity. Furthermore, individuals have multiple sources of identity and different aspects of themselves that they apply with differing salience in the contexts of each of their affiliations. Thus, in DES, the multiple values and meanings must be combined in ways that an integrationist theory of identity would overlook.

Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) list of identification modes, presented previously, suggests some of the value, environmental, and contextual dimensions that are part of the identity development process and thus represents a broader viewpoint for thinking about the identity construction and identification processes in DES. This theoretical formulation led us to highlight the lack of engagement in the department and to locate the problem in the constricted communication that curtailed sense making and, therefore, the formation of organizational culture and identity. The framework that acknowledged the multiplicity and ambiguity of identity, without also making it an inherent problem, allowed us to look beyond differences as the source of disidentification and to suggest that the problems of interaction chronicled in our journals limited the faculty's

ability to build organizational identity while still accepting differences and contradictions within the organizational culture.

Liminality: Theoretical Framework and Explanation

Pam used the concept of liminality (Turner, 1967, 1977; Zukin, 1991) as a theoretical vehicle to make sense of the dynamic interaction between individual faculty members' responses to changes in their work lives and identities and the changing political, economic, and social landscape of higher education. Liminality provided a way to embed the day-to-day, microcontext of university life within that of the wider macro, social, and economic changes taking place.

The origins of the term liminality are associated with Victor Turner (1967, 1977), an anthropologist whose work explores ritual and symbols in traditional societies. Turner described liminality as a transitional period and status during rites of passage. He argued that the liminal period is an "interstructural stage" in which individuals or groups give up one social state but are yet to enter the new prescribed social state, with its accompanying responsibilities and perspective. Thus, the individuals were "betwixt and between" social statuses. Examples of the liminal stage include times during girls' and boys' puberty rites when they are no longer children but are yet to acquire the status of adulthood or when before the marriage ceremony the bride is neither single nor married. Although these rites of passage and accompanying liminal statuses are found in all societies, Turner maintained that they are expressed more fully in societies that are bound to biological or astronomical events as signs of change rather than to technological innovations.

Turner (1967) found that the symbolism surrounding people in liminal states is often complex. The initiates are treated as both living and dead and neither living nor dead; therefore, symbols used to represent liminal people incorporate images of both life and death. For example, a waxing and waning moon, a snake shedding its skin, and a hibernating bear all symbolize life and death and something other than these discrete categories. Therefore, the social category of these liminal or transitional individuals is paradoxical. "This coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, but both" (p. 99).

Turner (1967) also found that the relationships among liminal individuals are of extreme equality. Within the period of liminality, individuals often assume what Turner called "structural invisibility" (p. 99). They have no status, property, kinship rank, or any marker that would distinguish them from their fellow liminal individuals. There is no hierarchy within the group, and in fact, members often make lifetime friendships during the liminal period. Liminal people do not have to act out any social or political part, and everyone is in a flux in terms of their individual identity. Turner found, however, that typically there are guides who help individuals negotiate this undefined status or liminal state and prepare them for the transition to their new status, such as married womanhood or adulthood. Thus, there is some stability offered to the individuals embarking on a journey to the unknown.

Later in his academic career, Turner (1977) revisited the concept of liminality with another anthropologist, Colin Turnbull (1990), and argued that he had missed the transformative possibilities embedded in the liminal state, one in which individuals can try on new ways of being. The lack of social status

and fixed identity offer opportunities to explore new identities and ways of being that are not allowed in the society at large.

Since Turner's (1967) use of the term, the concept of liminality has been expanded and applied to other "betwixt and between" conditions. The educational sociologists Kathleen Bennett deMarrais and Margaret LeCompte (1999) applied the term to the entire time period of adolescence in industrialized societies. This age-group is seen as neither children nor adults and occupies a precarious position in modern society, at times vulnerable, privileged, and often segregated from the rest of society. Sharon Zukin (1991), a critical urban sociologist, used liminality to describe the current historical, social, political, and economic context. Drawing from Schumpteter's notion (as cited in Zukin, 1991) that an essential fact of capitalism is its constant ability to reinvent itself, Zukin saw the landscape of advanced industrial societies as one that is always varied and changing due to this continual process of creative destruction. Specifically, she argued that the language of neither deindustrialization nor postindustrialism "captures the simultaneous advance and decline of economic forms, or the sense that as the ground shifts under our feet, taller buildings continue to rise" (p. 5). Zukin used Turner's anthropological concept of liminality to make sense of the current transitional social and economic landscape of industrialized nations:

> In the abstract, economic restructuring can be thought of as a process of liminality. It socially reorganizes space and time, reformulates economic roles, and revalues cultures of production and consumption. What is always new about these processes is their mutual impact on specific groups. Once it is culturally mediated, the experiences of relative gains and losses inflict a general consciousness of change. (pp. 28–29)

Just as Turner (1967) saw liminality as representing neither this nor that but both and more, Zukin (1991) argued that neither deindustrialization nor postindustrialism explained the current dynamic economic and social changes and that these changes were more than both of these explanations combined. Furthermore, Zukin explored how the characteristics of both modernism and postmodernism were in evidence simultaneously in this liminal space.

This notion of liminality—articulated by Zukin (1991) as a transitional social and economic period between industrialism and postindustrialism, and modernism and postmodernism—provided a conceptual framework for explaining the macro-intellectual and macroeconomic changes in all of higher education. Although Zukin is referring to the creative destruction inherent in a capitalist economy and the implications of this in terms of American culture writ large, her argument makes sense when applied to universities in their current context. The university in which the five of us worked is a part of the global economic restructuring taking place, along with all of its incumbent social changes. At the same time, we drew from the original meaning of liminality and its anthropological roots, which explore individuals in societal transition. These two understandings helped us make sense of our data and our lives as faculty members.

Locating the Theoretical Framework

Since the two of us have been trained in different subfields of education, we have been immersed in different theoretical orientations. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that when we came to read deeply in the

literature, make journal entries, and finally make sense of the data, we did so in somewhat different but overlapping ways. Pam's training in the social foundations of education exposed her to the disciplines of anthropology and sociology as they relate to education and encouraged her to embed all of her research, particularly her qualitative endeavors, in the wider political, social, and economic context.

Although Pam did not enter the study with the expressed purpose of drawing from the conceptual vehicle of liminality, there were several factors that made its infusion and explicit use not surprising. First, Pam had used the concept of liminality, in its micro- and macroforms, in her dissertation, which explored urban high school students' understandings of their lives and futures amid a rust belt city that was deindustrializing (Bettis, 1994). Thus, she carried a heightened sensitivity from her dissertation review of the literature concerning the transitional status of the U.S. economy, and in fact all industrialized economies. Furthermore, she was attentive to any group of individuals living between two social worlds, and she had begun to notice that being adrift between two worldviews and/or contexts was not limited to adolescents.

After Pam had thoroughly coded and recoded her dissertation data and completed the best preliminary analysis she could without a strong theoretical explanation of what she had found, she "sat" on the data, read new material, and reread books that she thought were significant. One of these was Zukin's (1991) *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*, which explores the changing political economy of cities and uses the concept of liminality to describe that changing landscape. This had been a useful concept in considering how cities were changing and what impact that might have on how urban students understood their lives. Most of Zukin's work, however, remained at the macrolevel and did not move into the micro or everyday lives of urban inhabitants, and this is what Pam wanted to do in her work. When she was rereading Zukin and considering the liminal economy, she traced Zukin's use of the term to a footnote where Zukin cited the work of Turner, whose work she then read. Turner's discussion helped explain what the kids were saying and doing in her data; it provided the micro-understanding that Pam needed.

Therefore, Pam had the background knowledge of the liminality concept when she began this study with Michael and other colleagues. Its use, however, was not triggered fully until she began reading StanleyAronowitz's *The Knowledge Factory* (2000), which explores the changing political and economic landscape of higher education. Reading Aronowitz while coding the data led her to consider the data and their relationship to the macropolitical, -economic, and -social changes taking place throughout universities across the nation. Thus, the direct applicability of the multiple meanings of liminality came into play fairly early in the analysis phase of the project. The similarities in social disruption and the shifting identities that described transitioning adolescents, the socioeconomic conditions of late capitalism, and the changing organization of our college drew us to this line of explanation. Furthermore, whereas the administrators championing the reorganization did not clearly articulate their motives in terms of the pressures on the modern university in a postmodern era, it did not take much of a leap of logic to frame the reorganization in those terms.

Effects of the Theoretical Framework on the Research

Although liminality was not explicitly named as the theoretical framework that Pam would employ in the

beginning of this study, you can see her heightened sensitivity to how the individual negotiates the liminal period as well as an awareness of the changing macrocontexts even in the study's early stages. In fact, various understandings of liminality can be seen throughout Pam's early thinking and writing about the research project. Obviously, part of the reason for that was her explicit familiarity with the concept. Part of its use, such as attention to the macropolitical and -economic context of higher education, however, emanates from her doctoral training and subsequent reading. Therefore, Aronowitz's arguments in *The Knowledge Factory* (2000) easily fit into her awareness and understanding of the larger global economic shifts. All of these sensitivities led Pam to notice and write about issues regarding the status of colleges and universities in American society, the external pressures they face, and how those got translated into the work and daily lives of faculty members amid the organizational shift we were experiencing. This even became an explicit focus at times in her journal writing, as the following two passages exemplify. The first is a reflection on the first faculty meeting of the newly created department:

> When the HRD (Human Resource Development) woman started the meeting, she had an overhead that could be read several different ways. Her point was the multiplicity of our perspectives, . . . you know the kind of thing I taught to my 9th graders in 1984 in rural Arkansas. And here we are in 1998 amidst a whirlwind of economic, social, and political changes and the university is dynamically connected to them all. How obsolete can we be? Perhaps, this reorganization and its incumbent changes point to our inherent anachronism. Perhaps, Lyotard is right in saying that the Professoriate is dead and that the university can no longer be viable in a postmodern, postindustrial era. This meeting made that point to me clearly. *(Bettis & Mills, 2006, p. 66)*

This second journal entry frames the everyday mundane administrative tasks as political in nature:

> Sometimes I feel like Giroux's "clerk of the empire" and it is very discombobulating. I teach with passion about schools being the last public institutions besides malls where democratic possibilities exist. But I don't feel that way in my own institution. Democracy can flounder when participants are overwhelmed with minutiae and detail; when the big decisions are lost in the everyday administrivia. *(Bettis & Mills, 2006, p. 66)*

Although most of Pam's journal entries were much more descriptive in nature and less explicitly analytical, the point is that her training and reading were already evident in how she made sense of her everyday life in the newly formed academic unit.

Pam's sensitivity to the broader social, economic, and political changes that were playing out in universities across the nation could also be found in her literature review, which was an ongoing process throughout the entire research endeavor. Although all of the research team members read broadly in the area of higher education and the contemporary changes in which it was embedded, Pam was drawn to particular literatures, which she explored more deeply. For example, she read more deeply on the impact of the crisis of knowledge within university life in terms of the blurring of disciplinary boundaries, the challenges to rationality, and the history of universities. Furthermore, she read about how these changes were manifested in university life—such as (a) the university's greater technical and/or vocational thrust, (b) a decline in the importance of the humanities and challenges to the Western canon, (c) loss of the university's role in preserving democracy and civic discourses, (d) an exponential increase of knowledge, (e) a heightened managerialism in the operation of institutions, (f) a decrease in public funding and increased reliance on corporate and private monies, and (g) changing roles for faculty members and their demoralization

(Aronowitz, 2000; Bender, 1997; Bloland, 1995; Davies, 1999; Giroux, 1999; Lueddeke, 1999; Manicas, 1998; Paden, 1987; Popkewitz, 1998; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993; Ward, 2003; Welch, 1998). These kinds of readings provided her with the macro landscape in which to embed the actions and everyday understandings of faculty members who live within it, the data of this study.

So far, the heightened awareness of liminality and its characteristics could be found in Pam's journaling and her literature review. Its most explicit use, however, could be found in the analysis phase of the project. As was mentioned earlier in the study overview, after the 178 initial codes were collapsed into 48 codes and the entire data set was recoded by both of us, we then collapsed these 48 codes into 12 categories based on the similarity or relatedness of the topics. These 12 groupings consisted of the following: (1) a general sense of anxiety, (2) uncertainty over what work is to be valued in the new department, (3) getting to know each other in the new department, (4) how and why participation in the new unit is difficult, (5) external pressures on the university, (6) whether there should be nine programs or a coherent unit, (7) leadership issues, (8) the difficulties of curricular integration due to paradigm differences, (9) how faculty will be evaluated, (10) weak organization and administration support, (11) the discouraging of governance activities, and (12) evaluation. These groupings were further analyzed and collapsed as described in the "Study Overview" section. The discussions of these 12 larger descriptive categories resulted in three analytic themes that the group characterized as central to the data: (1) the changing context of higher education, (2) the dysfunctionalities and contradictions of the reorganization and the resulting new academic unit, and (3) the changes in faculty identity. Pam made sense of these three analytic themes through applying the concept of liminality. It helped explain the changing context of higher education and the anxiety and uncertainty that individual faculty expressed regarding their professional identities, and the dual understandings of liminality provided by Turner (1967, 1977) and Zukin (1991) linked these two analytic themes.

Faculty members are not mere puppets of the macroeconomic and -social changes that Zukin (1991) and Aronowitz (2000) describe. They live within and amid them and are shaped by them, and in turn, their own thoughts and actions reshape the university in which they live. This is where Turner's understanding of liminality comes into play. Turner (1967) maintained that when individuals enter the liminal period, they shed their previous roles but do not yet take on new ones. Thus, liminal individuals experience a type of paradox in which they let go of their previous roles and responsibilities but have not transitioned to the new social state and its accompanying social roles and responsibilities. This understanding of liminality helped explain why faculty members are so confused and anxious as they negotiate the contradictions of their professional lives. Liminality mediates the world of macroeconomic and -social changes with that of the daily lives of faculty. It is a synergistic concept in that characteristics of the macroworld and microworld play off of each other. Turner's notion of liminality and the multilayered conceptualization prompted by Zukin's formulation are helpful in understanding how faculty negotiate the changes brought about by a college of education's reorganization and the larger context of higher education.

Furthermore, the concept of liminality provided a way to frame our suggestions for approaching change and alternative futures for higher education. Turner (1967) and another anthropologist, Turnbull (1990), both revisited their initial understandings of the liminal period and recognized the missed opportunity of seeing this betwixt-and-between time as one of possibilities, of trying on different identities and embracing play. They argued that the transformational facets of the liminal period were just as important as the uncertainty it

engendered. We took their second reading of the liminal period as a way to wish for and dream about "doing" higher education differently in a rapidly changing social and economic landscape, and we offered that discussion as the conclusion of our article.

Critique of the Theoretical Framework

The purpose of a theoretical framework is to make sense of the data, to provide some coherent explanation for why people are doing or saying what they are doing or saying. It is meant to move the research project beyond the realm of the descriptive into the realm of the explanatory. It is not meant, however, to be a straitjacket into which the data are stuffed and bound. Liminality was a very helpful conceptual tool in considering how faculty members negotiate an academic reorganization. However, it was not a perfect fit for our data, nor did it explain everything in a neat and tidy manner, and we had several examples of this.

First, Turner (1967, 1977) studied mostly adolescents in their transitional period from childhood to adulthood. Our focus was on adults whose transition was situated around professional and career changes in identity. Furthermore, Turner found that liminal individuals were typically guided by those appointed to shepherd them through this interstructural stage so that they could begin to learn about their new way of life. Turner's use of the term liminal is individual and related to role, so the transformation refers more to personal identity than to social change. The adolescents he studied knew that they were returning to the same culture they had came from, and in addition, their transition was guided by the familiar adults of the community. The rules and roles of their new status were established within the culture and known by their guides, who passed their knowledge on to the adolescents during their transition.

It is Zukin's (1991) shift of the term to an economic and cultural sphere that emphasizes the social and organizational elements of the change and alters its character in important ways. Here, the transformation is not only in the individual role but also in culture. Things will be different (even if there is likely to be some continuity), and past experience does not provide a clear picture of what a new order will hold. There are no knowledgeable guides, an established culture to look forward to, or any firm sense of how the future will shake out. There were clearly no guides to help faculty negotiate the changes wrought by the reorganization of their professional lives. In fact, we argued in our article that administrators were in the same liminal state as faculty and also proceeded without much guidance.

Another way in which Turner's (1967, 1977) conceptualization of a liminal transitional process did not match what was taking place during the education reorganization in our college was that there was no clear demarcation between the old and new roles and responsibilities of the liminal individuals. The roles and responsibilities of the old culture continued to be part of faculty members' lives, which existed simultaneously with the effort to develop new roles and culture. Thus, faculty members were expected to maintain some of their previous professional habits as well as construct and adapt to the rules and habits of a new culture without a guide to what was coming. The demands of these two worlds weighed heavily on all five faculty members' professional lives.

Finally, Turner (1967, 1977) argued that liminal individuals experienced a sense of equity since past statuses and privileges dropped away. In line with this, one stated goal of the reorganization was to

standardize and make faculty workloads more equitable in the college. Our journal entries, however, revealed mistrust and unease with the attempts at reworking the new department or college culture through collaboration. In fact, one of the final three themes focused on the dysfunctionalities and contradictions of the reorganization and the resulting new academic unit. This included the inability of faculty to collaborate, which is the opposite of what Turner described in his liminal groups. In fact, the lack of rules and a fixed institutional culture did not facilitate new and different ways to imagine our work and our interactions with colleagues. Certainly, it did not engender many new friendships, much less lifetime friendships, among the faculty members.

The above are examples of how the concept of liminality did not fit our data exactly. The purpose of a theoretical framework, however, is not to provide comfortable clothing for data.

Possible Alternative Theoretical Frameworks

Various frameworks for the notion of organizational culture would have clear applicability to this case, as the close association of culture and identity discussed above makes apparent. From early in the study, however, we considered the unit of analysis to be us—the five journal keepers—rather than the department or college as a culture. Although we did comment on and interpret aspects of the units and the faculty as a whole, thus approaching a cultural analysis, the real focus was our perspectives and experiences of the new unit and their effect on our organizational identification.

We also could have used frameworks and theories from leadership and/or organizational change literatures. In fact, presentation and article reviewers have questioned why we have not made fuller use of theories from these sources. From the beginning, however, our attention was focused on the question of faculty members' identity and how it was tied to and affected by the organizational change we were experiencing. Regarding the questions about leadership, for example, our response has been to focus on the faculty's own responsibility for developing the identity of the department and our own failures in accomplishing this, rather than on any shortcomings of the administrators involved in the organizational changes.

The Use of Multiple Theoretical Frameworks

As this chapter makes clear, we used different theoretical frameworks in two articles from our project. Although they describe the conditions in the new department in very consistent terms, the different theoretical frameworks pushed the articles to focus on different aspects of the case and produced notable differences in the conclusions of the articles. The focus on organizational identity and identification in the first article produced an emphasis on the internal construction of values, expectations, and belonging that resulted in greater attention to the lack of internal agreement during episodes such as the debate over the department's P&T policies. The notion of liminality applied in the second article directed the focus to the social, political, and economic contexts of the departmental change and to an externally derived definition of faculty work that also curtailed identification with the new department.

Weick (1995) makes the point that there are really two different types of problems during sense making in organizations—one when there are not enough interpretations for members to work with and the other when there are too many interpretations available. In our department, we experienced both problems, and the two different theoretical frameworks each highlight one of the problem types. The article on liminality (Bettis et al., 2005) showed that the faculty was constrained, in part, by the fact that there were only two characterizations of the faculty job that we were stuck between—the modernist searcher for Truth and the postmodern laborer in the knowledge factory. The article concludes by discussing the need to develop more interpretations of what the faculty job can be, something we were not successful at accomplishing during the reorganization. The article on organizational identity and identification (Mills et al., 2005) showed that the new department's faculty had many different perceptions and values to bring to discussions about P&T, curriculum, and other internal matters. That article concluded that we needed to have better conditions for communication in order to work together to negotiate and better reconcile the different approaches to and interpretations of our organization and its purposes.

Thus, the use of different frameworks allowed us to have greater breadth in our analyses of the situation we studied. In effect, we were able to consider several of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) different ways in which identities are influenced in organizations: (a) the fit with social and organizational contexts through the liminality framework and (b) orientation based on values and belongingness through organizational identity and identification. In addition, the two versions exposed how the lack of imagined alternatives in one realm limited choices for identity, whereas the wealth of alternatives and constricted interactions in another realm constrained sense making and identity construction.

Additional Comments

In addition to the pervasive influence theoretical frameworks have on the conduct and focus of the research, we also want to emphasize the ways in which they contribute to addressing one problem researchers face when conducting qualitative research. The impact of theoretical frameworks on every phase of qualitative research contributes to one of the stickiest problems for the trustworthiness of qualitative research.

If we are as beholden to our theoretical frameworks as the premise of this book, and this chapter, suggests, then we also have to be concerned that these frameworks become self-fulfilling prophecies. There is a real danger that they could guide our data collection by determining where we direct our attention as well as the very terms we use to characterize what we see, and they risk turning the analyses toward conclusions that could be theorized before the research began. In qualitative research, our mechanisms for analytical skepticism are not as explicit as those developed for quantitative research (and even in quantitative research, the mechanisms are limited and also serve to hide certain preconceptions). This places an extra obligation on qualitative researchers to question ourselves; to seek out alternative data, interpretations, and explanations; and to doubt our framings and understandings.

Facing these concerns has led scholars of qualitative research to suggest ways to introduce checks and variety into research projects. Metaphors for research stances such as Denzin's (1978) triangulation and Richardson's (2000) crystallization suggest that alternative standpoints, including multiple theoretical

frameworks, could benefit research projects. We need to search out data that may contradict our expectations and promote change in our own understandings. However, this does not mean that the theoretical framework stops directing the study. On the contrary, it suggests that the framework directs the study in two directions—both toward and away from the perceptions and concepts of the framework. In our research, using multiple frameworks also helped us open our interpretations and analyses to alternative viewpoints and additional understandings. It was one way to promote what Sanjak (1990) called "theoretical candor" by finding ways to "confirm, extend, and revise" (p. 396) the theories we began our project with. Only when we do that can we push our analyses to more nuanced stages that go beyond what our frameworks provide us. And when qualitative researchers have accomplished this, we can be assured of the restored trustworthiness of our data and analyses.

Furthermore, theoretical frameworks provide a solution to one of the often discussed problems/limitations of qualitative research. Theory contains the breadth that our data do not have. Thus, theoretical frameworks provide the pathway to overcome the local, contextualized nature of data collection and to allow a form of generalization that some say qualitative research lacks. Theories allow our intense, specific data collection and contextualized interpretations and conclusions to speak to broader issues and conceptual formulations. As Wexler (1992) noted,

> The theory is really a "fusion of horizons" between the elements of the analytic fields as I blended them and what the subjects of the study said and did. I let the subjects lead me to the language and understandings that could only be found on the field of perception for which I had prepared. (p. 6)

By working back and forth between the detailed data and the broader concepts of the framework, researchers and readers can highlight why research can be relevant for other contexts and social settings. Qualitative researchers often talk about the continual comparisons and multiple iterations they perform with their data during analysis, but the theoretical framework is also part of this iterative process—the part that adds greater weight to the mundane data we gather and pore over.

Another way to think about this expansive process is to consider the researcher at the conjunction of two different communities of discourse. In effect, the researcher is involved in social constructions via interactions with the participants in the study and with intellectual colleagues who have helped formulate the framework being used in the study. The study involves both making sense of the research site and participants' meanings in light of larger theoretical ideas as well as making sense of the larger theoretical framework in light of the specific things learned in data collection. Each perspective informs the other as the researcher brings both to bear in the interpretive process, and the multiple layers of the conversation make the research context speak to issues and in terms meaningful beyond its boundaries. By using multiple theoretical frameworks, we were able to extend the breadth of the dialogues through which our research project spoke.

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7

Using "Othermothering" to Study Administrative Work Life at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Terrell L. Strayhorn

In this chapter, I focus on the framework of othermothering and its use in my previous research with colleagues (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2008) on administrative worklife for student affairs administrators at HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the United States. Several major lessons can be taken from the chapter, including (a) identifying and defining key concepts of the othermothering framework; (b) recalling the background of HBCUs and the nature of the relationships between student affairs staff and students; (c) summarizing the role that theory plays in qualitative research on student affairs administration, such as the highlighted study; and (d) identifying and describing the challenges and pitfalls that researchers encounter when using theoretical frameworks such as othermothering.

Hirt, J. B., Amelink, C. T., McFeeters, B. B., & Strayhorn, T. L. (2008). A system of othermothering: Student affairs administrators' perceptions of relationships with students at historically Black colleges. *Journal of Student Affairs Research & Practice, 45*(2), 210–236.

Overview of the Study

If we have learned anything at all from the corpus of studies examining the impact of college on students, it is that relationships with others on campus foster inclusive climates and facilitate student retention and success. Scholars studying students of color at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) also have consistently noted that underrepresented ethnic minorities (UREMs) benefit from meaningful relationships with faculty, staff, and students on such campuses; positive relationships with campus staff and same-race peers mitigate some of the negative experiences, cultural barriers, and social isolation that UREMs may encounter at PWIs (Guiffrida, 2005; Strayhorn, 2008a, 2008b). Even academically successful Black collegians at PWIs benefit from caring relationships with faculty where they feel respected, listened to, and affirmed (Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007).

Many students of color, however, still enroll at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Indeed, enrollment numbers have varied over time. Still, HBCUs represent 3% of all postsecondary institutions; enroll more than 300,000 students collectively, approximately 80% of whom are African American; and graduate many more Blacks than PWIs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Interestingly, some HBCUs have graduation rates that are well above the national average of 42%. For instance, Spelman's Black student graduation rate is 77%, while at Morehouse and Fisk 64% of entering Black students go on to graduate within 6 years, as was mentioned in the original article (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2008). The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* reported that HBCUs including Xavier University, Howard University, and Dillard University, to name a few, are the top producers of bachelor's

degree holders among Blacks in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as medical graduates (i.e., MDs) and veterinarians.

Several factors have been identified that contribute to the relatively high success rates of UREMs at HBCUs, one of which is the nature of the relationships between students and campus personnel. HBCUs often "highlight their ability to create inclusive climates through meaningful and lasting relationships between students and faculty that enhance student success and retention" (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2008, p. 212). For instance, some HBCU presidents—like the "hip hop president"—pride themselves on high contact with students: "open door" policies that invite students to contact the campus leader via phone, e-mail, and even text messages (Masterson, 2010). Faculty members at HBCUs also personally engage students, foster institutional pride, and teach behaviors and skills required for college success and beyond. HBCU faculty tend to offer students specialized attention that makes them feel like they matter, which in turn facilitates a sense of belonging that is key to educational success *for all students* (Strayhorn, 2012).

There is ample evidence suggesting the importance of peer relationships and the role they play in creating positive institutional climates, producing educationally purposeful outcomes, and ensuring the academic success of students at HBCUs. For example, Palmer and Strayhorn (2008) analyzed interview data from 11 academically underprepared Black men who persisted to graduate from a public, land grant urban HBCU despite all odds; they found that institutional support and noncognitive factors such as self-determination, prudently managing one's time, and supportive peer relations were significant to Black males' success at HBCUs. In short, inclusive campus climates created through positive peer interactions lead to greater satisfaction with one's college experience, reaffirm institutional and goal commitments, and provide a sense of belonging, which in turn promotes student success at HBCUs (Strayhorn, 2012).

Despite this information, there was little known about the relationships that administrators establish with students at HBCUs and virtually nothing about students' relationships with student affairs administrators until we conducted the study that informs the present chapter (Hirt et al., 2008). This gap was noticeable and surprising "in light of the importance that relationships play in terms of positive educational outcomes for African American students" (Hirt et al., 2008, p. 213). And the study that formed the basis of this chapter sought to fill such gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study that formed the basis of this chapter was to explore the nature of the relationships that student affairs administrators form with students on HBCU campuses. A single research question guided our study: How do administrators on HBCU campuses describe their relationships with students? It is important to note that this study (Hirt et al., 2008) was part of a larger research program examining the nature of administrative work life for student affairs professionals across various campus contexts. Studies from the larger program have focused on student affairs administrators at liberal arts colleges, research universities, and community colleges, to name a few (Hirt, Amelink, & Schneiter, 2004; Hirt & Collins, 2005; Hirt, Kirk, McGuire, & Nelson-Henley, 2003). A fuller report of findings from the overarching research program was published in Hirt's (2006) book on the topic.

OUR PARTICIPANTS

In this multicampus study of administrative work life at HBCUs, data on the nature of the relationships between administrators and students were collected through three primary sources: (1) written exercises, (2) one-on-one interviews, and (3) focus groups. Participants included 70 HBCU administrators from 25 HBCUs across the country who worked in one of the more than 30 functional areas (e.g., residence life, student activities, advising) identified by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (Miller, 2003). A majority of the participants were African American/Black[1] (89%), and 67% were female. Almost half (44%) graduated from the HBCU at which they worked.

HOW WE COLLECTED DATA

Data were collected in two stages that used written exercises and oral discussion. For instance, one written exercise was designed to elicit information about the nature of relationships with others on campus. The participants listed words or phrases that best characterized the nature of their relationships with students at their HBCU; responses were open-ended. A second section of this exercise asked respondents to indicate the amount of time they spent, on average, working with students.

In the second stage, the participants engaged in an elaborate discussion of their responses to the written exercise about their relationships with students on their campus. Specifically, the participants explained why they had selected particular words or phrases and provided a context for their responses through personal stories, reflections, and anecdotes, oftentimes prompted by probes from the researcher (e.g., "You used the word . . . can you recall a time when this was the case?"). Oral discussion of the written responses took place through two focus groups and 46 individual interviews. The focus groups lasted 90 minutes on average, while the one-on-one interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. All the interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed by a professional for analysis.

HOW WE ANALYZED THE DATA

The data were analyzed in two stages using the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). First, the responses and transcripts were read and reread to understand the essence of the perceptions and experiences shared by the participants. The data were reduced to individuals units—that is, words, phrases, or elements that seemed to relate to the study's overarching purpose of understanding the relationships that administrators form with students at HBCUs. Next, we coded units by categorizing the data around the central concepts found in the othermothering framework, which will be described in a later section of the chapter. For more information about the study, its design, and the strategies employed to enhance trustworthiness and accuracy of data, see the original study published elsewhere (Hirt et al., 2008).

KEY FINDINGS

Four key findings emanate from the study that formed the basis of the present chapter. First, the findings revealed that administrators believe that positive relationships nurture HBCU students and are "family like in nature" (Hirt et al., 2008, p. 220). Countless times we heard HBCU administrators use words with familial

connotations (e.g., "mom," "sister," "parent[s]") to describe the nature of their relationships with students. In every instance, the HBCU professionals were careful to clarify that their kinlike bonds with students were a function of their deep personal, emotional commitment to students with whom they had no blood relationship; the deep sense of commitment often led them to assume family-like roles as surrogate parents, guardians, or siblings, to name a few.

Second, the relationships that HBCU administrators form with students are distinctly shaped by an *ethic of care*. Student affairs administrators at HBCUs are deeply concerned with student welfare and form close, personal relationships with students that facilitate academic and social integration into college life. While many administrators purport to be "student centered," professionals at HBCUs routinely report an emotional commitment or attachment to students that calls them to go "above and beyond" the call of duty. For instance, many of our participants recalled instances where they talked with students at length about their personal lives, offered advice about family matters, lent support during financial crises, and invited students to stay with them during holiday breaks or summer. All of this is clear evidence of how the ethic of care influences administrators' relationships with HBCU students.

Student–administrator relationships at HBCUs also are designed to facilitate a shared responsibility to encourage *cultural advancement*; this is a third key finding from our study. By establishing positive, supportive relationships with HBCU students, administrators intentionally create inclusive campus environments that promote student success. We uncovered a distinct element of racial uplift embedded in professionals' descriptions of the relationships they form with HBCU students; quite often, administrators used these relationships to fulfill a moral imperative to "give back" to the Black community, the Black race, and HBCUs in general and to "repay a social debt" to those individuals who helped them succeed when they were college students (Hirt et al., 2008, p. 225).

Fourth and finally, we found that the close, personal relationships that student affairs administrators form with students at HBCUs serve to sustain the role of HBCUs in higher education and broader society. In other words, relationships serve as a form of *institutional guardianship*, where administrators intentionally seek to preserve the unique niche that HBCUs fill through relationships with students. The authentic, positive relationships that professionals form with students are seen as a way to maintain a distinct position in the higher education hierarchy. And relationships of this kind create strong bonds and institutional commitments that endure long after HBCU students have graduated; institutional vitality is maintained as the relationships serve to encourage alumni either to recommend future students to attend their alma mater or to return as employees, as did 44% of our sample.

As a result of these findings, we concluded that the family-like, committed relationships that administrators form with HBCU students are important; they nurture students' success and embody the culturally grounded ethic of care. Deeply committed, authentic relations of this kind are established based on a moral responsibility, duty, or "social debt" to "give back" to the Black race, the Black community, and the HBCU system, as a genre in the postsecondary enterprise; this reflects the notion of cultural advancement. Ultimately, professionals at HBCUs view themselves as guardians of their students and their institutions; institutional guardianship acknowledges the ties that bind administrators to HBCU students, allowing professionals to serve as protectors of the institution who preserve the student-focused mission of Black colleges. Thus, *ethic of care, cultural advancement*, and *institutional guardianship* are central concepts in the

othermothering framework that undergirded the study that informed the present chapter. The framework is described in the next section, followed by a discussion of the framework's influence on our study of HBCU administrators' relationships with students.

The Framework of Othermothering

Since we were interested in understanding the nature of the relationships that administrators form with students at HBCUs and we learned from our participants that many described their relationships as "family-like roles" or "kinlike bonds," we sought a cultural framework that served as a useful heuristic for such purposes. Othermothering was the logical choice.

Othermothering, historically, referred to African American women's maternal assistance offered to the offspring of biologically related mothers (Foster, 1993). A concept whose disciplinary origins lie in Black feminist scholarship, *othermothering* dates way back to slavery, although Collins (1990) was the first to coin the term to describe Black women's role as community mothers in hostile political and economic surroundings. During slavery, othermothering[2] was a survival mechanism and a way of both preserving and transmitting cultural traditions (Danzy & Jackson, 1997).

Though one concept, othermothering has many definitions. For example, it is closely related to the concept of kinship care, defined as "caregiving by a relative (close friend or fictive kin) when biological parents are unwilling or unable to parent their children" (Gibson, 2005, p. 281). *Othermothering*, or guardianship, has been defined in previous education studies as the nurturing and cross-familial patterns of care that Black female teachers offered students (Foster, 1993). And while the concept of othermothering originally focused on women's relationships with children (or students) in the Black community, over time women's actions significantly influenced the culture of some social institutions (e.g., schools) and, thus, the manner in which both men and women form relationships with students (Foster, 1993; Pasour, 2004).

For the purposes of our study, we defined othermothering as HBCU administrators' academic caregiving to students that facilitates their adjustment to the college environment, encourages retention, fosters positive campus climates, and protects the integrity of Black colleges as an enterprise. Like Collins (1990), we saw othermothering as work that extends beyond mere mentoring, encompasses the manner in which both men and women form relations with students, and involves formal and informal arrangements of care. This operational definition powerfully shaped various aspects of the study, which will be discussed in a later section.

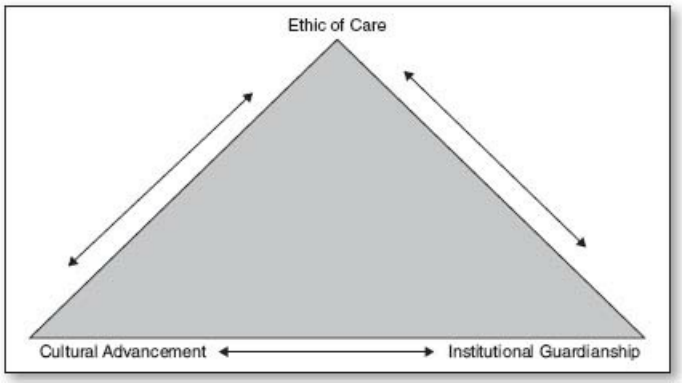
Othermothering comprises three key concepts. One major concept refers to the manner in which an ethic of care is transmitted (Case, 1997). *Ethic of care* is defined as an "attentive and emotional response to the other that is an ongoing part of one's own engagement with students" (Hirt et al., 2008, p. 218). It is a universalized concept where othermothers in the community feel a duty or sense of obligation to the offspring of other mothers, and applied to education, it extends the concept of family to relationships with students.

Cultural advancement is another key concept of the othermothering framework (Pasour, 2004). Othermothers see themselves as working on behalf of the Black community by "expressing ethics of caring and personal accountability, which embrace concepts of transformation, power, and mutuality" (Collins, 1990, p. 132), for cultural advancement. Cultural advancement is achieved as individuals receive mentoring, advice,

love, and support from representatives of the Black community, which, in our study, were student affairs professionals at HBCUs.

A third key concept associated with the othermothering framework is *institutional guardianship*, Educational institutions are significant, especially in the Black community, in that they serve as primary venues through which Blacks are taught to read and write, cultural and oral traditions are transmitted, and various forms of capital (e.g., human, social, intellectual) are accrued, developed, and exchanged (Hirt et al., 2008). Consequently, there is a pervasive belief that Black educational institutions (including HBCUs) should be protected at all costs (Case, 1997). Figure 7.1 presents a graphical representation of the framework.

Figure 7.1 Othermothering Cultural Guardianship Framework



SOURCE: Hirt, McFeeters, & Strayhorn (2008).

Identification and Selection of the Framework

Identifying othermothering as the framework was an iterative process. It began during the research planning and implementation phase of our study. For example, there were several moments during data collection when we (members of the research team) debriefed one another about what we were learning from our informants about the nature of the relationships administrators form with HBCUs students. On occasion, we all reflected back on a comment uttered by one participant that reflected the sentiments of the others: "Basically, I'm they momma [sic]." And since we had been collecting data from personnel at various types of institutions, we were struck by the stark differences between the comments shared by those at HBCUs versus those at PWIs, community colleges, and liberal arts institutions. HBCU administrators seemed to feel a personal responsibility for the success of the students with whom they worked, a moral obligation to build supportive relationships that enabled their retention, and a deep commitment to their students and institutions. What accounted for such differences? And how would we make sense of this in the end? One of the explicit assumptions that several of us brought to bear on this study was the role of race, racism, and culture in social phenomena, which led us to the fields of cultural anthropology, Black studies, and Black feminist thought in search of a useful frame. Several possibilities were identified initially.

As scholars of higher education (or at least as *scholars-in-the-making* at the time), we were generally familiar with those frames that are frequently cited in the postsecondary literature, including college student

retention theory, socialization theory, and college impact theory, which are discussed in one of my most recent books (Strayhorn, 2013). While useful, each had limitations that made it incongruent with the underlying epistemological framing of our study of HBCU administrators. For instance, college student retention theory emphasizes *academic* and *social integration* as antecedents to student departure decisions (Tinto, 1993). However, the language of integration has a distinct bond with the political history of African Americans in the United States that goes unaddressed by dominant retention models (Tinto, 1993). And the goal of both retention and college impact theories is to understand aspects of the college experience in terms of a consequence, a decision, or an outcome—not to understand the nature of interpersonal relationships, as was the purpose of our study. So while we identified a short list of possible theories, we ultimately agreed that we needed a culturally responsive framework that preserved the cultural significance of the concepts (e.g., relations, family, race) that emerged in our study, provided scaffolding to build the arguments we advanced in our work, and served as a bridge to connect otherwise disparate islands of inquiry (i.e., retention, HBCUs, relations). Our coordinated search led us to other-mothering as a theoretical frame, which one of us came across while reading about Black students at PWIs.

We selected othermothering for several reasons. First, we recognized the need to find a way to acknowledge, honor, and validate the multiple and complex relations that campus administrators form with students at HBCUs, which are unlikely to adhere to conventional forms of behavior or communication (Bernard et al., 2000). Whereas some professional staff see their roles as contractual and hierarchical, we learned from our study that administrators' relationships with HBCU students tend to be personal, relational, familial, and at all times operating on multiple planes. Othermothering enabled us to acknowledge the nature of these relationships through a culturally responsive frame that accepts collective responsibility for others' children as a hallmark of the African American community (Henry, 1998).

Second, othermothering met the criteria for useful theory. We found it a simple, but useful, explanation of observable social phenomena such as administrator–student relationships; in that sense, it seemed a parsimonious model for our work. While useful, othermothering may still be considered a tentative explanation since aspects of the theory await empirical testing, verification, or revision. For instance, our findings clarify the notion of institutional guardianship as it relates to HBCU administrators' relationships with students. The participants in our study saw themselves as guardians of HBCU students and purveyors of the HBCU enterprise as a whole.

Last, othermothering as a theoretical frame provided concepts, constructs, and language for talking about the dimensions of interpersonal relationships through an Afrocentric paradigm that emphasizes cooperation, harmony, and notions such as ethic of care, cultural advancement, and institutional guardianship (Bernard et al., 2000). Core elements of othermothering not only were useful for talking about the unique texture of the relationships that administrators form with HBCU students, but they also were useful analytic units for making sense of the data from our interviews and focus groups.

Adopting a kinship care perspective also was reflective of the strengths-based approach—one that emphasizes the capacities and competencies of people and groups (Saleebey, 1992)—that we adopted when we designed the study. For far too long, researchers have employed deficit models and impoverished language to talk about African Americans, their communities, and Black social institutions such as HBCUs. There are reams of examples of this discrepant approach; chief among them is the arguably scathing review of Black

colleges by Jencks and Reisman (1967), which labeled HBCUs as "academic disaster areas" (p. 26). We sought a frame—an intellectual apparatus—that acknowledged the cultural strengths of Blacks individually and collectively (e.g., cooperation and ethic of care), appreciated cultural traditions and values (e.g., advancement, uplift, and generativity), and located all of this within the larger sociopolitical contexts and histories that shape commitments such as institutional guardianship (Freeman & Logan, 2004). Othermothering satisfied all of these expectations and had a number of important effects on our study, which are discussed in the next section.

Effects of the Framework on Our Study

As Anfara and Mertz (2006) explained, theory affects every aspect of a study, and indeed, othermothering influenced our study of HBCU administrators in meaningful ways. For example, othermothering and notions of guardianship were useful for building an argument for our study. Readers might notice that we justified the need for a qualitative study of HBCU administrators by tying the "relationships that students form with . . . college personnel [to] creat[ing] an inclusive climate that encourages student success and facilitates retention" (Hirt et al., 2008, p. 211). Our arguments were bolstered by linking HBCU staff–student relationships to caring, mattering, institutional pride, and "paying it forward," all of which are associated with othermothering and the Black feminist literature on guardianship.

The theoretical framework also helped narrow the focus of the study by sensitizing us to key concepts of othermothering. A quick review of the literature on staff–student relationships will yield an impressive list of references to various studies on the topic: student–faculty engagement in research, faculty–student mentoring, staff–student supervision, among others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). With so many options before us, we used the theoretical framework to narrow our focus to the nature of the family-like relationships that HBCU administrators form with students in consonance with othermothering concepts (e.g., ethic of care). Indeed, there are other factors that could have been considered in our study, but othermothering allowed us to justify our decision to focus on these elements in particular.

Othermothering and its constitutive elements (e.g., ethic of care) also guided our analysis of data. Specifically, we used *ethic of care, cultural advancement*, and *institutional guardianship* as analytical tools to sort through, categorize, and determine themes on the basis of words, phrases, and quotes from the interviews and focus groups. Notice how the components of the model (e.g., cultural advancement) serve as major subheadings under the findings section of the manuscript and the ways in which the excerpted quotes reflect the essence of the core element. Consider this example from the ethic-of-care finding—that is, that student affairs administrators at HBCUs are concerned with students' welfare and form close, personal relationships with them that facilitate their academic and social integration into college:

> I have students who call me their "college mom." I look out for them. If I think that they're getting a raw deal, I *will* go to the administration and say "Hey, let's look at this. Let's take a different [approach]." (Hirt et al., 2008, p. 222)

Last, othermothering shaped our interpretation and discussion of the findings. The framework enabled us to "see" what needed to be discussed in the final section of our published report. What is ethic of care, and

how does it relate to the relationships that administrators form with HBCU students? What is cultural advancement, and how does it relate to the ways in which HBCU administrators describe their relationships with students? How does institutional guardianship relate to HBCU administrators' relationships with students, and what are the advantages of positive interpersonal relationships for Black institutions? Othermothering theory served as a lens for viewing the common topic of student–staff relationships in new and different ways. And it enhanced the rigor of our study by linking together in a logically connected whole what might otherwise be seen as random, isolated facts or observations. Why do we discuss the nature of HBCU administrators' relationships with students in terms of care, as a way of giving back to the race or Black community, and as an effort to protect the HBCU enterprise? Good question. Because othermothering provides a useful set of interrelated terms, concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of cultural relationships within an Afrocentric paradigm. This is the promise and purpose of theory in research.

A Closing Thought

And I end where I began. Recall that the purpose of this chapter was to introduce the framework of othermothering and its use in my previous research with colleagues (Hirt et al., 2008) on administrative work life for student affairs administrators at HBCUs. It was written with several major lessons in mind, so that, on completion, readers would be able to (a) identify and define key concepts of the othermothering framework; (b) recall the background of HBCUs and the nature of the relationships between student affairs staff and students; (c) summarize the role that theory plays in qualitative research on student affairs administration, such as the highlighted study; and (d) identify and describe the challenges and pitfalls that researchers encounter when using theoretical frameworks such as othermothering. I hope that these objectives were achieved by the information included in the previous sections of the chapter.

Just one more point about a possible pitfall. To invoke Christian scripture, I have found that theoretical frameworks can transform us by renewing our minds, bringing us to a place where *old things pass away, all things become new*. But once we are renewed, it can be difficult to regain our former perspectives or to "see" angles that lie outside one's current cognitive script. For example, though there are certainly other aspects of relationships that do not relate to fictive kinship, guardians, or cultural advancement, our theoretical framework sensitized us to "seeing" elements of othermothering while concealing others. Exercising care, utilizing multiple frames, and trying on different perspectives are a few ways to reduce, if not avoid, pitfalls of this kind. Despite these limitations, othermothering served a critical role in our investigation and helped advance the literature base in ways that could not have been achieved without it.

Notes

1. Throughout this chapter, I use the terms *African American* and *Black* interchangeably, in keeping with the materials used in the original study that forms the basis of this essay. These terms generally refer to individuals whose ancestral origins can be traced to the African diaspora (e.g., West Indian, Haitian,

African, Caribbean).

2. Othermothering also emerged as a phenomenon in the Great Migration of the 1920s, when Blacks in the South moved North for upward social mobility (Gibson, 2005).

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8

Mary Douglas's Typology of Grid and Group

Edward L. Harris

This chapter focuses on the social anthropologist Mary Douglas's typology of grid and group, also referred to as cultural theory, and its usefulness in qualitative research. The chapter addresses how the theory is useful in explaining the evolving nuances of space, place, and time and why and how certain educational strategies might work in some environments and not as well in others. Furthermore, it illuminates how a theory such as grid and group can help shape and direct a study as well as offer the means to build on and link to the broader body of literature. In my own work, the framework has significantly influenced the depth and integration of my teaching, research, and service activities.

Harris, E. L. (1995). Toward a grid and group interpretation of school culture. *Journal of School Leadership, 5*, 617–646.

Overview of the Study

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

At the time of writing "Toward a Grid and Group Interpretation of School Culture" (Harris, 1995), the notion of school culture had gained popularity in educational literature. In many cases, however, culture was viewed in either homogeneous or figurative terms, and cultural comparisons were difficult to make.

The purpose of the article and the research questions that guided the content was rather pragmatic. In studies conducted by various authors, grid and group theory had previously been used to explain a variety of social arrangements, including political cultures, ethnic groups, work environments, and religious contexts (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Ellis, 1993; Lingenfelter, 1992; Rayner, 1984). I desired to explore the framework's utility in educational settings and determine whether grid and group theory was a viable means of explaining the nuances of school culture. Thus, the purposes of the publication were to explain school culture in terms of grid and group and to determine the framework's applicability to educational settings. Central research questions included the following:

- How can a social context be suitably interpreted, explained, and compared with other contexts?
- How effective is Douglas's typology in accomplishing those tasks?

METHODS

Much of the data collection and analysis for the article (Harris, 1995) occurred prior to my discovering Douglas's (1982) work. For example, from 1989 to 1993, my graduate students and I conducted numerous qualitative studies concerning school culture that used either a grounded theory approach or no particular

formalized theory at all.[1]

In these initial studies, data were gathered through qualitative strategies such as interviews, observations, and document analyses. From each respective school context, the chief informants included teachers, students, central office administrators, and community members. For those original explorations, constant comparison methodology, as outlined in Lincoln and Guba's (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, was used in data analysis.[2]

This foundational research resulted in various narrative case studies that portrayed schools and their dynamic cultures. My discovery of grid and group theory occurred in 1993, after many of these narratives had been written. Douglas's (1982) framework provided a fresh lens to examine those existing data sets and narratives.

Grid and group theory also offered a means to explore new explanations for each research setting and, in general, was useful in revealing and comparing distinct cultural forms. Because data were collected and analyzed prior to my knowledge of Douglas's (1982) typology, the application and exploration of the model's utility in Harris (1995) were a posteriori considerations.

Four fundamental cultural categories constitute Douglas's (1982) typology. As I wrote in my article (Harris, 1995), the criteria describing these categories were used to select four schools from the existing databases. A collection of case studies was chosen that suitably represented Douglas's cultural prototypes. My understanding of grid and group was elementary and developing at the time. Therefore, considerations for classification were somewhat rudimentary and included the following:

- How are rules and role expectations defined?
- How are activities and objectives directed?
- How are values and norms manifested?

Essential classification criteria, grid and group dimensions, as well as Douglas's four prototypes are explained further in the following section.

Description of the Theoretical Framework

Mary Douglas (1982) offered a typology that helps educators meet conceptual and methodological challenges inherent in cultural inquiry and educational practice. Her typology of grid and group is useful, as it

- provides a matrix to classify school contexts;
- draws specific observations about individuals' values, beliefs, and behaviors;
- is designed to take into account the total social environment as well as the interrelationships among school members and their context; and
- explains how constructed contextual meanings are generated and transformed.

The theory helps bring order to experience and provides a common language to explain behaviors and interactions in a school setting. According to the typology, one may find oneself in one of four, and only four, distinctive cultural contexts. Two dynamic dimensions, grid and group, define each of those four prototypes.[3]

THE GRID DIMENSION OF THE STRUCTURAL FRAME

In Douglas's (1982) frame, grid refers to the degree to which an individual's choices are constrained within a social system by imposed prescriptions such as role expectations, rules, and procedures. For instance, in some schools, autonomy is constrained by bureaucratic rules that regulate curriculum, teaching methods, and grading procedures. In other schools, there are nominal regulations, and teachers have freedom of choice in most areas of the teaching and learning process.

Grid can be plotted on a continuum from strong to weak. At the strong end of the grid continuum, roles and rules dominate the environment, and explicit institutional classifications regulate personal interactions and restrain individual autonomy.

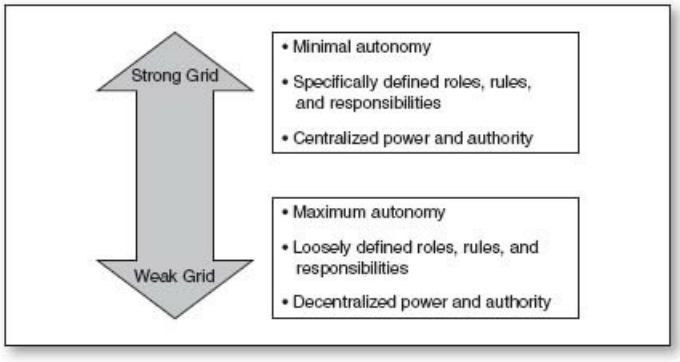
In strong-grid environments, teachers typically do not have the freedom to select their own curricula and textbooks, and many decisions are made at the upper levels of administration. Strong-grid environments also contain many role distinctions at the teaching and staff levels, with proportionately fewer distinctions farther up the organizational ladder. For example, in a classic strong-grid school system, the superintendent is at the pinnacle of a regulated chain of command. Significant power and authority are delegated by the school board to the superintendent. In this regulated chain of command, each layer of authority in the hierarchy has specific communication and job procedures, which insulate it from other layers and positions.

At the weak end of the grid continuum, teachers experience significantly more autonomy in choosing curricula, texts, and methods. In weak-grid schools, roles are achieved rather than ascribed, and individuals are increasingly expected to negotiate their own relationships and professional choices. There are few role distinctions, few institutional rules, and individuals are valued for their skills, behaviors, and abilities. Also, value is placed on individual success in an openly competitive environment. Salient features of grid can be seen in Figure 8.1.

THE GROUP DIMENSION OF THE STRUCTURAL FRAME

Group represents the degree to which people value collective relationships and the extent to which they are committed to the larger social unit. Group deals with the holistic aspect of social incorporation and the extent to which people's lives are absorbed and sustained by corporate membership. Like grid, group has a continuum of strong to weak.

Figure 8.1 The Grid Dimension of School Culture



In strong-group environments, specific membership criteria exist, and explicit pressures influence collective relationships. The survival of the group is more important than the survival of individual members. An extreme case of strong-group strength can be seen in a monastic or communal environment. In such settings, private property is renounced on entering, and cultural members rely on the unit for physical, emotional, and social support. Private schools provide good illustrations of membership criteria with their explicit admission requirements. Many public schools, however, exhibit implicit, de facto criteria for group membership and allegiance through features such as elite neighborhoods and exclusive cliques or gangs. In strong-group environments, the goal of group interaction is to perpetuate the life of and allegiance to the whole school rather than its individual members.

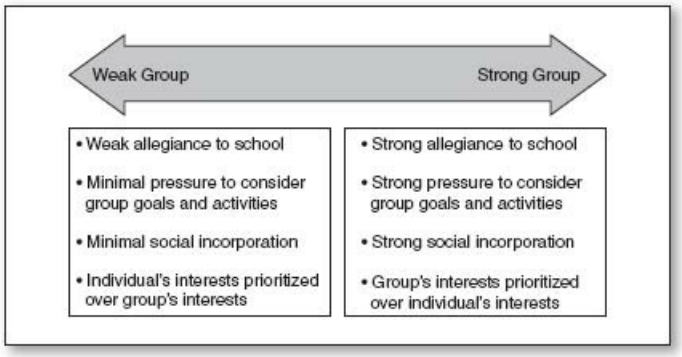
In weak-group environments, the pressure for group-focused activities and relationships is relatively low. Members of social and working subgroups tend to focus on short-term activities rather than long-term corporate objectives, and their allegiance to the larger group fluctuates. When group strength is low, people are neither constrained by nor reliant on a faction of others.

The dynamic forces of grid and group are simultaneously at work in any school setting. Figure 8.2 depicts some pertinent features on the group continuum.

SCHOOLS AS ECOSYSTEMS: FOUR CULTURAL PROTOTYPES

An analogy that illustrates the symbiotic relationship between grid and group is a rain forest.[4] In a rain forest, grid is analogous to the unique "roles" and particular "rules" that govern individual plants, animals, and insects (i.e., the law of the jungle). Group is analogous to the interrelationship and holistic incorporation of these living organisms.

Figure 8.2 The Group Dimension of School Culture



The dynamic interaction among the unique forces of any rain forest constitutes a unique, biological community, which is greater than the sum of its parts. Moreover, there are different categories of rain forests, which are determined by their overall makeup and location. For instance, there are cloud forests, tropical rain forests, subtropical rain forests, and temperate rain forests. Likewise, in the social realm, based on the simultaneous consideration of grid and group, Douglas (1982) identified four distinct prototypes of social environments:

1. Individualist (weak grid and weak group)
2. Bureaucratic (strong grid and weak group)
3. Corporate (strong grid and strong group)
4. Collectivist (weak grid and strong group)

THE FOUR ENVIRONMENTS AND THEIR SOCIAL GAMES

Although the dynamics of human life are highly variable, when grid and group coalesce over time, certain themes and dominant patterns of thought and behavior tend to define a particular setting. These patterns are referred to as prevailing mind-sets or social games, which influence the entire cultural environment.[5] Knowledge of the different social games helps to

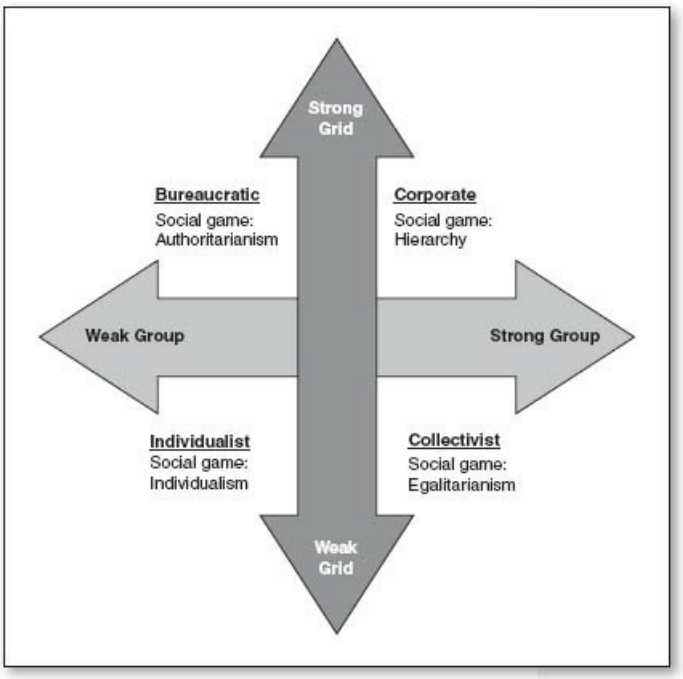
- identify roles and relationships in a school setting,
- understand how those roles and relationships are structured, and
- interpret how and why each member of the school engages in educational activities.

Figure 8.3 categorizes the four social games with their respective grid and group environments.

INDIVIDUALIST (WEAK GRID, WEAK GROUP) ENVIRONMENTS

In individualist environments, the relationships and experiences of the individual are not constrained by imposed formal rules or traditions. Role status and rewards are competitive and are contingent on existing, temporal standards. The emphasis on social distinction among individuals is submerged, there are few insider–outsider screens, and little value is placed on long-term corporate survival. The predominant social game in this environment is "individualism," which encourages members to make the most of individual opportunities, to seek risks that result in personal gain, and to be competitive and proactive in carving their future in life.

Figure 8.3 Types of Social Environments and Their Social Games



BUREAUCRATIC (STRONG GRID, WEAK GROUP) ENVIRONMENTS

Bureaucratic environments offer little individual autonomy. They are often hierarchical, and the classifying criteria focus on factors such as race, gender, family heritage, or ancestry. Individual behavior is fully defined and without ambiguity. Cultural members have meaningful relationships and life-support networks outside the group, and little value is placed on group goals or survival. The social game in this environment is "authoritarianism." Authoritarianism promotes limited opportunity for advancement, compliance with rules and procedures, lack of control of school goals and rewards by teachers, and autocratic rule by administrators.

CORPORATE (STRONG GRID, STRONG GROUP) ENVIRONMENTS

In corporate contexts, social relationships and experiences are influenced by the boundaries maintained by the group against outsiders. Individual identification is heavily derived from group membership. Individual behavior is subject to controls exercised in the name of the group. Roles are hierarchical; at the top of the hierarchy, roles have unique value and power (generally limited to a small number of experts).

There are many role distinctions at the middle and bottom rungs. Perpetuation of traditions and group survival are of utmost importance. The social game valued in this environment is "hierarchy," because the members understand that in a hierarchical system what is good for the corporation is good for the individual. Central office administration, site administration, teachers, students, and parents work in a cohesive, integrated system for the benefit of all involved. All share in the opportunities, risks, and future of the school.

COLLECTIVIST (WEAK GRID, STRONG GROUP) ENVIRONMENTS

Collectivist contexts have few social distinctions. Role status is competitive, yet because of the strong-group influence, rules for status definitions and placement are more stable than in weak-group societies. The

perpetuation of group goals and survival is highly valued. "Egalitarianism" is valued as this environment's social game. Egalitarianism places a high value on unity, equal distribution of teaching supplies and space, suspicion of those outside the school community who may want to help, conformity to the norms of the group, as well as rejection of authoritarian leadership and hierarchy.

Disciplinary Origins of Grid and Group Analysis

Grid and group analysis originated in the field of social anthropology. The social anthropologist Mary Douglas earned a doctorate from Oxford University and conducted her early fieldwork in the Belgian Congo. Her academic career included appointments at Oxford University, University College London, University of London, Northwestern University, Princeton University, and the Russell Sage Foundation, where she served as Director for Research on Culture. She advanced grid and group theory in three major works: the first and second editions of *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (1970, 1973) and *In the Active Voice* (1982).[6]

In *Natural Symbols* (1970), Douglas built on Bernstein's (1964, 1970) work on language codes, social control, and relationships. She used Bernstein's blueprint to hypothesize that individual cosmology, the set of concepts and relationships that bring order to one's world, is largely shaped by one's experience of social control. In the second edition of *Natural Symbols* (1973), she further developed the notion of grid and the role of individual choice in grid and group theory. In her third treatise, *In the Active Voice* (1982), she presented a symbiotic relationship between grid and group, redefines the two concepts, and offered criteria to distinguish and classify social systems.

Discovering Douglas

In the late 1980s, I became interested in the dynamics and potential of school culture. At the time, the concept of school culture was gaining increased attention in a broad range of educational literature and practice. I was intrigued by notions such as cultural leadership, values, and organizational culture, and the interrelationship of these conceptions with school improvement strategies. The more I delved into cultural issues, the more the questions that arose, such as the following:

- What is the interrelationship of school culture and school improvement?
- How can we best comprehend, compare, and contrast variant school cultures?
- Why is school culture important to the educational process?

THREE VIEWS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

In my quest for comprehending the various complexities of school culture, I realized that the field of education, as well as other fields, lacked a clear and consistent definition of the term. Culture was often used interchangeably with a variety of concepts including climate, ethos, and saga (Deal, 1993). Educational literature regarding culture was influenced heavily by anthropology, as well as by popular writings on corporate culture, such as *In Search of Excellence: Lessons From America's Best-Run Companies* (Peters & Waterman,

1988). The concept of culture was, and still is, approached from at least three differing perspectives: (1) holistic, (2) symbolic, and (3) dualistic.[7]

The holistic perspective, as the name implies, is broad and encompassing in its explanation of culture. It proposes that culture should be conceptualized as part of what an organization is rather than what an organization has. That is, schools don't *have* cultures, they *are* cultures.

The symbolic view proposes that schools are social organizations composed of people with a set of shared beliefs, complex rituals and relationships, as well as collective verbal behaviors. Symbols, or manifestations of these behaviors and beliefs, are keys to understanding shared meanings, values, and activities. They are expressions of how people interact and conduct business from day to day. In this approach, school culture is viewed simply as "the way things are done around here" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 4), and things are done through symbols such as

- stories,
- heroes and heroines,
- myths and metaphors,
- rituals and ceremonies,
- facility decor, and
- special language or jargon.

Due to the works of Terrence Deal, Kent Peterson, Allan Kennedy, and others, this approach is popular in many educational circles. It emphasizes that at the heart of any educational environment is a set of shared beliefs and values, which are personified by its heroes and heroines, maintained and reinforced by its rituals and ceremonies, shaped by the school environment, and communicated through the informal network.

A third approach, cultural duality, has roots in both of the above views. Theories that emphasize the duality of culture propose that in any given social context a person's professed knowledge, feelings, beliefs, and values are important, but his or her actions may or may not coincide with those espoused beliefs. Thus, to understand culture, one must divide it into dualistic categories:

1. The espoused beliefs and knowledge of the cultural members
2. The interrelationships and actions of the cultural members

In practical terms, what cultural members espouse and what they actually do in an operational sense can be distinguished, analyzed, and explained. From this perspective, culture is a combination of the ideas or theories that people use collectively and the way they act out those ideas or theories.

CULTURE AS SEEN THROUGH DOUGLAS'S LENS

To a degree, Douglas (1982) utilized principles and ideas from all of the above approaches. I first learned of Douglas's typology of grid and group while critiquing Lingenfelter's (1992) *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission* for the *Criswell Theological Journal* (Harris, 1993). In reviewing Lingenfelter's treatise, I was intrigued by the framework's value in addressing the problems inherent in understanding, explaining, comparing, and contrasting cultures.

In "Toward a Grid and Group Interpretation of School Culture" (Harris, 1995), I explained how Douglas's (1982) typology enables a researcher to meet the conceptual and methodological challenges inherent in cultural inquiry:

> The idealist can use the model to better understand and explain how constructed contextual "meanings are generated, caught, and transformed" (Douglas, 1982, p. 189). The variable culturalist is provided a matrix to classify contexts and draw specific observations about individuals, their value and belief dimensions, and behavioral and symbolic variables manifested in particular environments. One of the model's most beneficial aspects is its holistic, comprehensive nature. It is designed to take into account the total social environment and individual member relationships among each other and their context. (Harris, 1995, p. 619)

Effects of the Theoretical Framework on My Research

As mentioned, I first used Douglas's theoretical framework to explore existing data and case studies generated from previous research (Harris, 1995). Consideration of using Douglas's typology or any theoretical frame in the process was a posteriori.

INITIAL RELUCTANCE

In the original studies, data were organized into emergent themes or codes and constantly revisited after the initial coding, until it was evident that no new themes were emerging. For my article (Harris, 1995), Douglas's (1982) theory provided alternative categories to sort various themes as well as fresh vernacular to explain cultural phenomena. In the article, although I presented direct accounts of informants and data, I selected salient excerpts from the original studies according to Douglas's prototype criteria. Also, data that I deemed superfluous to illustrating grid and group were omitted from the original data sets. A major reason for those omissions was space, as I needed to explain grid and group theory and portray four environments in a space-constrained, article format. Thus, for the construction of the article's (Harris, 1995) final case narratives, emergent topics derived from constant comparison methodology were evaluated by Douglas's (1982) criteria, and descriptive portraits representing each of the four grid and group prototypes were constructed. This a posteriori categorizing and case study construction combined authentic emergent design with the functional structure of preexisting patterns.

My next venture was to utilize and consider grid and group from other vantage points. Initially, I was reluctant to use a theoretical framework in qualitative research. I feared that a priori theory and inductive inquiry might be oxymoronic. I desired neither to commit research heresy nor appear to suffer from paradigm schizophrenia.

Qualitative research asserts distinct paradigmatic assumptions regarding, among other things, the nature of reality, emergent design, transferability of findings, and holistic consideration of cause-and-effect relationships. For instance, qualitative researchers typically reject the notion of linear-sequential, cause-and-effect relationships and embrace the notion that entities are in a continual state of mutual, simultaneous shaping. In qualitative inquiry, distinguishing between the initial cause and the consequent effect is a futile effort. So is it antithetical to use a constant, predictive framework in a research paradigm that asserts multiple constructed realities, time- and context-bound findings, and interrelational causation?

Although grid and group structure allows for a moderate degree of predictability in understanding causal relationships among culture, behavior, and thought patterns, it is not deterministic or linear in its approach to those causes. A central feature of grid and group theory is the symbiotic, mutually supportive relationship between the dimensions of grid and group as well as among the concepts of culture, behavior, and values. Moreover, Douglas (1982) has been careful to say that her theoretical framework does not call for deterministic causation. Notions of free will, choice, subjectivity, and individual worth are interwoven in the fabric of grid and group theory. An example of some of these themes can be seen in Stansberry and Harris (2005), where they explain the interrelationship between instructional technology and culture.

My reluctance to use a theoretical framework waned somewhat as my knowledge increased about grid and group and how Douglas's (1982) typology and qualitative research could be used complementarily. I also discovered a rich history of theory use in social anthropology. Not all social scientists agree, however, on the extent to which theory is valuable in anthropological research. In *The Art of Fieldwork*, Wolcott (1995) provided a balanced discussion of theory and its significance to qualitative research and the social sciences (see pp. 170–190). Although Wolcott clearly expressed caution in overemploying theory in fieldwork, he granted that theory offers strategies for coping with "the dual problem of purpose and generalization" and a means to cope with "the underlying issue tersely summarized in a two-word question always at the tip of some skeptic's tongue: So what?" (p. 189).

In my evolving use of grid and group, the framework allowed me to address the perennial "so what" question and also provided structure and definition to research experiences. Reiterating some of Wolcott's (1995) grounds for appropriate theory use, I explain below the various ways in which grid and group theory has influenced my research. For example, use of Douglas's (1982) typology of grid and group has

- provided convenient labels, categories, and vernacular, which has helped in expressing and comparing cultural phenomena, as well as developing thick description for broader application for single-case studies and transferability issues;
- allowed for the development of a web of inquiry (I prefer to use the term *web of inquiry* rather than *line of inquiry* as "web" connotes networks, interrelationships, and simultaneous shaping), which I can expand on and link to prior research, use to relate my work to the larger body of literature on school culture, and better integrate my teaching, research, and service activities;
- offered a way to gain a broader perspective of cultural research and appreciate school culture in the larger context of social anthropology;
- afforded a means to strengthen research design, better organize and present data, and recognize and convey relevant aspects of my research experience; and
- provided a lens to better perceive and identify my own biases and constructed realities, which I bring to each research experience.

All these factors, and especially the last, have not only enriched my research but also deepened my understanding of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry is a value-bound enterprise. The primary instrument in qualitative inquiry is human; therefore, all data collection and analysis are filtered through the researcher's worldview, values, perspectives, and, yes, theoretical frame(s).

Either consciously or unconsciously, we all carry biases and reality constructions to our research experiences. Theoretical frameworks are examples of specific constructions of reality with definite form and substance. In using grid and group theory, I have tried to be sensitive to biases in the data collection and analysis process, because any construction of reality can blind me to certain aspects of the phenomena under study. I realize that all observations and analyses are filtered through my worldview, values, and perspectives, which are all influenced by my extensive use of the framework.

I have had many students who after using the theory in their dissertation say, "I now see everything through a grid and group lens." This realization is important. When using any theoretical framework, the researcher must understand how biases shape the inquiry and its findings and be open to those areas that may fall outside the purview of the framework's lenses. A theoretical framework, while potentially clarifying, is also imperfect and can be distorting.

As a qualitative researcher, I do not view theory as deterministically predictive. It is simply one construction of reality that might provide order, clarification, and direction to a study. In any qualitative study, the reality construction one brings to the research experience interacts with others' constructions. Therefore, a central task of the researcher is to negotiate through the layers of meaning rather than pigeonholing individuals into particular constructions and categories of a particular framework (Merriam, 2001).

EFFECT ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Using a theoretical frame has also influenced the types of research questions I formulate. Questions addressed in much of my research have been derived from the dilemmas presented in the cultural literature. For instance, although school culture has gained amplified consideration in an expansive range of educational literature and practice, questions still exist regarding how to best understand, explain, and compare cultures.

Teacher leadership, for example, is a topic of interest for many of my students. An overarching question in a qualitative study using grid and group theory to explain teacher leadership might be "What is the interrelationship between school culture and teacher leadership?" Correspondingly, "How is teacher leadership manifested (and/or defined) in various school contexts?" More specifically, a typical set of research questions designed for studying teacher leadership in several schools might look like the following:

- What is the grid and group makeup of each school?
- How is teacher leadership practiced (or defined or manifested) in each school?
- What is the interrelationship of grid and group and teacher leadership?
- How useful is grid and group theory in explaining teacher leadership?

The last research question, or a derivative thereof, is vitally important to research processes. In a qualitative study, a critique of the framework's utility allows the researcher to assess theoretical constructions in light of the themes that were developed. Invariably, if rigor is employed, some phenomena may be addressed and explained directly by the theoretical framework, and some data may fall outside the framework's purview. An appraisal of the framework's usefulness is crucial in explaining a particular study's significance to research, theory, and practice, thereby building on the existing body of literature.

There is little doubt that it is useful to view schools as cultures, and an abundance of definitions attempt to explain the elusive concept. Still, problems exist in explaining how best to improve schools through, or especially in spite of, their cultures. To successfully envision and enhance cultures of learning, certain questions must be examined, such as the following:

- How can educators best comprehend school culture?
- Why is school culture important to the educational process?
- How can educators apply school improvement strategies to their particular and unique school cultures?

These questions have guided much of my research using grid and group analysis. The evolution of my research has recently resulted in a book, *Key Strategies to Improve Schools: How to Apply Them Contextually* (Harris, 2005), dealing with adapting improvement strategies in schools with various grid and group dynamics.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Grid and Group Analysis

In using Douglas's (1982) frame in cultural inquiry, I have found both boundaries and benefits. When I began using grid and group theory, an initial limitation was my lack of anthropological training. Consequently, I conferred with experts in the fields of sociology and anthropology, corresponded extensively with others who use the theory, and embarked on an intense reading program. I realized quickly that I could spend a large part of my career exploring the intricacies and applications of the framework. This realization was not daunting but very stimulating and motivating because it gave direction, focus, and meaning to my work. I had a foundation from which to construct a web of inquiry and integrate various strands of my roles and responsibilities in academe.

I found many practical advantages to using Douglas's (1982) theoretical framework. For instance, grid and group theory offers four finite categories of reference, terminology to express behavioral forms, and a graphic structure to understand inter- and intra-organizational behavior. Once a category is known with some degree of assurance, forms of behavior within each prototype can be anticipated, variance in intra-organizational actions will be reduced, and intercultural comparisons can be made. Various school cultures can be seen as corresponding to a range of ideal types, which is why grid and group theory is useful in broad analyses of school organizations.

Whereas Douglas's (1982) frame is not intended to be the summum bonum of all theoretical constructions, it does provide a helpful lens through which to view human dynamics as well as vernacular to understand, compare, and explain different school cultures. Other benefits particular to theory, research, and practice are discussed below.

THEORY

Douglas's (1982) typology draws on the assertion that culture is a consistent construction of thought and action that is integrated into a unified social system. It allows researchers to view holistically the entire social system of an educational environment. Grid and group dynamics have parallels to other theories with which educators may be familiar. For instance, the Getzels-Guba (Getzels & Guba, 1957) model has been useful in conceptualizing the dynamic interaction of the personal (idiographic) and organizational (nomothetic) dimensions of an open system and has served as a framework for scores of studies. The various versions of systems theory include role theory, sociotechnical theory, and contingency theory (Owens, 2004).

Douglas (1982) offered a complementary addition to social systems' theory base. Not only are grid and group inherent in open systems, but these two coordinates also offer a mutually exclusive continuum of categories for dealing simultaneously with social behaviors in varied contexts. While grid and group theory

requires a similar contextual approach to systems theory, its four classifications also provide a more variegated conception of social life within a particular social system.

Categorizing, however, can also be misleading. For instance, grid and group theory can appear to be rigid in its categorization schemes and counterintuitive to the highly variable dynamics of human life. The boxes that manifest the four types may appear to suggest discrete positions rather than dynamic social interaction. In both theory and practice, however, the dimensions of grid and group are continuous, interactive, and symbiotic.

When explaining a cultural context in terms of grid and group, it is important not to insinuate discrete, static categories or compartmentalize a certain school or person in a quadrant without consideration of variation. Qualitative case studies are time and context bound, and the researcher must realize that, as in any portrait of life, although the description is written to capture a particular moment in time, the actual context is continually changing. Human behavior is dynamic, complex, and extremely difficult, if not impossible, to contain and predict. Thus, the frame is not intended to portray social environments as static or motionless but rather as vigorous and precarious dynamic processes.

Similarly, another caveat in using the theory is attempting to overclassify a system or unit of analysis. That is, while it is theoretically correct to say, "I work in a collectivist environment," this does not imply that one works in a group composed exclusively of collectivists.

Grid and group proponents are quick to mention that almost all social systems incorporate all four prototypes of social games, but not necessarily in equal proportions. Whereas an environment likely has a predominant social game, it also incorporates three other social games in complementary and/or antagonistic relationship with one another.

In my preliminary and rudimentary understanding of Douglas's (1982) method, I thought that it worked best in explaining hierarchical situations. As my understanding has evolved, however, I have discovered that it also has comparable utility in theoretically reflecting situations where hierarchy is absent. I have found that grid and group theory, while not a cure for all theoretical problems, works very well in reflecting and portraying a comprehensive and complex sequence of social conditions.

RESEARCH

In using a theoretical frame, one must be consciously aware of when and how the frame makes its entry into the research process. Wolcott (1995) referred to this as choosing between "theory first" or "theory later" (p. 187). He advised that the best use of theory is near the conclusion of a study, "where a self-conscious but genuine search for theoretical implications and links begins rather than ends" (p. 187).

While there is merit in this advice, I also recognize that data collection and analysis are very interactive and inclusive processes. Making sense of data occurs at the very beginning of data collection and continues throughout the study to facilitate the emergent design and developing structure. Whether one chooses "theory first" or "theory later," one must allow the framework to guide and inform, rather than determine and force, the emerging research design and process.

I have used grid and group analysis in a priori (i.e., "theory first") and a posteriori (i.e., "theory later") modes and also as a guide in theory construction. As mentioned, my first application of the model was a

posteriori. The research for my dissertation was completed in 1990. Since I knew nothing of grid and group, I depended heavily on the cultural literature popular at the time, especially the works of Deal and Kennedy (1982), Deal and Peterson (1990), Goodlad (1984), Lightfoot (1983), and Schein (1985).

When I subsequently discovered the typology, I directly incorporated grid and group language to express prior research findings. For example, some of Douglas's (1982) criteria for grid (e.g., autonomy, role, and rewards) and for group (e.g., group allegiance and social incorporation) were useful in distinguishing particular aspects and explaining past research findings. I was able to expand on thick descriptions with a new vocabulary. For instance, the Jewish day school was not just a school with many role distinctions and a good deal of community support, it was a "strong-grid/strong-group" environment, which emphasized "achieved" rather than "ascribed" role status, where roles were "hierarchical" and "social incorporation" was strong.

Grid and group analysis has been fruitful not only for me but for a number of researchers. Research areas where others have incorporated the theoretical frame include interpretation of environmentalism (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982), risk perceptions (Rayner, 1984; Wildavsky & Dake, 1990), religious communities (Carter, 2002; Lingenfelter, 1992), technology policy (Schwarz & Thompson, 1990), high-tech firms (Caulkins, 1999), work cultures (Mars & Nicod, 1983), career expectations (Hendry, 1999), and higher education (Lingenfelter, 1992).

Another valuable use of the theory is in understanding the evolving notions of space, place, and time. Much like the Industrial Revolution altered societal conceptions of space, place, and time, the modern Information Revolution is also changing these life-shaping factors. More than a century ago, classical models such as scientific management, bureaucracy theories, and their spinoffs were designed to ensure time and motion efficiency, divisions of labor, and very tangible workspace structures. In today's schools, we still see these factory-based remnants in the form of bells that signal start–stop times and breaks, production-line desk and classroom arrangements, as well as subject area divisions and teacher specializations.

However, while these mind-sets continue to influence educational policy and practice, new manifestations of place, space, and time are emerging. In education for instance, web space, virtual classrooms, online learning communities, asynchronous learning, and an array of distance educational opportunities are replacing traditional, more tangible conceptions of space, place, and time. Yet many of the frameworks used to address these issues are derived from real-time, real-space theoretical orientations. Douglas's typology adds insight to these shifting conceptions of place, space and time. According to Douglas (1982), all labor patterns and social relationships "take place in a spatial dimension," whether implicit or explicit, and "the organization of space lends itself to microcosm/macrocosmic effects" (p. 214).

To illustrate this, researchers have demonstrated the theory's usefulness, either wholly or partially, to clarify a broad range of social constructions of space, place, and time, from understanding traditional educational organizations (Stansberry & Harris, 2005), to explaining virtual space and online learning communities (Case, 2010), to even describing ethereal and elusive constructions of sacred space, place, and time (Moore, 2004).

PRACTICE

The implications for practice follow closely on those of theory and research. Grid and group analysis is

valuable to practicing educators as it draws specific application about the value and belief dimensions of their specific context. I have found that many practicing educators identify with the way the theoretical framework explains how roles and institutional pressures constrain or confer individual autonomy and how collective participation is deemed either essential or marginal to effective work in schools.

Key Strategies to Improve Schools: How to Apply Them Contextually (Harris, 2005) is designed to help practicing educators understand the grid and group makeup of their particular school in order to employ specific school improvement strategies. Those in the day-to-day world of schooling can see that, although the dynamics of human life are highly variable, when grid and group coalesce over time, certain themes and dominant patterns of practice tend to define a particular setting. The structure and vernacular inherent in grid and group theory help educators recognize and clarify the dissonance and complexity of everyday life in educational settings.

Utilization of Another Theoretical Framework

I have considered and used one other framework in my research, Wallace's (1970, 1979) typology for revitalization movements. The anthropologist and historian Anthony Wallace (1956) developed a structure for understanding the stages of acculturation under the influence of technological change. Wallace describes these stages in terms of cultural revitalization. A revitalization movement is a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a group to create a new culture" (p. 265).

These movements are reactionary and often begin with discontented cultural members, because traditional institutions are unable to adapt and respond to social changes. The process stages of a revitalization movement are as follows:

1. Steady state
2. Period of increased individual stress
3. Period of cultural distortion
4. Period of revitalization
    a. Mazeway (worldview) reformulation
    b. Communication
    c. Organization
    d. Adaptation
    e. Cultural transformation
    f. Routinization
5. New steady state

I have used Wallace's (1956) frame in two research endeavors. The first applied his concepts of revitalization movements to the evolving field of educational administration (Burlingame & Harris, 1998). The purpose was to demonstrate how Wallace's revitalization movement is a better frame than Kuhn's (1962) notion of paradigm shift, which is often used to explain the cultural changes in educational administration during the past century. In that article, we made reference to the fact that Douglas's (1982) typology could also add significant insight into how pressures influenced evolutionary transformations in leadership thought over the past 100 years.

The second undertaking explained technology adaptation in variant organizational cultures (Stansberry, Haulmark, & Harris, 2001). The twofold purpose was to demonstrate complementariness between Douglas's typology and Wallace's stages, as well as to reinforce Wallace's stages by analyzing them according to grid and group dimensions.

In Stansberry et al. (2001), we used both Douglas's (1982) framework and Wallace's (1956) stages. The dual employment of the frameworks allowed us to detail the stages of technology adaptation as well as explore the social barriers and pressures that affected those stages. Moreover, Douglas offered a means to compare and contrast significant features of the environments through the process of each cultural stage.

Free Response

Social anthropology, the study of human beings, their group relationships, and cultural forms, is where educators first borrowed conceptualizations to explain school culture. Schools are social organizations, dynamic organisms whose effectiveness is often influenced by cultural forms. Douglas's (1982) theoretical framework has deepened my understanding of and helped explain the complexities of human dynamics.

As mentioned, when I discovered Douglas's typology, I was reluctant to extensively use the framework. To my knowledge at the time, theoretical frameworks were utilized predominantly in quantitative, not qualitative, studies. The rage in qualitative research was grounded, ex post facto theory, not a priori theory.

Grounded theory is still an important feature of qualitative inquiry. Many novice researchers desiring to use qualitative methodology, however, lack the experience and preparation necessary to erect theoretical constructions from the ground up and are unfamiliar with the complexities of ex post facto theory development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND METAPHOR

Theoretical frameworks help shape and direct a study as well as offer means to build on and link a study to the broader body of literature. Morgan (1997) offered a useful comparison of theory with the notion of metaphor. Metaphor is used to understand one frame of reference with another. For instance, when we say, "He is as strong as a bull," we relate the muscular characteristics of a bull to those of a person. This relational comparison offers both insight and distortion. The bull metaphor evokes images of strength, power, and robustness. Metaphor, however, can also distort the fact that the person may possibly also be slothful or overweight. To carry the idea further, to say "He is bullheaded" suggests a new meaning altogether. Like theory, metaphor evokes ways of thinking and seeing that shape our perceptions of reality.

Morgan's (1997) theory as a metaphor premise has important implications for qualitative researchers. Theoretical frames, like metaphors, can offer valuable insight to a study and, at the same time, be restrictive, biased, and potentially misleading. In this sense, a theoretical frame is inherently paradoxical. In reference to similar paradoxical aspects of metaphor, Morgan (1997) explained, "It can create powerful insights that also become distortions, as the way of seeing created through a metaphor becomes a way of not seeing" (p. 5).

Also implied in the theory–metaphor assertion is that no single theoretical framework will ever offer a flawlessly clear view of any studied phenomena. A theoretical frame will not only highlight certain

interpretations but also force other interpretations into the background. Nonetheless, qualitative researchers should not be dissuaded from using theory. Rather, as Morgan (1997) further elaborated on metaphor, "The challenge is to be skilled in the art of using metaphor: to find fresh ways of seeing, understanding, and shaping situations that we want to organize or manage" (p. 6).

Theoretical frameworks can be extremely helpful. In qualitative inquiry, the consideration should not be whether or not to use a theoretical frame but rather, as Wolcott (1995) reminded us, how and when theory can be best utilized in a study.

FOCUSING ON ONE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the seminary I attended, I often heard the adage "Deepen your message before broadening your ministry." I have found this advice to be beneficial in many areas of life, including academe. To improve and deepen my research, teaching, and service activities, I have explored and employed one primary theoretical frame. Douglas's (1982) typology has become the lens, the organizing system through which I view school culture as well as prioritize and integrate all aspects of work. It has allowed me to, in essence, deepen my message as well as offer language to communicate that message to a broad audience.

I have been, and continue to be, both student and teacher of grid and group typology. Many topics, such as teachers' voice, shared decision making, site-based management, and technology adaptation in educational systems, have been explained via grid and group vernacular. For instance, cultural theory has been useful in seeking explanations to problems concerning

- why some educational practices are successful in some contexts and not successful in others, and
- how faculty and administrators from various educational environments can attend the exact same seminars and workshops and yet return to their respective settings and apply interventions in widely variant ways.

Many courses I teach deal with some aspect of organizational theory, leadership, or qualitative research methods. I integrate grid and group in course content in a variety of ways, such as

- demonstrating the interrelationship of situational leadership and an environment's grid and group composition,
- allowing students to critique either work I have done in the area of cultural theory or an idea that could affect leadership practice,
- comparing Douglas's (1982) concepts with classical organizational theory or systems theory, and
- expanding the notion of theory use in qualitative research.

My service and consulting activities include many of Douglas's (1982) concepts, especially

- comparing an organization's grid and group composition with individual members' social game,
- emphasizing the contextualization of school improvement strategies, and
- demonstrating how variant grid and group orientations can result in conflict in educational settings.

I am, as all educators are, in the business of making sense of things. Douglas's (1982) typology of grid and group has given me direction, structure, and a holistic, integrated sense of my research teaching and service activities. It has helped me see how concepts and actions make sense and sometimes "fit together."

I realize, however, that this notion of "fitting together" can also be a pitfall. We cannot always

comprehend how all the variables correlate. A qualitative researcher learns to live with a certain degree of ambiguity in his or her research endeavors. Grid and group theory functions as a useful guide to inform and clarify, not determine and coerce. In using Douglas's (1982) theoretical frame, I strive continually to make the crucial distinction between understanding how some things might fit and insisting that everything does fit in the theoretical frame.

Although my focus has been primarily on one typology, I realize that no single theoretical framework offers a flawless, universal view of the world. If a perfect framework did exist, my own biases, imperfections, and reality constructions would distort the research process anyway.

Notes

1. In those studies, specific research topics included decentralization, shared leadership, teachers' voice, instructional technology adaptation, inclusion, application of school improvement strategies, and other areas dealing with school leadership. A central, twofold assumption in all these studies is that organizational culture exerts a powerful force on its members and activities and that understanding an environment's interconnected roles, rules, and relationships requires a framework that considers and explains the pressures and dynamics of culture.
2. In *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry* (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993), we detail the methodological steps of selected case studies.
3. In Douglas's (1982) treatise, a fifth alternative, "the hermit," is presented. Hermits live out the social game of total self-reliance and separation from all group interaction (i.e., zero grid, zero group). Thus far, I have not used this category in research, as my unit of analysis is typically school organizations rather than individuals per se. For an understanding of the hermit lifestyle in grid and group theory, I direct the reader to Ellis's (1993) *American Political Cultures* and Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky's (1990) *Cultural Theory*.
4. In *Key Strategies to Improve Schools: How to Apply Them Contextually* (2005), I also use sports illustrations to explain the variant social classification inherent in grid and group analysis.
5. I use the terms *prevailing mind-set* and *social game* interchangeably. Both refer to Douglas's important notion of "cultural bias," which concerns interpreting and judging phenomena in terms particular to one's own culture. People of a culture tend to make assumptions about conventions, including conventions of language, dress, customs, and other cultural symbols. Often they can mistake these notions for universal norms or laws of nature. Social games are much more than games or parts in a play. They reflect a particular bias that we have about the right way to live our collective life. Lingenfelter (1992) offered an expanded explanation of the term *social games*, which is, in part, given below:

> Each of the social games has far reaching implications for our life and worldview. . . . The structure of a social game leads participants to adopt a related set of assumptions and values that are elaborated in their worldview. . . . Each social game has a peculiar cultural bias, and only one bias can be right. (p. 35)

6. I offer a detailed discussion of the evolution of Douglas's theory in "Toward a Grid and Group Interpretation of School Culture" (Harris, 1995). For further reading on the subject, I direct the reader to Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky (1990), Gross and Rayner (1985), Lingenfelter (1992), and Spikard (1989).

7. I detail and evaluate these three approaches in both the publications cited (Harris, 1995, 2005). Culture can be explained from a variety of vantage points. The reader may obtain further insight from the following works: Marshall Sashkin and Herbert Walberg's (1993) *Educational Leadership and School Culture*; Tomoko Hamada and Willis Sibley's (1993) *Anthropological Perspectives on Organizational Culture*; Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's (2003) *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*; and Sonja Sackmann's (1991) *Cultural Knowledge in Organizations: Exploring the Collective Mind*. Sackmann explains cultural perspectives in terms of (1) holistic, (2) variable, and (3) cognitive. She also reminds the reader that "the boundaries between these three perspectives are not completely clear-cut. Overlaps exist"(p. 18), and application depends heavily on the purpose and context.

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9

Adapting Bourdieu's Field Theory to Explain Decision-Making Processes in Educational Policy

Carol A. Mutch

In this chapter, the elements of social field, capital and habitus, drawn from the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, provide a framework for making sense of educational policy making. The main study described in this chapter (Mutch, 2004) needed a framework that highlighted the contested nature of educational policy making. I found that the explanatory power of the social field model allowed me to visualize the process and the policy elites at work (detailed in Mutch, 2006). From my visualization, I could capture the complexity and fluidity in diagrammatic form as a snapshot in time. The chapter also outlines the way that theory has come to permeate my research and thinking to the point where I constantly visualize settings, from everyday encounters to complex power plays in terms of capital and habitus.

Mutch, C. (2004). Curriculum construction as a social field: Mapping the process of the development of the New Zealand social studies curriculum. *Curriculum Perspectives, 24*(3), 22–33.

Overview of the Study: Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum

The main study I will describe (Mutch, 2004a) focuses on the writing of the highly controversial 1997 social studies document *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum*. In this study, I was able to supplement historical research and document analysis with a series of semistructured interviews with curriculum writers, advisers appointed by a council of ministers, reference groups, and social studies educators, all involved in the development process. My aim was to document the path that this document took before it reached completion. This particular curriculum development was highly convoluted and contested. The document was fully rewritten three times before all parties were satisfied. I saw that this development was of interest not only to the New Zealand educational community but also to scholars interested in the wider issues of curriculum development. The social field model allowed me to express the themes of my study—context, complexity, and contestation—in a vivid manner. I reconfigured the idea of a social field as a model of "curriculum construction as a social field" and developed a diagrammatic representation in which the players were portrayed along a "line of tension," vying for control over the object of the process—in this case, determining the contents of the social studies curriculum.

Briefly (a detailed explanation is provided in the next section), a "social field" needs to have clearly delineated boundaries. Each setting of the field in this study has a temporal boundary, a particular purpose to be achieved in that time frame, and a recognizable set of players. Players use "capital" to gain access to and position themselves on the field.[1] "Habitus" determines the rules by which the game is played and the way players communicate and interact. The time frame for the first setting—the writing of the first version of

Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1994)—was from late 1993 until late 1995. The purpose was to prepare a new social studies curriculum for the compulsory schooling sector in New Zealand, and the players included those who set, monitored, completed, and evaluated the task. The second setting of this field occurred in 1996 (Ministry of Education, 1996). The task this time was to revise the newly published curriculum, and the players had similar roles, but the field included new individuals holding those roles. The final setting was 1997 (Ministry of Education, 1997)—the task to prepare a version of the social studies curriculum that would meet favor with both sides of the hotly contested debate. Again, there were similar roles but changed membership. The external forces at work were historical, political, economic, and social. The notion of curriculum presage (Print, 1993) highlights the personal, professional, and wider social and political influences that shape the thoughts and actions of curriculum developers. For example, the writers of the first version were influenced by a range of historical forces—New Zealand's liberal progressive educational history, prior processes of curriculum development, and the legacy of influential educationalists. In more recent history (since 1984, in particular), there has been a strong economically driven political influence over curriculum decision making. In the New Zealand context, the treasury produced lengthy briefing papers for governments in the 1980s, giving their suggestions for improving educational outcomes and efficiencies. Socially and culturally, the writers—especially of the first (Ministry of Education, 1994) and final (Ministry of Education, 1997) versions—were influenced by their responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi (the recognition of Maori, the indigenous people, as equal partners), their awareness of the growing multicultural population, the importance of gender issues in education, and their commitment to the need for equal educational opportunities and outcomes for all sectors of society.

On the field, the major groups vied for control over the curriculum content. The Ministry of Education, reporting to the politically appointed minister of education, was one powerful group. Educational institutions and organizations of varying kinds were also influential groups—but often with widely divergent factions. Smaller players included the various social and political lobby groups, the strongest at this time being the Business Roundtable. The major line of tension was political—between the supporters of the new right's economic policies and those opposing this ideology, described in this study as the liberal left.

VERSION 1: *SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM* (DRAFT)

In 1993, the Ministry of Education called together a Policy Advisory Group (PAG) to set the parameters for the development of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1994). Two conveners were then appointed to set up a writing team.

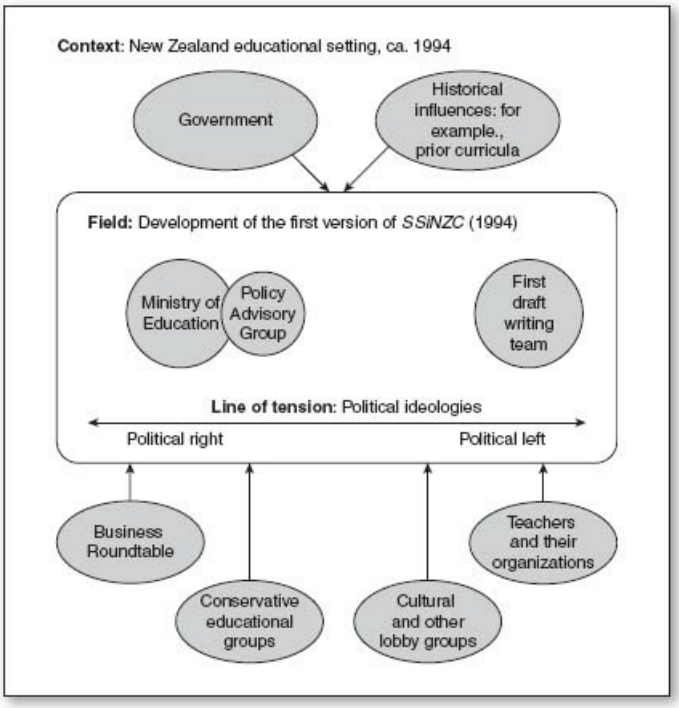
At this point, the notions of field, capital, and habitus allow important aspects to be elaborated on. Who was granted entry to the field and why? Which ideological positions were favored and why? Who was excluded and why? What particular capital did members bring, and how was this valued? Once the field was set, how was consensus achieved, and what factors kept dissension at bay? What forces from outside this microfield influenced what happened within?

Figure 9.1 shows, by placement of the main players, that the main line of tension was between the Ministry of Education and the writers. The ministry wished to prepare a curriculum that would meet the needs of all sectors of society but, in particular, would be in line with the pervasive ideology that focused on

improving New Zealand's economic competitiveness. The writing team, on the other hand, represented the other end of the ideological continuum, coming from liberal-progressive, feminist, critical, postcolonial, and postmodern theoretical perspectives.

Personnel within the ministry began as the most powerful group. They selected the PAG and the successful proposal team. Control over the framing of the communication resided with the ministry. Every working draft was reviewed by the ministry's Contract Review Committee and the PAG. Members of the first version writing team proved to be equally powerful, however, in promoting the version of social studies closest to their views of current New Zealand society and best practice in social studies pedagogy. The writing team conveners took great care to select a writing team that was culturally inclusive, gender inclusive, and representative of location, discipline, and sector. Entry to the field was granted, therefore, to people who met these inclusive criteria. Capital included attributes such as actual classroom experience, expertise in a relevant area, research in related fields, and the ability to work on a team, and particular value was placed on knowledge of Maori culture and protocol.

Figure 9.1 Setting of the Field for the Writing of the First Version of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (*SSiNZC*; Ministry of Education, 1994)



SOURCE: *SSiNZC*; Ministry of Education, 1994.

VERSION 2: *SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM* (REVISED DRAFT)

After extensive trials in schools, public submissions, and media debate, this second version of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996) was withdrawn. There were strong critiques from conservative and business groups. In terms of framing the communication, the ministry regained control, directing all feedback on the document to be forwarded to them to be analyzed by their appointee. In response to the feedback, the ministry appointed a single writer to amend the first draft. Again, field theory helps

describe how the field came to be set differently, how the power balance had altered, why the consultative and collaborative model was discarded, and the capital that was most highly valued in the new setting. In this setting of the field (see Figure 9.2), we can see that the ministry is still powerful but the new writer has entered the field. The original writers have, however, been marginalized, and the PAG has minimal influence.

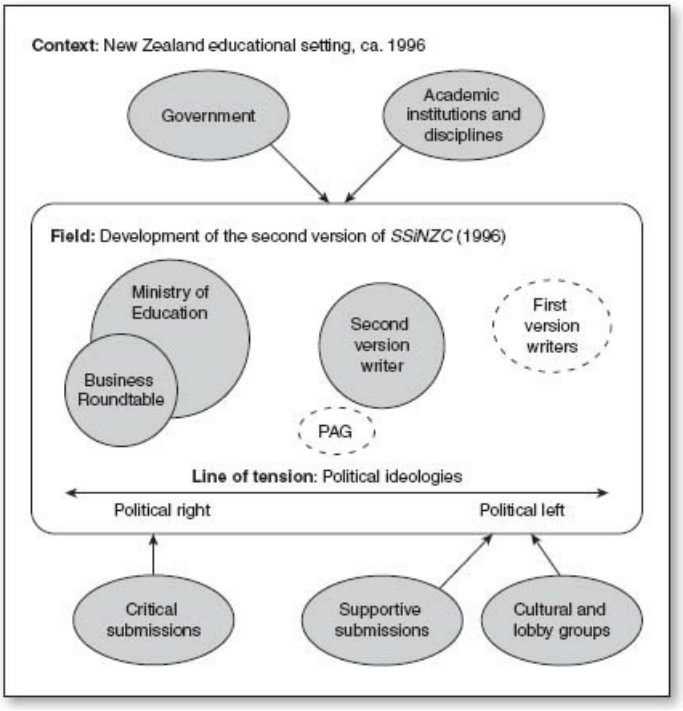
The newly commissioned writer was, at that time, an educational consultant who brought capital such as her considerable experience in curriculum development and was seen by the ministry as being able to provide an objective stance in relation to the revision process. As a newcomer to the setting of the field, she was not bound by the habitus of the previous writing team and could, therefore, set up her own procedures and consultation process. The Business Roundtable also entered the field of play. Their education watchdog group, the Education Forum, ran a highly visible campaign to discredit the first version of the curriculum. As stated earlier, the first version (Ministry of Education, 1994) writing team and the PAG were sidelined.

The publication of the second version released a backlash of criticism, most notable of which was a well-known social studies educator taking a case to the Race Relations Conciliator on the grounds that the second version was racist in its portrayal of Maori history and culture.

VERSION 3: *SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM* (FINAL)

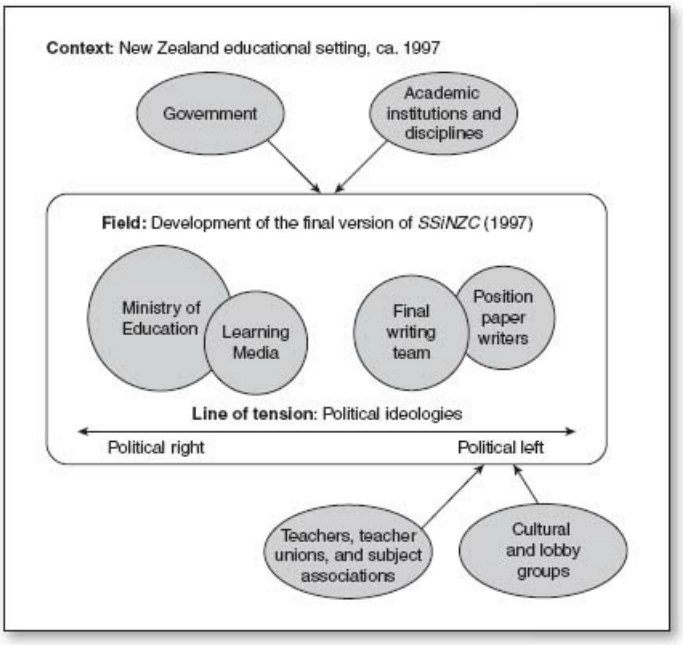
As outlined earlier, the second version of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996) was not to be the last. This time there was more dissatisfaction from the liberal left (especially teachers; teacher unions; subject associations, such as the Federation of Social Studies Associations; and the more liberal-minded academics). Members of the Business Roundtable, however, were still not content—they wanted social studies removed from the curriculum altogether. The Ministry of Education convened a third writing team. The version this team compiled was to become the final one (Ministry of Education, 1997). How does field theory help us interpret this new setting of the field? What capital was valued this time? What was the habitus of the new group? Who was included, and who was excluded, and why? Figure 9.3 shows the changes in field placement.

Figure 9.2 Setting of the Field for the Writing of the Second Version of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (*SSiNZC*; Ministry of Education, 1996)



SOURCE: *SSiNZC*; Ministry of Education, 1996. NOTE: PAG = Policy Advisory Group.

Figure 9.3 Setting of the Field for the Writing of the Final Version of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (*SSiNZC*; Ministry of Education, 1997).



SOURCE: *SSiNZC*; Ministry of Education, 1997.

The capital that the next writing team brought was that most of them had been involved in the first version (Ministry of Education, 1994) or the later consultation; that is, they were knowledgeable about social studies, and they understood the nature of the task. They also provided broader representation in the way that had been so highly valued in the composition of the first writing team. The habitus of the new team came,

therefore, to mirror that of the first version writing team.

The internal and external influences have changed in this setting of the field. Teachers' voices are stronger, and the Business Roundtable has been removed, but the ministry's publications branch, Learning Media, which attempted to exercise editorial control over both the content and the format, has appeared. In the end, however, the writers claimed victory over the framing of the communication and control over the object of the task—determining the content and format of the social studies curriculum.

The Theoretical Framework: Bourdieu's Social Field Theory

The model of a social field, as I have used and adapted it over the years, is synthesized from a selection of theoretical literature. The notions of a social field, capital, and habitus are taken from Bourdieu (1990, 1993, 1999; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The notion of framing is taken from Bernstein (1971, 2000). I have also, at times, used the notions of "insiders" and "outsiders," from Lave and Wenger (1991), and discourse (e.g., from Foucault, 1981). The idea of using Bourdieu's notions of field, capital, and habitus in relation to educational policy is taken from Ladwig (1994), but I have extended this notion of the social field and adapted and refined Bourdieu's notions, in particular, to explicitly delineate positions and actions within this field.

A "social field" is similar to a field of play. Bourdieu, in fact, describes habitus as "what in sport one calls a feel for the game" (cited in Earle, 1999, p. 185), and Bouveresse (1999) calls it "le sens du jeu," so this analogy is not inappropriate. Bourdieu (1993), describing it as game and the participants as players, writes,

> The new players have to pay an entry fee which consists in recognition of the value of the game (selection and co-option always pay great attention to the indices of commitment to the game, investment in it) and in (practical) knowledge of the principles of the functioning of the game. (p. 74)

The field is a common ground on which the action occurs, and this ground has boundaries where entry is blocked by existing holders of power. Within the field, players have positions that have both roles to be enacted and a status carried with them. These positions, however, can be challenged at any time. There is a network of negotiated actions and relations between positions, and the players (be they individuals or institutions) vie for possession of, or influence over, the object at stake (e.g., control of educational policy making or curriculum content). How the players are invited to participate, or allowed access, embodies the notion of "capital." This capital is specific to the field and could be social, political, economic, cultural, or symbolic. Who has what capital, and in what amounts, sets up the hierarchically distributed power structure. As Bourdieu (1993) explains,

> The structure of the field is a state of the power relations among the agents or institutions engaged in the struggle, or, to put it another way, a state of the distribution of the specific capital which has been accumulated in the course of previous struggles and which orients subsequent strategies. (p. 73)

Habitus is a set of dispositions that are commonly held by members of a social group, and these subjectively created attitudes, beliefs, and practices bind the members together so that they can identify and communicate with each other. It also allows them to recognize, and be recognized by, outsiders. As Bourdieu

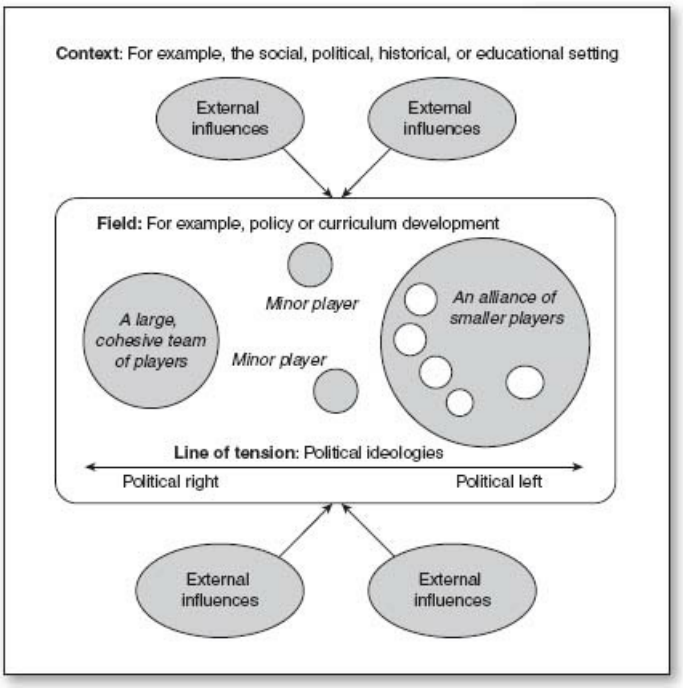
(1990) explains, "Habitus is an infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions, and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" (p. 55). Similarities can be seen between Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, and habitus and those of Bernstein (1971, 2000), who refers to the pedagogical relationship in similar terms. He talks of the places in which action takes place as sites that are identifiable by their distinct boundaries and practices. He also talks of the frame of the relationship. This determines the selection, organization, timing, pacing, and direction of the transmission of information. "Framing is about *who* controls *what*. . . . Framing is concerned with *how* meanings are to be put together, the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it" (2000, p. 12). The elements of my adaptation of the model of a social field (see Figure 9.4) are as follows:

- The social field model is used to portray the complex, contextual, and contested interactions at a particular time or during a particular process—for example, in the realms of educational policy or curriculum construction.
- A social field can operate at a macrolevel (e.g., in national and international contexts) or at a microlevel (within a particular group or setting), and there will be overt and covert links to wider social contexts and related fields.
- The field sits within a context. The context needs to be adequately described. What are the historical, social, cultural, political, or economic factors that have led to this setting of the field?
- The field also needs to be clearly described. What are its boundaries? Who is allowed access? Who determines who has access? What is the capital that the players bring? How does this allow them entry to or position them on the field?
- The reason for the field's creation needs to be explained. What is the purpose that brings this setting of the field into being? What is expressed as being "at stake" both explicitly and implicitly?
- How the field operates also needs explanation. What is its "habitus"? How are rules made? How are decisions made? How are conflicts handled?
- The positioning of the players on the field needs to be described. How do they position themselves in relation to one another? Where are the alliances? Who are the players (or factions) in the stronger or weaker positions? How might these positions change? How might these positions be displayed along a continuum or line of tension?

My Introduction to the Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu's field theory comes from the discipline of sociology, and Bourdieu himself was chair of sociology at the Collège de France, although he is often considered to have been a philosopher (see, e.g., Shusterman, 1999). I took sociology in my undergraduate degree in the early 1970s and became familiar with the work of Durkheim and Weber and with terms such as *culture, society*, and *role*. Later as a schoolteacher, I eagerly embraced the 1977 New Zealand social studies curriculum, which was strongly influenced by the "new social studies" movement in the United States (especially Bruner, 1971, *Man: A* Course *of Study*; Taba, Durkin, Fraenkel, & McNaughton, 1971). In the United Kingdom, the work of Lawton, Campbell, and Burkett (1971) was influential. I taught the themes of cultural difference, interaction, social control, and social change. In the 1980s, my career path turned from being a teacher to being a teacher educator.

Figure 9.4 A Generic Diagram of a Social Field



As I upgraded my qualifications, I was introduced to critical theory, with its emphasis on who gains and holds power in social and political interactions and how this is used to advantage some groups and disadvantage others. As I was teaching social studies education, it seemed logical that I should review these theoretical concepts and their relevance to the development of the social studies curriculum. I first encountered Bourdieu's theory in 1996, when conducting historical research into the early development of the New Zealand curriculum, and social studies in particular (see Mutch, 1998). I was looking for a theoretical explanation for the tensions within society that seemed to pull education in conflicting directions. A colleague gave me a copy of an article by James Ladwig (1994), an Australian educational researcher, in which he proposed a model of "educational policy as a social field" based on Bourdieu's notion of a social or cultural field. Ladwig claimed that the educational reforms of the 1980s revealed the maturation of educational policy as a social field with its own autonomy and rewards. I read and pondered how this might relate to my study. I went on to read some of Bourdieu's work in more detail (e.g., Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and then experimented with these ideas by representing the "field" two dimensionally and the groups on it diagrammatically. In my initial study, field theory allowed me to show how groups placed themselves on the field in relation to each other and how this changed over time. I could then theorize around the changing fortunes of the various groups and the factors that influenced these changes.

The first study I undertook using this model as an analytic framework (Mutch, 1998) examined educational decision making in the early days of New Zealand's formal education system (1814–1877). As this was my first attempt at using a visual portrayal of the model, I had not yet developed it as thoroughly as in the explanation earlier in this chapter, but the two settings of the social field in this study showed clearly how the power and influence of particular groups changed over time and, in this particular case, how the number of players and the complexity of their interactions also increased over time.

My next piece of historical research (Mutch, 2000) looked at particular developments in social studies and used the development of the 1977 social studies syllabus as a case study of how individuals within a curriculum

writing team similarly positioned themselves and sought to bring their own agendas to the fore. This study (Mutch, 2000) drew mainly on a report by Jim Lewis (1980) and focused on a social field at a microlevel. Lewis was a key participant in the writing of the 1977 social studies syllabus (Department of Education, 1977). His knowledge of the participants, their roles, their influence (and the factors that had influenced them), and the lines of communication and interaction provided an illuminating insight into the inner workings of the group. Exploring the social field at a microlevel highlighted the hierarchical distribution of people within a narrower context. It also showed more clearly the outside influences, an idea I was to explore more fully in later research.

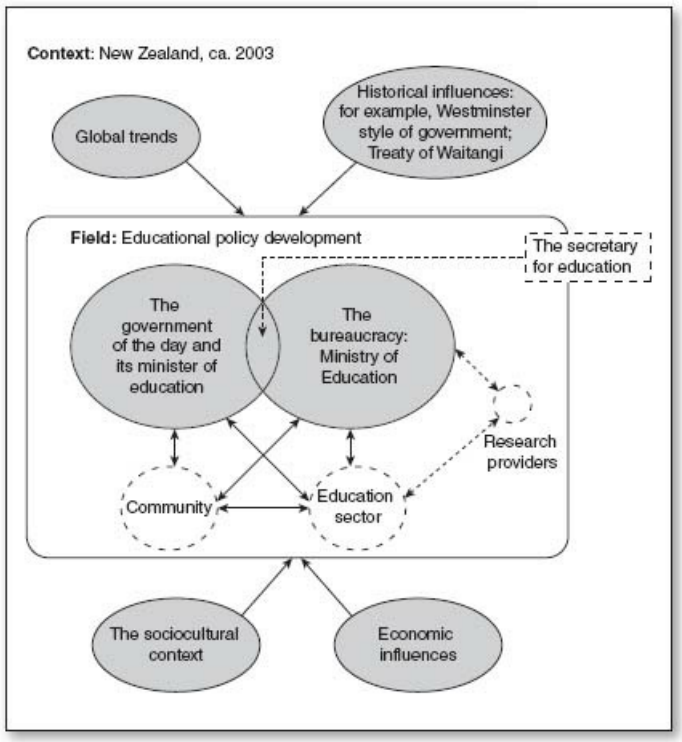
Effects of the Framework on the Research I Undertook

More recent research by me (Mutch, 2004b, 2006) has moved away from social studies education back to educational policy making in a more general sense but in contemporary settings. As part of a wider international comparative study of educational policymakers and their conceptions of education for the future, I interviewed elite policymakers in New Zealand. In this case, I did not attempt to find alternative models, as I knew that the social field model would be adaptable for my purposes, and indeed, the project was conceived and the interview questions framed with such an analysis in mind. The interview questions referred to concepts such as power, influence, and control. In this case, when conducting the analysis, I returned to the earlier "educational policy as a social field" form and portrayed the findings without a line of tension. Outlining the study here shows how the concepts of social field, capital, and habitus were brought to the fore all the way through the project. The context for this study was temporally located in New Zealand in 2003, the year the interviews were conducted. Influences from outside include the effects of the prior decades of educational reforms and the influence that these reforms are still having nationally and worldwide.

In this research, the government of the day was politically center-left. In the field diagram (see Figure 9.5), the government is shown alongside the Ministry of Education (its bureaucratic machine) as the key policymakers, with the secretary for education as the intersection between the two organizations. The other stakeholders in the process—the community and the education sector—are shown as broken lines to represent the fact that they are loose amalgamations of various groups, whose members are sometimes at odds with each other. Research providers are shown as an emerging group that the policymakers saw as becoming a more integral part of the process.

In terms of the capital that granted access to the field at the time, the government had access, and pole position, due to the public mandate that it had through democratic elections. The personnel at the ministry were granted access to the field as they were employed as public servants to carry out the government's wishes, but at the same time, they were able to exert some influence of their own. The community was entitled to a say because it had elected the government. The education sector's relationship to policy making was by virtue of the expectation that it would be the day-to-day implementer of the policy. The research organizations gained access because of their emerging relationship to educational policy. Within the community sector, particular individuals or groups had a place because of their relationship to other stakeholders, because of their lobbying ability, or because of the government's wish for representative consultation and involve ement.

Figure 9.5 Educational Policy in New Zealand as a Social Field



Habitus, which ensures that players are able to remain on the field and adequately communicate with other participants, is related in this setting to knowing what, knowing who, and knowing how. First, knowing what includes knowing the legislation, knowing the channels for participating in policy making, and understanding the process and its variations and vagaries. Second, knowing who means getting beneath the surface and knowing who the "movers and shakers" are and who to talk to in order to make your voice count. Third is knowing how: how to approach the right people; how to use the submissions process to your advantage; and how to keep abreast of current initiatives and emerging issues.

The final aspect is the framing of communications. The arrows on the diagram represent the flow of communication. Although shown here as a reciprocal flow, depending on the times, the circumstances, and the issues, this can vary. Sometimes, the communication can cease altogether, and sometimes alliances can form that effectively undermine or silence other voices. At other times, less prominent voices can make themselves heard.

These later studies (Mutch, 2004b, 2006) show how the social field framework can underpin research from beginning to end. The aim of this aspect in the larger project was to ask quite explicitly for the elite policymakers to outline the process as they saw it, to indicate who played a part in these decisions, and to show where they felt the balance of power lay. The questions were framed with the aim of displaying the findings on a social field diagram. How it might look and what adaptations might be necessary were not yet determined, but the selection of the topic, the questions to be asked, and the analytic framework to be employed all arose out of my interest in the social field model.

Incorporating Other Theoretical Frameworks

Being a qualitative researcher in the main, I do not always start out with a theoretical framework—a theoretical position, yes, best described as tending toward social constructionism, that is, the belief that our versions of the world are socially, culturally, and historically constructed and situated (Burr, 1995). Once I have gathered my data, extracted my themes, and begun the analysis, I usually ask that typically qualitative question: "What does this remind me of?" I have not always used social field theory in answer to this question.

In the study of the 1997 social studies curriculum described earlier (Mutch, 2004a), I explored a range of other theoretical models—Walker's (1972, cited in Print, 1993) naturalistic curriculum development model, Marsh's (1997) stakeholder classification, and McGee's (1997) dynamic curriculum development model. All these illuminated parts of the process, but none allowed me to explore and express the positioning and repositioning of the key players and the influences on them and their decisions in the way the Bourdieu model did, especially given the nature of the research topic. When I wanted to explain the curriculum development process, and why the Bourdieu model faltered in this particular case, I looked for a model that more clearly outlined the steps in the process and hence chose the McGee (1997) model with its situational analysis stage to make my point clearer. When I wanted to show "curriculum presage" (what curriculum developers bring to the process in terms of their beliefs, understandings, and aims), this was where the Walker (1972, cited in Print, 1993) model proved useful as it outlined the stages of platform, deliberation, and design. When I wanted to specify who the players were that made up the groups, factions, and alliances, I used the Marsh (1997) stakeholder classification as a way of detailing the players and their roles. In the end, however, the social field model was the only one that allowed me to adequately describe, analyze, and visually portray the development of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* as a highly contested process with constant changes in personnel.

Displaying the settings of the field diagrammatically helped identify changes in the locus of power over time and to trace the changing fortunes of groups inside and outside the field. A model such as this supports the view of Ozga (2000), who takes "a different more diffuse view of policy as a process rather than a product, involving negotiation, contestation, or struggle between different groups who may lie outside the formal machinery of official policymaking" (p. 2). The social field model highlighted the official forces (e.g., the Ministry of Education) and the unofficial forces (e.g., the Business Roundtable) that were to affect the process. This model best portrayed the fluidity of individuals and/or groups competing for positions of strength or influence in the decision-making process. In this study, the players were described as using strategies of compromise, contingency, and expediency. The model also allowed me to discuss other themes arising out of the study—those of polarization, factionalization, collaboration, and marginalization.

This model does not always resonate with my research findings, and other theories or models may need to be used in its place; but where the research findings show interactions, power plays, tensions, or contested decision making, I find it difficult to go past the concept of a social field. In fact, I now sit in meetings or follow events in the news, viewing them in my head as individuals or groups placing themselves on a particular field. I then watch their strategies to advance their causes, defend their current positions, set up alliances, or discredit other players. I have even tried to explain the notion of a social field to my son, who was watching one of those reality television shows where people are left to survive by their wits in some exotic location!

Strengths and Limitations of Bourdieu's Social Field Model

The studies outlined in this chapter (Mutch, 1998, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2006) show the usefulness and flexibility of the field model for the kinds of research I undertake. One strength of this model, therefore, is that it is not prescriptive; it is descriptive. Rather than telling how things should be done (as in my area, where many traditional curriculum development models do), it allows multiple processes and complex interplays to be described. This means that it can be adapted to a range of contexts to explain what is happening internally and externally. The three key elements are very important. (1) The concept of field allows the researcher to detail the context in which the action is taking place and to put boundaries around the place of action. (2) The concept of capital explains who gets to play, why, and how. (3) The concept of habitus can be used to describe and analyze the strategies of the players in each particular context.

The model can show a snapshot in time, or it can show changes over time. The diagrammatic expression of the model makes the theoretical framework visually clearer and argumentatively stronger. The model can be expanded to include complementary notions such as framing (Bernstein, 1971, 2000) or insiders/outsiders (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The placement on the field can indicate positions and relationships (i.e., ideological stances). The size of the representations can indicate the size (quantitatively) or the strength (qualitatively) of the group on the field. The use of the line of tension allows settings where powerful ideological forces are pitted against each other to be portrayed.

Limitations of the model are that it can appear a little dense and complex at the outset and needs careful explanation—but this is where the diagrammatic version comes into its own. The diagrammatic representation, which I generally find to be a strength, can also be seen as a limitation. It could be seen as too reductionist in that it takes away the "authentic voices" and "rich description" so highly prized by qualitative researchers. It could reduce a whole interview transcript, for example, to a small dot on a diagram. A participant's passionate and emotionally charged story could end up being portrayed as a geometric shape, the complex interactions displayed as an arrow. To overcome this concern, it is necessary to support the theorizing with authentic data (excerpts from transcripts, field notes, or documents). It is also important that the reader is convinced that the theorizing is credible, that the researcher has not just selected data that fit the model. The contradictions and anomalies must also be discussed and portrayed. The diagrammatic representation could be considered too static. Shusterman's (1999) words (discussing Dyke's assessment of Bourdieu, 1999) could be used to critique my interpretation:

> Bourdieu's theory of the dynamics of habitus (not a rigidly fixed or mechanical habit) and of field (not a stationary space but a dynamic field constituted by struggles over changing positions) demonstrates that social structures must be understood not as static, typological and hard-edged but rather as dynamic formations of organized diachronic complexity, poised between stability and change. (p. 8)

Another limitation of the social field model is that it could be seen as too functionalist. Participants are reduced to their roles—their unique individualities and personalities become anonymous. Their words are portrayed as coming from a position rather than from a living, breathing human being. The social field model, especially my variation with the line of tension, can be seen as too polarizing, pitting ideologies against each other. Reducing individuals or groups to positions and then portraying them statically on a diagram sets their

stances in concrete, so to speak. The vacillations, waverings, and overlaps as people reconsider and adapt their views and positions cannot be easily shown.

It is also difficult to show the complexities within a group or individual (without going into micro-microlevels). As participants can only be shown once for each setting, their position is determined, placed, and labeled. In real life, people are much more complex and multifaceted than they appear on these field diagrams. Critics of Bourdieu, in fact, raise several of these concerns about Bourdieu's theory as he applies it in his own writing. Margolis (1999) critiques Bourdieu's use of the dualisms and binarisms he sought to challenge. Bohman (1999) finds his explanations "functionalist" and his theory unable to explain "theoretical reflection, cultural conflict, and social change" (pp. 220–228), whereas Butler (1999) claims that Bourdieu privileges the social field in a way that fails to recognize opportunities for social transformation.

Despite these limitations—which must be acknowledged but can be lessened with awareness, careful consideration, and explanation—social field theory has much to offer in terms of portraying complex positioning and interaction. There are also boundless ways in which this model could be developed. I find the static nature of the presentation limiting and would love to explore computer-generated, three-dimensional moving images. Although technology can do this, the academic world is not yet set up to receive and embrace such nontextual representations as the norm. Within the limitations of two-dimensional portrayal, there are still possible nuances to explore—for example, displaying influential forces on an axis or matrix rather than by a single line. As I reread Bourdieu, I am struck by the fact that there are other concepts that could be included in my model, for example, "cultural production" or "field of reception." For the time being, there is plenty to keep me interested in, and challenged by, the social field model.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the usefulness of a theoretical model for moving research findings out of the case-bound specifics into broader understandings of human interactions. It is also helpful if the selected model is flexible enough to suit a range of contexts and adaptable enough to include complementary notions from other theorists. In my case, the theory I have chosen to discuss, social field theory (drawing mainly on Bourdieu), has come to influence how I visualize everyday interactions, as well as determining relevant research topics and influencing their design. The three important concepts of field, capital, and habitus have helped me detail the place of action, the players, and their strategies in contested decision-making processes. In this chapter, I have also promoted the usefulness of visual portrayals of complex theories. Although this, and any theory for that matter, has limitations, and in this case, the visual portrayal could be seen to exacerbate these, they can be overcome or minimized by the supporting discussion and with sound evidence from the data. For this model, I have suggested the limitations as overreduction of data, a static representation, a seemingly functionalist approach, the polarization of the forces being displayed, and the inability to show the complexities within players and groups as well as between them.

Finally, I think that we are too often frightened of theories (and theorists, especially ones as esteemed as Bourdieu); but I would like to argue that if we use their theories or models with sensitivity, adapting them to suit our purposes while keeping their integrity intact, they are wonderfully illuminating tools. Bourdieu

himself (1992, cited in Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002), has argued about his theories that

> these tools are only visible through the results they yield. . . . The ground for these tools . . . lies in research, in the practical problems and puzzles encountered and generated in the effort to construct a phenomenally diverse set of objects in such a way that they can be treated, thought of, comparatively. (p. 47)

My use of Bourdieu's field theory has certainly been employed within such a spirit of inquiry. Theories are always evolving, and they should be tested, adapted, updated, and challenged. This is our contribution as qualitative researchers to understanding and explaining our world in multiple and diverse ways.

Note

1. Although Bourdieu and others speak of being "in" a field, I found that once I had visualized it diagrammatically and compared it with a field of play, in the sense of a game or sport, "on" seemed more appropriate.

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10

A Look Through the Kubler-Ross Theoretical Lens

Kerri S. Kearney
Adrienne E. Hyle

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's (1969) grief construct is examined in this chapter in relation to its influence on the study design and data analysis of a qualitative study of organizational change. One lesson to be learned from this examination of the use of theory is that well-researched models from other fields, in this case the field of death and dying, may serve as pathways to new insights.

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Overview of the Study

IMPETUS FOR THE STUDY

This study (Kearney & Hyle, 2003), like many studies, was born of a series of what appeared to be only vaguely related experiences of Kerri Kearney, which eventually collided with similar research interests of Adrienne Hyle. This "collision of common concern" ignited a series of collaborative research projects that will quite likely be ongoing well after this book has been published and found its way into the hands of aspiring researchers. The foundation for this chapter, however, is provided by the original study as it presents the best backdrop for discussion of the consideration and selection of a theoretical framework for research, as well as all of the associated consequences of that decision.

Because students often wonder where the ideas for research come from, it seems wise to start at the beginning. The original impetus for this study was a series of change management efforts made at WorldCom, Inc. during its merger with MCI (now known as Verizon Business) in 1999. At that time, this was the largest corporate merger in U.S. history and, as senior corporate trainer, Kerri was charged with the development and implementation of change management training for the company's domestic locations. It was through her struggle to find something meaningful for "managing" this massive change that she realized that grief models could be very powerful tools for both understanding and management of the individual grief with which she suddenly found herself surrounded. The suicide of one employee—who left a suicide note that mentioned the merger as a factor in the decision—certainly seemed to validate her suspicion that individual emotions were major factors in the change, and this event greatly solidified her determination to address the role of individual emotion and organizational change.

A year later, Kerri left WorldCom to obtain her doctorate and return to the field of education; her

experiences, however, continued to fire a desire to study the relationship between individual emotion and organizational change. She soon encountered a faculty member, Adrienne, who had a similar desire, created from her work with organizational change in schools, and so began a collaboration that continues today.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Our initial expectations regarding grief and organizational change were quite similar. We expected to find grief in the educational setting just as Kerri had observed it in the for-profit world because both undergo an inordinate amount of change. Change efforts traditionally focus on rational process issues, strategic decision making, or external behaviors while avoiding the emotion that is natural to an organization of people (Fineman, 1993; Marshak, 1996; Vince & Broussine, 1996). The focus of our study was specifically on educational organizations. Although schools have attempted to change, this has not been considered successful by most (Fullan, 1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Sarason, 1996). We speculated that the lack of success in change was based on a lack of attention to individuals and their emotional experiences during the processes of change. Therefore, our study focused on individual loss and grief for those who stay with the organization as possible key factors in the failure of educational change.

Because the study of individual, change-related emotions in organizations is not particularly common, we decided that the use of a grief construct as a theoretical framework would be very helpful, if not critical, in finding direction for both collecting and understanding our data. Our initial intent was to use a grief construct, or model, to examine the emotional impacts of imposed organizational change on individuals as a potentially integral, yet missing, piece of most organizational change strategies. Although the decision to use an individual, change-related emotions theoretical framework to guide our study was made very early in the process, our challenge became to identify the appropriate framework. Our efforts in this area resulted in the selection of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model; the details of this selection process and its impact on all facets of our study are discussed in a later section.

Although we have additional research that uses Kubler-Ross's (1969) work as a theoretical framework, the information discussed within this chapter is based on our original study (Kearney & Hyle, 2003) of individual emotions and organization change. Two peer-reviewed articles resulted from this research. The first, "The Grief Cycle and Educational Change: The Kubler-Ross Contribution," was published in *Planning and Changing* (Kearney & Hyle, 2003). This article specifically addressed the application of the Kubler-Ross grief construct to an organization (as described in the next section) undergoing broad-ranging change. The second, "Drawing Out Emotions in Organizations: The Use of Participant-Produced Drawings in Qualitative Inquiry," was published by *Qualitative Research* (Kearney & Hyle, 2004) and republished, at the request of SAGE Publications, in 2013 (Kearney & Hyle, 2013). This second article resulted from the same original study but was a methodological article about the use of participant-produced drawings to access the types of emotional data needed for analysis using the Kubler-Ross framework. The details of this drawings methodology, and why it was used to produce data that could be analyzed by our theoretical framework, are discussed in a later section.

STUDY SITE AND FOCUS

One of our first steps for this study (Kearney & Hyle, 2003) was to find a site that was willing to be the subject of our inquiry. Our efforts resulted in our study being conducted at a technology training school that was part of a larger state system of technology school districts located in the southwestern part of the United States. The school district met the training needs of high school students (who were concurrently enrolled at their "home" or public high school), adults, and business and industry clients.

The school was situated in a close-knit, rural community of 5,500 people, which was also home to the main campus of a 4-year, regional university. The school was overseen by a publicly elected, five-member board of education and served a district that included parts of seven counties. Training classes were both short and long term, might be ongoing during both day and evening hours, and culminated in certifications, licensures, or college credit. Funding came from a variety of sources, including local and state taxes, revenues from tuition and fees, federal grants, and loans. The school had had a single superintendent with 17 years' tenure, who was nearing retirement and beginning to prepare the organization for the transition.

Approximately 18 months prior to this study, one of the school's "own," a man who had been raised from childhood in the area but spent 15 years "downstate," took the assistant superintendent's position at this school campus. As a possible "heir apparent" for the system, he brought new philosophies and practices that had resulted in far-reaching changes. The primary focus of this study was the impact of those changes on the employees of the school; however, information provided by the participants early in the study led to the addition of a secondary focus on the widespread changes that had been proposed at the state level of the technology school system.

METHODS

The partners in this study, the respondents, voluntarily participated in a four-phase process. Each was asked to complete a brief demographic profile that captured both personal (i.e., age, etc.) and organizational (i.e., position, etc.) information. Additionally, the respondents were asked to create two drawings about their experiences of organizational change. These drawings were used as entry points to unstructured interviews and will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

The unstructured interviews began by asking the participants to explain their drawings; the researchers asked follow-up questions to further clarify this explanation, focusing specifically on the emotions identified, as well as other needed information. As an additional tool for capturing emotions-based data, the interviews also incorporated the use of lists of feelings, from which the participants were asked to identify those that resonated with them. Follow-up interviews were conducted for the purposes of asking clarifying questions, conducting member checks (confirming tentative interpretations with the respondents, as outlined by Merriam, 1988), and addressing a separate methodological issue—the efficacy of the drawings methodology itself. The data collection was intended to address, in theory, a single point in time as it related to the overall changes. In practice, the process of data collection extended over 8 weeks.

DATA ANALYSIS USING THE KUBLER-ROSS LENS

Because we chose to use the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct, which provides five stages of grief that are directly associated with specific emotions, our data were first organized by like emotional clusters. We

coded interview transcripts line by line following our review of the participant drawings and emotions lists. We then examined and compared the clusters with the categories provided by the Kubler-Ross grief model. This comparison process, as described by Merriam (1988), directs that the "database is scanned to determine the fit of a priori categories and then the data are sorted into the borrowed categories" (p. 137). In this way, examination of the data produced both what fit the Kubler-Ross grief cycle and what did not.

FINDINGS

Based on the Kubler-Ross (1969) model, grief reactions were clearly found for employees who had experienced organizational change as well as for those who anticipated organizational change at a local level. In addition, a tremendous amount of participants' energy was being absorbed in dealing with naturally occurring, change-related emotions—many of which the participants themselves were resistant to. Reactions, however, were unique to the individual and did not necessarily include all stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct. Every participant in this study reported that most of the organizational changes at the local level were "good." Their emotional reactions lend support to Barger and Kirby's (1995) assertions that grief occurs even in response to change that is perceived to be "good."

Like the emotions reported at the local level, it appeared that emotions associated with grief were present in these participants' responses to proposed state-level change, although perhaps in the early stages. These data support the idea that grief can be anticipatory, or occur prior to the actual loss itself, a premise originally reported by Kubler-Ross (1969). Again, the loss found at the state level was similar to grief descriptions for death and dying (Bowlby, 1980; Kubler-Ross, 1969), as well as grief found in other organizational change studies (Clapper, 1991; Humphrey, 1997; Massey, 1991, 1992; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994; Stein, 1990a, 1990b; Triolo, Allgeier, & Schwartz, 1995).

Description of the Theoretical Framework

The Kubler-Ross (1969) model was the result of a collaborative research project by the author and students at the Chicago Theological Seminary on the experience of death. This project included a multitude of real-life interviews with dying patients on the various defense and coping mechanisms that surface during different periods of time—replacing each other or existing side by side, depending on the individual and his or her unique perspectives. The stages discovered and identified by Kubler-Ross and her students include denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Hope was also included, not as a stage in the process, but rather as an underlying feeling that threaded throughout the dying process. This process was viewed by Kubler-Ross not as a linear progression of grief but as stages that may replace each other, repeat themselves, or exist side by side.

DENIAL AND ISOLATION

Denial in Kubler-Ross's (1969) death and dying arena refers to the patient's denial or refusal to accept the diagnosis of a terminal illness; this denial may lead to isolation from others. Kubler-Ross considered denial a

healthy reaction. "Denial functions as a buffer after unexpected shocking news, allows the patient to collect himself and, with time, mobilize other, less radical defenses" (p. 52). Schoolfield and Orduna (1994) carried this position over into their work in a medical organization: "Denial can give individuals needed time to understand that the change is going to occur and what it may mean for them" (p. 60). Barger and Kirby (1995) characterized denial as the most prevalent response to organizational loss and grieving.

ANGER

In the stage of anger, Kubler-Ross (1969) included feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment associated with impending death and loss. This stage can be difficult to cope with as emotions may be "displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment at times almost at random" (p. 64). Wherever the person looks, he or she will find reason for complaint.

BARGAINING

Best described as attempts to trade one action for avoidance of death or loss, bargaining, according to Kubler-Ross (1969), is only helpful for brief periods of time. This grief response stems from the temporary belief that "there is a slim chance that he may be rewarded for good behavior and be granted a wish for special services" (p. 94). In organizations, bargaining may be subtle and is often designed to weaken the proposed change so that it can more easily be condemned or sabotaged (Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994).

DEPRESSION

Depression or overt sadness signals the replacement of anger with a sense of great loss (Kubler-Ross, 1969). It occurs when the patient can no longer deny the impending outcome of an illness, grieves the losses accompanying the illness (e.g., the opera singer's loss of ability to perform), and begins to prepare for death. Daugird and Spencer (1996) stated that overt sadness is usually acknowledged and honestly expressed—but likely only to trusted friends or colleagues or to none at all.

ACCEPTANCE

Kubler-Ross (1969) described acceptance as a stage where anger and depression about "fate" have dissipated; in fact, it is described as a stage almost devoid of feelings. Those who have applied the Kubler-Ross model to those who chose to stay in the organization see this as a time when peace has been made with the change as well as a time in which creative work around the change can commence (Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994). In the realm of Kubler-Ross's work, death follows the state of acceptance, and the grief cycle ends for the patient. (Kubler-Ross maintained a focus on the patient's grief cycle and gave little attention to the postdeath grief of family and friends of the patient, although her work has since been extensively applied to the postdeath grief of others.)

As mentioned previously, Kubler-Ross posited that hope is threaded throughout the grieving process. Perhaps it is during the stage of acceptance, then, that hope reasserts itself as the primary emotion for the stayers who have experienced grief as a result of imposed organizational change.

Origins of the Theory and How It Was Selected

Our selection of Kubler-Ross (1969) resulted from a search for assistance in understanding and awareness of individuals in the change process. Because we chose to focus on individual emotions and grief, which we believed were present in the organizational change process, we reviewed a broad variety of grief constructs in the field of death and dying (an obvious place to look for emotions and grief models) and other life loss, as well as those that have resulted from limited efforts to apply grief models to organizational change.

We have often been asked about the applicability of using a death and dying framework for organizational change. Woodward and Buchholz (1987) addressed this question very succinctly and also appropriately for our study:

> At first . . . to compare change and death seemed a little heavy. But the more we thought about it, the more we realized that the process was, indeed, very similar. In many ways, it is identical to it. . . . When loss occurs, the people who remain have to go through some basic states—denial, anger, bargaining, depression—to finally achieve acceptance. (p. 66)

Because the use of any individual grief model in an organization was, itself, not prevalent in the current research literature, we believed that it was important to identify a framework that was well researched and well accepted as an emotions and grief model, even if it had not been used in the organizational environment. It was also important that the model selected lend itself to a practical ability to apply it as a framework for analysis. A useful theoretical framework, in our opinion, can be easily visualized and therefore brings guidance as to organization and approach in terms of data collection and analysis. The theoretical framework need not necessarily be linear, although this helps in judging stages or progression. We believe it is essential that a framework be able to be drawn in picture form, where components and their relationships can be clearly defined, because we need to know how to categorize or code data according to their theoretical components.

Prior to selecting the Kubler-Ross (1969) model, we looked first at several well-known grief-related theories including Bowlby (1980), who attributed four stages to the process of adult grieving; the nonlinear approach of the Solari-Twadell, Bunkers, Wang, and Snyder's (1995) pinwheel model of grief; and the Perlman and Takacs (1990) model that added five stages to the KublerRoss (1969) construct.

We also reviewed the work of Crosby, Gage, and Raymond (1983) in their study of divorce-related grief and Trolley (1993–1994), who sought to link the death-related grieving literature to a number of traumatic life events. In all of these cases, concerns about support of the theory or about the ease of operationalizing the concepts of the theory led us to believe that Kubler-Ross remained the more appropriate choice for this study.

Following this broad review of existing individual grief models and studies, we looked at organizational change literature to determine which, if any, grief models had been applied. Most of the efforts to consider grief in organizations were based on anecdotal reports and observations (Barger & Kirby, 1995; Jeffreys, 1995; Kaplan, 1991; Owen, 1987; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994). Others used varying levels and types of both qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Clapper, 1991; Humphrey, 1997; Kavanagh & Johnson, 1990; Massey, 1991, 1992; Stein, 1990a, 1990b; Triolo et al., 1995), with a handful using grief models. Although some anecdotal efforts did not produce clear empirical data, the reported insights into organizational change, loss, and grief were remarkably similar to those of the empirically based studies. In

none of these cases, however, did we find a model that met our criteria as well as did the Kubler-Ross (1969) model.

Organizational Change With the Kubler-Ross Model

It was at this point in our review that we began to feel somewhat certain that the Kubler-Ross (1969) model —although perhaps not ideal, primarily because of its tendency to be misinterpreted as a linear process— would be our best choice for a theoretical framework for our study. To confirm our thoughts, however, we conducted a review of the use of Kubler-Ross's work in the organizational setting. Although we did not expect to find many studies, a few efforts did exist.

Perlman and Takacs (1990) used a modified version of the Kubler-Ross construct in a medical organization, and Schoolfield and Orduna (1994) combined the Kubler-Ross model with other models for their analysis of the individual impacts of restructuring a major hospital oncology unit. We also discovered that others had used models with similarities to the Kubler-Ross model (Barger & Kirby, 1995, 1997; Bridges, 1991). A few researchers chose to use the Kubler-Ross model very much as it was originally developed in the death and dying literature for their work on organizational change, again, with the exception of Clapper (1991), primarily in health-related organizations (Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Kavanagh & Johnson, 1990). Our review led us to the conclusion that of the limited number of organizational studies using grief models, Kubler-Ross model is the most broadly applied (in addition to arguably being the most well-known and well accepted in the field of life loss). This review also gave us some information about the operationalization of the model for collecting and analyzing emotional data, critical factors for our study.

FINAL SELECTION OF KUBLER-ROSS AS OUR MODEL

It was with the review and consideration of all of the grief models, constructs, and suppositions noted above that we chose to proceed with the Kubler-Ross (1969) model. From our review, we believed that it had the greatest depth and breadth of research as its foundation, as well as broad acceptance of its practical applicability. In considering the purpose of our research, to identify the emotional impacts on individuals who had experienced organizational change, this theoretical framework seemed the best choice.

Effects of the Framework on the Study's Questions, Design, and Analysis, and a Critique

After selection of Kubler-Ross's model (1969) as the lens to be used for our study, we did a full review and revision of our original study questions. Instead of focusing on traditional components of change such as leadership strategies, processes, outcomes, initiation, implementation, and institutionalization, we took a very fine focus specifically on the emotions that are related to educational change, as operationalized through the individual grief focus of the Kubler-Ross model. It would not make any sense to use this model to address traditional components of change because the focus of these models is institutional or organizational whereas

Kubler-Ross's is individual and emotional. Specifically, the following three research tasks were addressed:

1. To describe the emotional responses of individuals affected by the imposed change
2. To analyze these responses through the lens of the Kubler-Ross grief cycle
3. To report other findings that may evolve from the data
4. To assess the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross grief cycle for understanding change in organizations

Additionally, we used the knowledge gained by our review of the limited number of applications of the Kubler-Ross (1969) work to organizations to add an additional research question about the viability of the Kubler-Ross construct. Clapper's (1991) study of grief and change in schools used the Kubler-Ross model, without additions or modifications, as a tool. Although Clapper found evidence of grief at the school site, the issue of whether the Kubler-Ross grief model was an appropriate tool for this type of work was never clearly addressed. This observation and our decision to use the Kubler-Ross construct caused us to add a fourth research task:

IMPACT ON METHODOLOGY

The use of the Kubler-Ross (1969) framework influenced the methods we used for this study in multiple ways. The major impacts were created because of the huge challenge of unearthing the individual emotions for which the framework could be used for analysis. We knew from both experience and research in the field that getting individuals in organizations not only to access personal emotions but also to share those emotions is extremely difficult. The ability of individuals to access, recognize, and effectively label emotions, even if they are willing, is challenging and something few are ever asked to do openly. Knowing that U.S. organizations tend to create environments in which emotions are unwelcome or devalued in terms of organizational decision making (Fineman, 1993; Vince & Broussine, 1996) heightened this challenge. This led to the addition of the use of participant-produced drawings and lists of feeling words as methods for quickly accessing individual emotions.

The drawings were deliberately placed at the beginning of the interviews in the hope that they would set a stage for emotion retrieval and discussion. The lists of feelings served to confirm and add to our understanding of individuals' emotional experiences in the change process. This list also allowed for the assumption that different people would use different words for a variety of emotions. We believed that language might be a powerful limiter and were working to find ways to bridge these limitations. The details of each of these methods are discussed below.

Use of Drawings. The ability of drawings to surface unspoken thoughts and feelings has long been accepted by art therapists, who have used this tool for many decades. "Drawings offer a different kind of glimpse into human sense making than written or spoken texts do, because they can express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, the subconscious" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 34). In the limited amount of research available on the use of drawings in organizations, it has also been found that drawings may be a more specific or direct route to the emotions and unconscious responses or

feelings underlying behaviors during organizational change (Vince, 1995). Imagery can "bridge the gap between the apparently individual, private, subjective, and the apparently collective, social, political" (Samuels, 1993, p. 63). In his 1988 study, Zubroff found that, for clerical workers experiencing organizational change, "pictures functioned as a catalyst, helping them to articulate feelings that had been implicit and hard to define . . . These simple drawings convey feelings that often elude verbal expression" (pp. 141–142).

We used participant-produced drawings in this study (Kearney & Hyle, 2003) for two reasons. First, both the literature (Vince, 1995; Vince & Broussine, 1996; Weber & Mitchell, 1995; Zubroff, 1988) and our previous organizational development experience suggested that drawings were a way to tap quickly into the emotional lives of participants. With the selection of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model as our study lens and our concern about the natural resistance to sharing emotions in the organizational setting, drawings appeared to be a way to access the needed data. Second, the use of drawings as a catalyst for unstructured interviews, an integral part of the study design, afforded the participants every opportunity to frame their own experiences, unencumbered by our biases about people and organizational change (Kearney & Hyle, 2004).

Recognizing that both participants' and researchers' perspectives on the drawing methodology are culturally rule bound, we chose to include both perspectives as an important foundation for our findings. The experiences created by the use of participant-produced drawings in this study, combined with the experiences reported in the literature, led to a number of observations about the application of this methodology as it relates to both the use of the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct as well as qualitative research in general:

1. Participant-produced drawings appear to create a path toward participant feelings and emotions, making them viable tools for researchers who seek access to these types of data.
2. The cognitive process required to draw leads to a more succinct presentation of the key elements of participants' experiences.
3. The personal experience depicted by participant-produced drawings could only be considered complete with additional interpretation of the drawing by the participant.
4. Whether the drawing activity encourages or discourages participation in the research process depends on individual and situational characteristics, and its impact may be unpredictable for any given study.
5. The provision of little structure in the drawing activity allows for participants' unique experiences to be communicated. This lack of boundaries helps combat any preconceived biases of the researcher that otherwise might have been unintentionally imposed.
6. The amount of researcher-imposed structure on the drawing process is a determinant in how the drawings may be interpreted.

The demonstrated ability of drawings to create a path to participant feelings and emotions, and to lead to succinct presentations of their experiences, appeared to create the opportunity for more meaningful and honest verbal reports—arguably the methodology helped the respondents reveal more than what may have been captured with only the unstructured verbal interview. It was our belief that this methodology allowed us to more adequately collect the crucial emotional data needed for successful use of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model.

Use of Feelings Lists. In building on one of the few existing Kubler-Ross–based studies, Clapper (1991), we provided participants with a preset list of emotions and asked them to identify those that they either had experienced or were still experiencing as a result of the local change. The spontaneously produced emotions (those that did not appear on the preset list but evolved through the drawings and interviews) were also

compiled from the interview data.

IMPACT ON DATA ANALYSIS

One of the greatest challenges in qualitative research is finding a starting place for sorting the masses of data that are collected. The Kubler-Ross (1969) construct was critical to our finding a place to start with analysis, as well as playing an essential role in our final understandings of individual change.

The Kubler-Ross (1969) grief model provided an initial working plan for us to follow. The stages of grief bounded our initial review of the data and afforded a scaffold from which to begin. From other work, we knew that this initial scaffold would change as we discovered additional emotional components of the change process for individuals. (As you can see from our study results as published by *Planning and Changing* [Kearney & Hyle, 2003], we ultimately proposed modifications to the framework that we believe are important components in the development and refinement of theory and its application to organizational change.) One difficulty in the data analysis process emerged almost immediately. We had deliberately collected both the emotions that were contained in the preset lists of emotions as well as those that arose spontaneously through the drawings and the interview process. As a result, we had a number of emotions that had not been categorized within the Kubler-Ross stages via one of the few organizational studies that used Kubler-Ross as a lens (viz., Clapper, 1991).

We returned to the Clapper (1991) study to review how feelings had been categorized within the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief stages. This categorization had occurred through a series of field tests in a study by Michael (1984). To categorize the spontaneous emotions occurring in our study, a process similar to Michael's was used, although with slightly more rigor.

A regionally based group of 13 professionals who were both formally trained as well as experienced in working with individuals and grief served as a review panel. Seven of the reviewers were either counseling or clinical psychologists. Three others provided counseling services through various religious associations—one was a minister, one was a deacon and a trained Stephen minister (trained to deal with long-term care), and one was a bereavement and spiritual care coordinator with a doctoral degree in counseling. Two additional reviewers were patient liaisons in the medical field—one of them was certified for long-term care. The final reviewer was the executive director of a regional hospice unit that specializes in nursing and support care of the terminally ill and their families.

The reviewers worked independently and were asked to place each spontaneously reported emotion in the grief stage in which the emotion, from their training and experience, was most likely to be found. They were also asked to indicate those reported emotions that did not seem to fit within the categories identified by Kubler-Ross (1969). A category for "hope" was not included as a part of previous organizational research (Clapper, 1991), but as it was presented by Kubler-Ross as "the one thing that usually persists through all these stages" (p. 148), it was added as a potential category for this set of reviewers.

Each of the final categories used by the current study included those emotions that had been placed in the same stage by 62%, or 8, of the 13 reviewers. This requirement was intentionally higher than the Michael (1984) study, which required only 33% of the reviewers to agree on an emotion's placement. With the completion of this process, we were able to move forward with our data analysis using the Kubler-Ross

construct.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As a result of our study, we found both strengths and weaknesses in applying the Kubler-Ross (1969) model to our research problem. The reality that we needed an "emotions" framework to study change in organizations and the paucity of known options in the field of organizational change caused us to look to other fields for proven models. The death and dying field may seem a strange place to go, but knowing from our own experiences that loss is a part of every change led us to Kubler-Ross. The strength of this model was its proven appropriateness and usefulness for understanding emotions and grief and the potential for it to be operationalized in a way that made it useful for guidance in study design, data collection, and analysis. What we did not know at the outset was its appropriateness for the specific context or situation we wanted to explore. In part, this became (as it does in all of our theoretical research) part of the research problem and findings.

In considering any theoretical framework for a particular context, some questions always remain as to whether or not it will be a perfect fit. All responsible researchers can do is make their best effort to remove questions and design a "fit" between the problem, the theoretical framework, methods, and analysis. We believed that the Kubler-Ross model would work and was the best fit available. We also believe that we were right—it did work.

From our data, it was clear that the participants reported a full spectrum of emotions that appeared to fit within the Kubler-Ross model's (1969) stages. Each individual's experiences, however, seemed to be as unique as the individuals themselves. This brought up the question of whether a representative "process" of grief can actually exist for humans who have such different experiences and perspectives. In some ways, this question, also set forth by Hagman (1995), Solari-Twadell et al. (1995), and Schwartzberg and Halgin (1991), is about the way "grief models" in general have been both presented in the literature and practiced in the field.

The literature has, in some ways, attempted to simplify Kubler-Ross's (1969) model by presenting it as a process that individuals move through and come out of at the end having processed their grief. From her original writings, it appears that this is a gross oversimplification of the intent of Kubler-Ross, who said that the defense mechanisms or stages "will last for different periods of time and will replace each other or exist at times side by side" (p. 147). The only visual depiction of her grief stages (p. 265) depicts anger as partially crossing over with denial, elements of denial throughout anger, anger and depression sitting almost on top of one another, and so on. This mixing and meshing of emotions was certainly found to be true for this organization, although some employees did refer to the "processing" of their emotions.

Evidence of processing and the individuality of this process seemed to be present in some of the most reported emotions. For instance, feelings of apprehension were reported by six of the nine respondents; however, five reported that these feelings had "passed." Those who reported emotions like "peaceful" and "contented" identified them as present, not past, feelings. Eight respondents reported feelings of excitement, but only in the present; the respondents had "grown into" these feelings. Six described feelings of happiness; only one reported that she had been happy about the change in the past. Feelings of optimism were reported by eight respondents, four of whom said that this was a recent feeling, whereas the other four said that they

had been optimistic throughout the change.

One respondent noted that although there had been ongoing frustration in the process of change, it had recently gotten better. Another agreed that there had been a process of getting back to a place of comfort. Two drawings also suggested a process of grief, and this was supported by the verbal explanations of the participants who produced them.

No linear process or order of emotions, however, was clear in the data. In this organizational setting, it appeared that each change brought new and very individualized feelings. Changes came one on top of another, so even if there had been a specific path for processing a particular change, it would have been highly unlikely that an individual could have fully processed one change before being hit with another. Organizational life for the individual was simply not that organized, no matter how much these employees would have preferred that. For some, the emotions became individual overall responses to ongoing and complex organizational change—change that could not be defined by one event or decision. Another respondent described anxiety as just a general feeling. So in some ways, the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model for individuals experiencing organizational change is very dependent on how the construct is applied—as a process or as a collection of emotions that are common in the response to change.

One additional concern, discovered during the process of categorizing spontaneously reported emotions at the local level, dealt with the difficulties of placing some emotions, such as "pleased,""positive," and "happy," into the stages of Kubler-Ross's (1969) grief construct. These emotions were shown to occur within different stages across the model, depending on the context in which the emotion occurred. This is an important consideration when using the Kubler-Ross grief model for the study of individual reactions to organizational change.

Other Theoretical Frameworks Considered

As noted in the previous discussion describing how the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct was selected, other grief frameworks were considered. None, however, had a foundation of either research or practice that we believed was appropriate for use as a theoretical lens for a qualitative research study. A brief review of the other theories considered from the literature on individual grief and grief in organizations follows.

We did not believe that the work of Bowlby (1980) and Worden (1991) could be easily operationalized for our research. The work of Crosby et al. (1983) and Trolley (1993–1994) affirmed our desire to use a grief model, but neither of these works produced a model that we believed could be used for our own work. Solari-Twadell et al. (1995) did produce a model, but it was not based in a deep foundation of research—a criterion we believed important for our study. Studies that used grief models in organizations were primarily anecdotal and did not produce grief frameworks that would be usable for our research. Other, nonanecdotal organizational research did not produce a model that appeared to better fit our work than Kubler-Ross's (1969). Other frameworks (Barger & Kirby, 1995, 1997; Bridges, 1991; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994) were either extremely similar to the Kubler-Ross model or clearly stated that the framework was based on the work of Kubler-Ross. Ultimately, none of the other frameworks had a research foundation comparable with that of the Kubler-Ross framework. Likewise, none of the other frameworks appeared to

present a model that could be more easily operationalized for our work—a factor that was important for both study design and data analysis.

Free Response

Some have criticized our work for being an a priori application of a theory within the context of qualitative research. Qualitative purists believe that notions flow only from the data and that analysis should be done with a completely open mind. We, however, know that each researcher brings to the research process biases, frames, beliefs, and experiences that bound and color his or her perspectives. We believe that the use of a framework affords clarity in design, data collection, and analysis that is impossible to get in any other way. For students and other, less experienced researchers, this is particularly important and helpful because a road map is provided for data collection and analysis. Instead of having to "blindly" come up with categories and themes emerging from data sets, these individuals have before them a clearly defined and detailed strategy for analytically viewing the data.

Another important component of the use of theoretical frameworks is the requirement to both present the data and analyze it. In this way, the thick, rich description provides information that allows the reader to determine whether transferability applies for other environments. This requires that the data be presented independently of the framework; a view through the framework lens is analytical. In this way, others may be able to apply a different framework to the same data presentation and gain great insights and transferences. It is incumbent on researchers (student or academic) to analyze the data through their framework lens as well. Although we earlier made a convincing case that the framework guided virtually all aspects of data collection and analysis, we believe that there is nothing to support the position that only one framework is the best for analysis. Whether or not that framework is used to design the research questions or study design, other frameworks may also be applicable and may provide remarkable insights. The importance of thick, rich description is paramount! Transferability comes from this essential component of any study.

As a final note for new or early-career researchers, an initial choice of framework can affect both the future direction of a researcher's work and the work of other researchers! In Kerri's case, it was a choice that continues to heavily influence her work today, as well as the work of her students. For those who wish to see the continuing impact of the choice to study grief emotions as elicited through participant drawings, please see also Kearney (2013), Kearney and Siegman (2013), Archer, Kearney, and Blackburn (2007), and the doctoral dissertation of Archer (2010; advised by Kearney).

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11

Examining the Intersection of Race, Gender, and Environment Using Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory of Human Development

R. Darrell Peterson

In this chapter, I share how Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological systems theory of human development was used to frame my research, which sought to explore and understand the development of White racial consciousness among full-time, White male undergraduate students who attend public, predominantly Black HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities), through an examination of their academic and social experiences within the HBCU environment. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) theory provided a vehicle by which to contextualize the intersections of race, gender, and environment that were of principle interest in the study. This chapter illustrates the importance of identifying an appropriate foundational theoretical framework in which to ground the study and of including related theoretical frameworks to support and focus the approach. Furthermore, it shows how these varying theoretical frameworks can be organized to work in concert with each other.

Peterson, R. D., & Hamrick, F. A. (2009). White, male, and "minority": Racial consciousness among White male undergraduates attending a historically Black university. *Journal of Higher Education, 80*(1), 34–58.

Overview of the Study

As the number of White students attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) continues to increase, there is very little research documenting the academic and social experiences of these students. Prior research done on White students at HBCUs focused only on graduate students (Conrad & Brier, 1997; Hall & Closson, 2005), who inherently bring a different set of attributes to the environment and have different educational experiences from undergraduates. Research focusing on the academic and social experiences of White undergraduate students attending HBCUs was absent from the literature. This study sought to expand the body of knowledge regarding not only the experiences of White students attending HBCUs but also, more specifically, the academic and social experiences of White male students attending a public, predominantly Black HBCU and these students' development of White racial consciousness (WRC). Thus, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the development of WRC among full-time, White male undergraduate students who attend a public, predominantly Black HBCU through an examination of their academic and social experiences within the HBCU environment.

The site for the study was a public, land grant, historically Black institution located in a very small college town in the southeastern United States. East Coast University (ECU, a pseudonym) enrolls more than 3,400 students pursuing degrees in a variety of disciplines and is a Division I member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Undergraduate White students as a whole constituted 9% of the student population, of which 4% were White males (ECU Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Evaluation, 2005).

A total of seven students participated in the study, including two sophomores (David and Walter), one

junior (Patrick), and four seniors (Cal, John, Matt, and Ty), ranging in age from 19 to 23 years. All respondents were full-time undergraduate students at ECU. David, Matt, and Ty were scholarship student athletes on the ECU baseball team, and Cal participated in club sports. David lived on campus and Cal, Ty, and Walter lived with their families and commuted to the campus. John, Matt, and Patrick lived in off-campus housing either by themselves or with roommates. Cal, Ty, and Walter held part-time jobs off campus. Ty was married, and Walter self-identified as gay. All seven respondents grew up in locations within two hours of the ECU campus. Three respondents (David, Patrick, and John) described their neighborhoods as racially and culturally diverse or majority Black, and two (Matt and Walter) described their neighborhoods as majority White, and two (Cal and Ty) described their neighborhoods as rural.

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological systems theory of human development was used as the main theoretical framework for the study. This theory helped provide a context for examining the influence of environmental factors on identity development. And since racial identity development is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon in and of itself, additional theories were employed to specifically connect the influence of the environment with the various stages of racial consciousness development that might exist among the participants. The additional theories I selected to help support the study included the WRC model (Rowe, Behrens, & Leach, 1995), the Key model of White male identity development (Scott & Robinson, 2001), and Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement. The three additional theories were used to add specificity and precision to the study. Whereas Bronfenbrenner's theory focused on the environment and its impact, the additional theories focused on specific aspects of the participant's experience and how they contributed to their development.

METHODS/DATA COLLECTION

One of the primary goals of the study was to understand how the participants made meaning of their experiences. Thus, interviewing was the main method of data collection selected. The in-depth interview approach linked the making of meaning to the behaviors that participants exhibited as they navigated the campus and managed their position within various environments. Six of the participants were interviewed three times, and one participant was interviewed twice. Each of the first two interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes, and the third interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed, in addition to handwritten notes that were taken during each conversation.

In addition to interviewing, I incorporated observation and document analysis as complementary sources of data. I carefully observed the environment both on campus and in the community, including classrooms and academic buildings, the library, the athletic facility, the cafeteria, one of the main student parking lots, and the main campus grounds. Examples of the documents I analyzed included fact book data, e-mails, and an academic paper written by one of the participants.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the development of WRC among full-time, White male undergraduate students attending a public, predominantly Black HBCU by examining their

academic and social experiences within the HBCU environment. A total of four significant and often overlapping themes emerged from the data collected for this study. The four themes were (1) influence of family and neighborhoods, (2) classroom environments, (3) social environments, and (4) greater awareness of race and privilege (which included the subthemes of experiences with discrimination and judgment, perceptions of privilege, and personal development). Although the final theme was the most central to the study, the three other themes provide largely environmental contexts grounding the personal awareness described in the fourth theme. These environmental themes directly relate to the theoretical framework and help illustrate the intersection of race, gender, and environment.

The research questions guiding the study were as follows: (1) How do White male undergraduate students attending a public HBCU make meaning of their academic and social experiences in terms of their WRC development? (2) What roles might being a temporary minority play in WRC development in White male students at a public HBCU? (3) What roles might White male privilege play in informing the academic and social experiences of White male students attending a public HBCU?

With regard to the first research question, over all the students had positive experiences in academic settings both in the classroom and in group meetings. The participants did, however, describe situations where they felt hypervisible, being the only White student in the class or one of the very few. The participants also described self-censoring behavior in the classroom, which involved choosing not to join class discussions for fear of negative reactions to their opinions, which could lead to heightened visibility and negative regard. Several participants also described being looked upon to speak as the representative for the White point of view during discussions in class. This form of race spokesmanship is somewhat similar to what many students of color have described experiencing at predominately White institutions (PWIs), except for the greater authoritative stance that is granted to Whites (Rowe et al., 1995).

Socially, participants described a clear disconnect with nonacademic aspects of the campus environment. Many participants would often leave campus on the weekends, spending time in the neighboring city or on the campus of the PWI in the neighboring city. The participants' social environments were complex and involved different circles of friends depending on the setting and the types of activities involved.

With regard to the second research question, academic and social environments played a significant role in students' experiences of temporary minority status. Within the classroom environment, the participants described experiences that made them feel singled out and hypervisible as White students. Their immediate strategies, such as self-censoring, illustrated that the students recognized their "minority" status, accepted it to some degree, and developed ways to respond and interact within that particular setting.

Socially, the majority of participants chose to live off campus and to maintain social circles independent of, or in addition to, their relationships on their home campus. Like many of their peers, most of the participants created social networks at the neighboring PWI. The majority of participants also maintained more social relationships with family and friends from their home communities, and the "suitcase" reputation of their school facilitated this maintenance. These behaviors appeared to suggest that in certain ways the participants felt uncomfortable with the temporary minority role and preferred functioning in environments where they could maintain their majority status.

There was one participant in particular who stood out as an exception to many of the findings for the other participants. His early environments played a key role in his ability to adapt to and feel comfortable in

situations where he was in the minority. He grew up in a diverse neighborhood and was one of the few White students in class and often the only White student in class. His attitude toward being in the minority was much different from that of his peers. His desire to be in the minority and to stand out actually contributed to his decision to attend an HBCU, where he knew he would not be "just another White student," as he would be if he attended a PWI.

The participants also reported experiences where they felt as though they were targets of discrimination. These experiences were especially powerful because they provided an opportunity for the students to gain a temporary glimpse of what people of color may experience based solely on gender or racial/ethnic background.

The third research question focused on the role of White male privilege in the students' experiences. Both academically and socially, the participants always knew that any discomfort they may experience as a temporary minority on campus could easily be alleviated by removing themselves from the campus environment in favor of an environment where they perhaps felt more comfortable. Some of the participants expressed their awareness of the privileges that were available to them, whereas others appeared oblivious to their existence. Several participants privileged the rightness or appropriateness of their own standards and opinions to the detriment of those held by others. For example, several participants were very critical of the university administration and the way the university operated. One participant in particular described his frustration with how the administration had a tendency to hire friends, relatives, or other "insiders" for critical positions regardless of their qualifications for or knowledge of the job. Another respondent noted the insider advantages in corporate America for White males but was also quick to ascribe merit to these individuals and to this "good old boys" network, which he acknowledged would privilege him over people of color and women.

Overall the participants experienced some forms of racial consciousness development grounded at least partially in their temporary minority status. Rowe et al. (1995) stated that "although attitudes are often quite resistant to verbal persuasion, they frequently change as a result of direct or vicarious experience that is inconsistent of or in conflict with previously held attitudes" (p. 226). This study provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences in their own words and to express their own interpretations of those experiences.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory of Human Development

Urie Bronfenbrenner is widely regarded as one of the leading scholars in the areas of developmental psychology, child rearing, and the interdisciplinary domain of the ecology of human development, which he created. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological (formerly termed as *ecological*; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992) systems theory of human development was used to contextualize the intersections of race, gender, and environment that were of principal interest in the study. The theory posits "the dynamic, developmental relations between an active individual and his or her complex, integrated, and changing ecology" (Lerner, 2005, pp. xvii–xviii). The cornerstone of the theoretical structure is the ecology of human development, which Bronfenbrenner (2005) defined as

> the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 107)

Bronfenbrenner derived his ecological paradigm from Kurt Lewin's (as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998) formula, $B = f(P \times E)$, which states that behavior (B) is a function (f) of the interaction ($\times$) of a person (P) with the environment (E). To understand why people behave the way they do, factors such as their characteristics, background, and developmental levels must be examined (Evans et al., 1998). In particular, the HBCU environment could prove to be developmentally challenging for White male students who are accustomed to being in the majority. As a result, the student might disengage from the environment, isolate himself from others, and seek alternate environments that he might find more comfortable. Bronfenbrenner's theory could also provide insight into the ways in which the White male student sees himself as a student at an HBCU, in contrast to the ways in which he might see himself beyond the campus in society at large. This model was most appropriate for this study because it emphasizes the examination of both the student and the interactions with the environment. The influence of the environment is especially salient to this study because of White male students' positions as members of a smaller minority of students on the HBCU campus.

Renn's (2003) study of mixed-race college students utilized this model as a conceptual framework for racial identity development in college students. She stated that "conceptualizing the development of individual students within a complex, dynamic, interactive web of environments, some of which do not even contain them, provides a rich contextual field of study of cognitive, moral, and identity development" (p. 386). This study examined the interaction and influence of the complex, dynamic, interactive web of environments that Renn speaks of, in a way that provides insight into the strategies participants might utilize to manage their position within these environments.

Bronfenbrenner's model, based on his bioecological systems theory of human development, is composed of four levels of nested contexts, called (1) microsystems, (2) mesosystems, (3) exosystems, and (4) macrosystems, which place the individual at the center of developmental influences (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Renn, 2003). Microsystems involve the people present within one's settings, the nature of these links, and their indirect influence on the developing person through their effect on those who deal with him or her firsthand (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Microsystems may include classrooms, athletic teams, student organizations, on- or off-campus jobs, or families of origin (Renn, 2003). Specific microsystems that may help characterize White males' environment at an HBCU would include aspects such as their academic major, classrooms, labs, academic interactions, campus activities, outside interests, and on- or off-campus living status, and the proximity of their living space to the campus. All of these may potentially affect the development of their racial consciousness. An important microsystem that emerged from the data in this study was the presence of another university located approximately 15 miles away in a neighboring city. This institution was predominately White and served as an important social outlet for some of the participants.

Mesosystems comprise the relations among two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). An example of the synergistic effects that may be created by the interaction of microsystems relevant to the current study may include a student's peer groups on campus as

compared with peer groups off campus. According to Renn (2003), "micro- and mesosystem environments may conflict or converge in their developmental influences" (p. 389), especially if students are forced to consider their racial/ethnic identity in new and different ways. A White male student at an HBCU may receive conflicting messages about who he is and his role in society or on campus based on messages received from family and friends versus messages received from administrators, faculty, campus peer groups, and other sets of friends.

Exosystems are defined as settings that do not contain a developing person but in which events occur that affect the setting containing the person (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Examples of exosystems that might influence the environment of a college student could include items such as federal financial aid policies, institutional policy decisions, and parents' or spouse's workplace (Renn, 2003). Exosystems relevant to this study include these and, in particular, institutional policies regarding the recruitment and retention of non-Black students, institutional scholarship opportunities for White students, the history and culture of the HBCU, as well as the evolving mission.

Macrosystems encompass "the overarching patterns of stability, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, in forms of social organization and associated belief systems and lifestyles" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 47). Macrosystems are considered the most distal levels of environmental influence (Renn, 2003), which affect the nature of interaction within all other levels of the ecology of human development (Lerner, 2005). Examples of macrosystems might include cultural expectations, social forces, and historical trends and events (Renn, 2003). Examples specific to this study included societal issues surrounding race, privilege, and power; sexual orientation and religion; historical influences such as segregation and desegregation; and past and present court cases addressing collegiate desegregation.

Figure 11.1 provides an illustration of a theoretical model based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development, which shows the various environmental factors that were thought to be relevant to this study prior to data collection. Figure 11.2 illustrates an adapted model modified to include the environmental factors that emerged from the data collected during the study. These illustrations help illuminate the influence of the environment on development according to Bronfenbrenner's work. The geographical, social, and cultural environments specific to each participant helped establish a reveling context for the examination of the findings in the study.

Other Theoretical Frameworks Used

Three additional theoretical frameworks helped frame the critical intersection of race, gender, and environment: (1) the WRC model, (2) the Key model of White male identity development, and (3) Astin's theory of student involvement.

Figure 11.1 Theoretical Model Based on Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory of Human Development

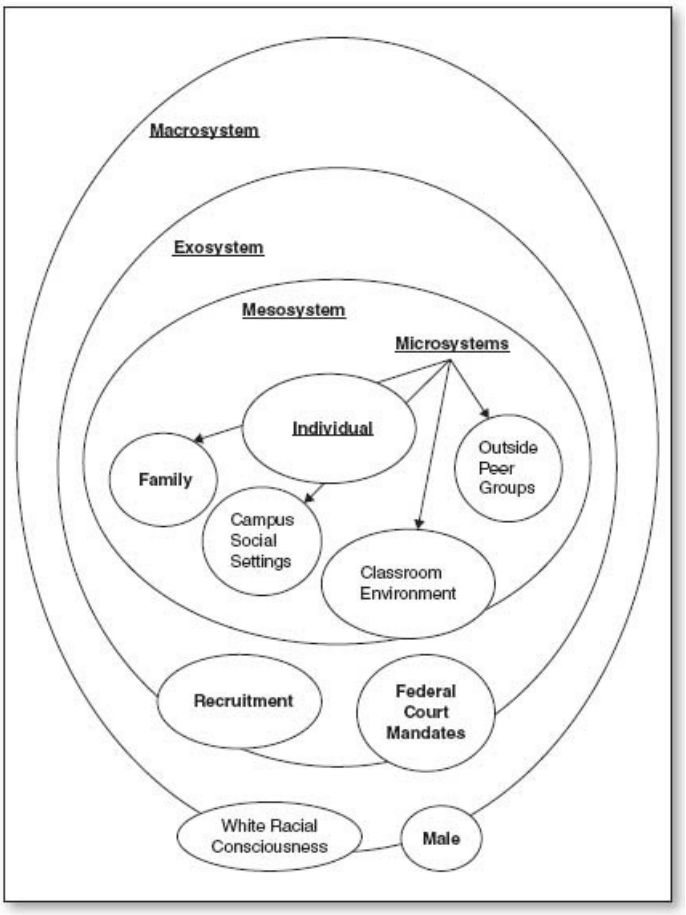
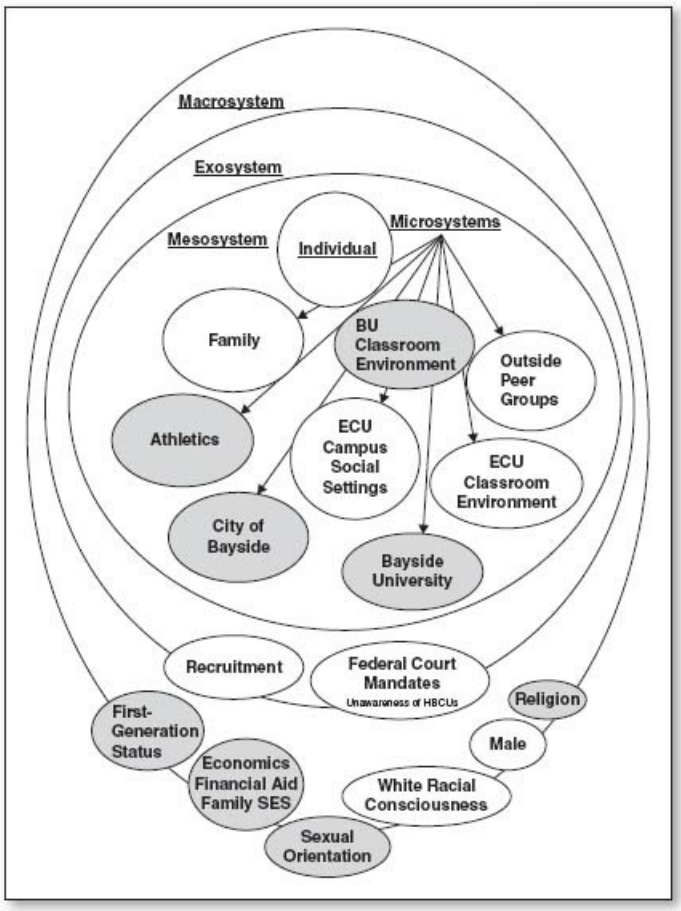


Figure 11.2 Adapted Theoretical Model Based on Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory of Human Development



NOTE: Items in gray circles were added based on the data. BU = Bayside University; ECU = East Coast University; HBCUs = historically Black colleges and universities; SES = socioeconomic status.

THE WRC MODEL

The WRC model was developed by Rowe, Behrens, and Leach from the field of multicultural counseling and based on the "characteristic attitudes held by a person regarding the significance of being White, particularly in terms of what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership" (Rowe et al., 1995). The seven categories or types of WRC proposed in the model were adapted from Phinney's (1990) stages of ethnic identity.

The WRC conceptual model includes seven distinct types. Three "unachieved" types—(1) avoidant, (2) dependent, and (3) dissonant—are characterized by the absence of either exploration or commitment to racial/ethnic minority issues or concerns. The avoidant type involves attitudes that include lack of consideration of one's own race as well as avoidance of concern for racial/ethnic minority issues. The dependent type refers to those who seem to have developed some kind of WRC but have not personally considered alternative perspectives. Those with dissonant attitudes display uncertainty regarding what to think about issues dealing with racial/ethnic minorities, therefore displaying a lack of commitment to attitudes they may express. Dissonant attitudes can also mark the transition from one set of racial attitudes to another.

Four "achieved" types—(1) conflictive, (2) dominative, (3) integrative, and (4) reactive—are characterized by both exploration and commitment to racial/ethnic minority issues. The conflictive type involves attitudes that condemn obvious discrimination toward racial/ethnic minorities but are opposed to programs or practices

intended to reduce the effects of discrimination. Dominative attitudes are based on the belief that the majority society is entitled to dominate members of racial/ethnic minority groups because of an inherent superiority. Integrative attitudes reflect an acceptance of one's "White-ness," with a pragmatic view of ethnic/minority issues, believing that racism can be overcome by goodwill, rational thought, and democratic processes. Reactive attitudes refer to views that can be considered militant in reaction to the recognized racism in American society. The reactive type also includes identification with minority groups, romanticizing the plight of minority groups, feelings of White guilt, and engagement in paternalistic behaviors (Rowe et al., 1995).

The WRC model served as the principle lens for examining respondents' racial identity aspects within Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development. The WRC model also permitted a deeper focus on the experiences of being White within the HBCU campus environment. Furthermore, as a companion to the WRC model, the Key model of White male identity development (Scott & Robinson, 2001) was used in an effort to focus more specifically on the White male and issues of White privilege. Taken together, these three theoretical models helped link the respondents with the environment, with WRC, and with White male privilege, which were the main components of the study.

THE KEY MODEL

The Key model of White male identity development is a theoretically derived identity model influenced by the works of Helms (1995), Myers et al. (1991), and Sue and Sue (1990). The Key model addresses the convergence of race and gender attitudes that White men may exhibit as a result of socially constructed attitudes regarding appropriate displays of manhood in their lives (Scott & Robinson, 2001). Scott and Robinson (2001) explain that although the model is not linear in its design, it does reflect the assumption that the initial phases of development involve minimal self-interrogation, whereas the higher levels of development reflect a personal crisis and subsequent resolution that leads to greater self-knowledge. One of the overarching goals of the model is to help White men challenge the debilitating socialized notion that they are superior to others, which can be done through education and experience (Scott & Robinson, 2001). The Key model itself is circular and suggests that movement occurs in multiple directions. The model is composed of five types of identity stages: (1) noncontact, (2) claustrophobic, (3) conscious identity, (4) empirical, and (5) optimal.

The noncontact type is characterized by little or no knowledge of races other than one's own, minimizing issues dealing with race, and endorsement of traditional gender roles. The claustrophobic type involves a belief that women and people of color are receiving unmerited advantages at the White male's expense and placing the blame on them. The conscious identity type is characterized by a precipitating event, whether positive or negative, that creates dissonance between a person's current beliefs and real-life experiences. During this phase, a person may either adapt attitudes of the claustrophobic type or transition into the empirical type. The empirical type involves the realizations that racism and sexism are real and that unearned privileges have been received. The optimal type is marked by a worldview that has changed to involve a more holistic understanding of the common struggle of all people and increased knowledge of the oppression that underpins efforts to promote equality and equity (Scott & Robinson, 2001).

Although the Key model is borrowed from the field of counseling, it offers a way of understanding White

male identity growth by considering the multiple facets affecting White men's psychosocial identity development. The main counseling-related goal of the model is to facilitate growth in White males to help them see themselves as whole beings—a goal that may conflict with the types of attitudes that may exist as a function of their socialization patterns (Scott & Robinson, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, I positioned the Key model within the core level of individual development in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development, since this is where the presence of other people, the nature of their relationships, and their influences on development would occur. Aspects of the Key model helped illuminate the respondents' meaning making of the interactions and relationships between the individual and members of his environment—especially with Black peers, classmates, professors, and administrators with whom a student may come in contact.

Student Involvement Theory

Astin (1984) defined student involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). Highly involved students might devote considerable energy to studying, student organizations, and interaction with faculty and other students, whereas uninvolved students would not expend their energies in these areas (Astin, 1984). This theory contends that it is not so much what the individual thinks or feels but what the individual does that defines and identifies involvement (Astin, 1984).

Astin's (1984) involvement theory has five postulates: (1) involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects; (2) regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum —that is, different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times; (3) involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features; (4) the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality of student involvement in that program; (5) the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (p. 298). This approach focuses on factors that facilitate development rather than examining development itself. For student learning and growth to take place, students need to actively engage in their environment (Evans et al., 1998).

For the purpose of this study, I positioned student involvement theory within Bronfenbrenner's model as one potential way of interpreting the relationships between the individual student and the amount of time and energy spent within the campus environment. In other words, student involvement theory helped illuminate aspects of the mesosystem, which comprises the relations among two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Astin's involvement theory includes both academic and social pursuits, which are cornerstones of this study. Outcalt and Skewes-Cox (2002) brought Astin's emphasis on student involvement to bear on Bronfenbrenner's more general concepts of human ecology by proposing a theory of reciprocal engagement, in which "students and their campuses exist in a relationship of mutual influence. Bronfenbrenner reminds us that environments must be studied as carefully as, and in tandem with, individuals" (p. 333).

Based on these theoretical perspectives, one working assumption relevant to this study was that students who were more actively involved in campus life would exhibit a higher degree of WRC, which is one form of individual development, than those who were less actively involved. The more involved students were most likely more aware of and comfortable with themselves and their environment. However, there were also elements of the respondents' campus experiences that affected the development of WRC in other ways. Attention to the phenomenon of involvement in this study also included a focus on potential meaningful involvements outside the campus community, particularly for the respondents who reported less campus involvement. These students felt greater comfort or affirmation in settings where they were in the majority. The role that a wide range of involvements played in the respondents' development of WRC was also explored in this study.

FINDING AND USING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As I worked to refine the focus for my study during the early stages of my research planning process, I assumed that identity development would be the foundation on which all aspects of the study would be built. I immediately began to search for theories and frameworks related to White identity development. After discovering the WRC and Key models, I thought I had all I needed to proceed with the research since these models addressed the areas of race and gender. However, after further examining these models, I realized that something was missing. Racial consciousness and identity development were definitely critical components of the study, but there was nothing to address the possible influences of the environment, which I believed to be an even more critical component of the study. As I wrestled with these ideas, I realized that the true focus of the study was not just to explore WRC development in White male college students but to explore WRC development in White male college students as influenced by their being White and male at a historically Black university. I needed to address this critical dynamic in a specific and intentional way.

My initial exposure to Bronfenbrenner's work came in two, very important forms: first, through word of mouth and, then, through my own process of familiarizing myself with the existing literature. I was fortunate to have a classmate a year ahead of me in the doctoral program whose research focused on minority stress and the well-being of sexual minority college students (Johnson, 2005). She was utilizing Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development as a guiding framework for the study and recommended that I learn more about it to see if it might be a good fit for my study. As I explored the literature, I came upon a study of mixed-race college students (Renn, 2003) that utilized Bronfenbrenner's model as a conceptual framework for examining racial identity development in college students. This study bore many similarities to the type of study I planned to conduct, so it became clear to me that Bronfenbrenner's work could be used in some way as a foundational component of my study.

Once I became more familiar with Bronfenbrenner's theory, I realized that it could be used to ground my study, rather than one of the identity development models I had originally assumed I would use. The theory helped guide and simplify my approach toward the study because it provided a way to contextualize the intersection of race, gender, and environment in a clear and understandable way. I was also encouraged by the visual depiction of the model, which allowed me to explore ideas for determining what elements of the participants' lives could be considered for inclusion in the theoretical model I would use for my study. The use

of Bronfenbrenner's theory opened my mind, guided my thinking, and challenged my assumptions about the direction the study should take. You know you have found the "right" framework when you identify one that helps bring order and direction to all the ideas you have about your study and yet also compels you to dig deeper for greater understanding and comprehension. A good theoretical framework should do all those things and more, which can be very liberating, and also very frustrating at the same time.

I was very fortunate to find Bronfenbrenner's theory very early on in the development of my study; however, for some, it might be a much longer process plagued by false starts, dead ends, and roundtrip tickets back to the drawing board. However, based on my own experience, I believe that consulting with other scholars, advisors, and faculty members as well as immersing yourself in both directly and indirectly related literature are extremely useful strategies to utilize during the process of identifying an appropriate theoretical framework for your study. Since no theoretical framework is perfect, it is important to critically analyze and evaluate various theories to determine their applicability to your research. It is also important to explore theories from other disciplines that might add context and depth to your study. Psychology, sociology, social work, philosophy, law, history, and ethnic studies are just some of the areas that could be considered for inclusion in your study.

EFFECTS OF THE FRAMEWORK ON THE STUDY

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development (2005) served as a solid foundation on which to build my research. Very early in the design stage of the study, the theory contributed to the formation of the research questions developed for the study by allowing the environment to remain as the common denominator within the participants' experience in relation to the intersections of race, gender, and other personal attributes.

Bronfenbrenner's model helped locate the student participants in multiple contexts and allowed me to examine their experiences in the face-to-face academic and social settings in which they participate as students (microsystems) and to explore what occurred when those systems interacted (mesosystems). This model also incorporated potentially relevant influences that do not contain the participants per se (exosystems), in addition to the overarching influence of characteristics of time, place, race, development, and culture (macrosystems). The use of Bronfenbrenner's model in this study incorporated all these factors, which framed the students' experiences broadly and helped illustrate the dynamics and interplay related to the students' development of racial consciousness.

A visual theoretical model based on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological systems theory of human development was developed based on participant characteristics prior to conducting the interviews (Figure 11.1). On completion of the data collection and analysis, an updated model was created to reflect a more accurate representation of participant experiences (Figure 11.2). One of the strengths of using Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological systems theory of human development as the main theoretical framework for my study was that it allowed me the flexibility to modify the model by adding both microsystems and macrosystems that emerged directly from the data. These were critical items that I would have had no way of knowing about prior to collecting data from the participants.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development helped illustrate the complex

environments and influences that were present in the lives of the participants. The use of Bronfenbrenner's multiple systems perspective permitted a broader examination of personal development that attends to multiple simultaneous environments and influences. The HBCU environment can be challenging for White male students who are otherwise accustomed to being in the majority, and the college campus per se may not be the primary environment of reference for these students' meaning making and development. The majority of the participants came from neighborhoods and backgrounds that were not as diverse and did not prepare them for what they experienced at ECU. The participants had to engage in a process of observing the environment and then deciding how to manage their position within it. The participants indicated that they experienced growth as a result of attending ECU, and in many cases, they changed the ways they thought about issues of racism and discrimination.

The participants in this study consistently spoke of how the experience of being a temporary minority at ECU transformed their way of thinking about themselves and others. This type of development is consistent with the literature that suggests that White students who attend HBCUs are often able to engage in more comprehensive actualization (Brown, 2002) regarding issues of racism and discrimination, have less difficulty in communicating with people from diverse backgrounds, and have a greater likelihood of dismissing racial stereotypes as false or inaccurate (Willie, 1983). Overall, the participants in this study were able to find value in the opportunity to engage in new experiences and environments that would contribute to their personal growth and development, as stated in the literature (Drummond, 2000; Hall & Closson, 2005; Thomas, 2002; Thomas-Lester, 2004).

Because of its emphasis on the environment, the theoretical framework in many ways required me, as the researcher, to not only write about the environment but also travel to the campus to experience the environment for myself. The location of the campus, the layout and structure, the visual aesthetics and architecture, and the symbols and artifacts of the campus, whether seen or unseen, all contributed to my understanding of the environment itself and its influence on the participants.

The theoretical framework guided my thinking regarding the identification and location of the variables that would appear within the macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem for the student participants. In turn, these variables influenced the questions that were asked, which ultimately influenced the data that were obtained as a result.

Just as the theoretical framework influenced the formation of the research questions and the methods of data collection, it also influenced the approach toward data analysis. There were four significant themes that emerged from the data, of which one was developmental in nature, while the other three were environmental in nature. The developmental theme was inextricably tied to the three environmental themes, thus illustrating the complex intersection of race, gender, and environment, which was of principal interest in this study.

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12

Theoretical Frameworks in Brief

lagniappe: *"noun \'lan-'yap, lan-'\ . . . something given or obtained gratuitously or by way of good measure"*

—Merriam-Webster (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lagniappe)

To add to the variety and richness of the theoretical frameworks presented in the preceding chapters, we asked a handful of former doctoral students with whom we had worked who had completed qualitative studies to develop "briefs" focusing on the theoretical framework they had used in their studies. They were asked to provide descriptions of their studies and of the theoretical frameworks they had chosen, an explanation of why they had chosen that framework and how the framework had affected their study, and details of other frameworks they had considered, much as we had asked of the chapter authors—but in briefer form. The frameworks they describe vary from the familiar, e.g., work-life balance, to the somewhat esoteric, e.g., flow theory, and they were not selected on any basis other than that they were accessible and different from those discussed in preceding chapters. If they help to encourage other beginning researchers to pursue a theoretical framework to guide their own research with greater confidence, they will have served their purpose. Of the eight students we invited to contribute to the venture, only five were able to accept the invitation. The authors of these briefs are identified, with their current (postgraduation) positions and the title and source of the doctoral dissertation on which the brief is based.

Exploring the Status of Learning Outcome–Focused Initiatives in Four-Year Public Higher Education

Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2012)

(http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/1546)

Andrew Q. Morse

Educational Policy Analyst, Board of Governors, State University System of Florida

The purpose of this study was to explore the present status of efforts to assess student learning outcomes within the bachelor's degree–granting institutions in one system of public higher education. Furthermore, the purpose of this study was to understand what challenges and criticisms academic leaders report about the call to provide learning outcome evidence.

I conducted a multisite case study using semistructured interviews, field notes, and site documents to secure information about learning outcome–focused initiatives on each campus. Each site was investigated under the common theme of the experiences and perceptions of academic leaders to respond to accountability expectations for student learning outcome evidence.

Bolman and Deal's (2003) "organizational frames" model served as this study's theoretical framework.

This model is tied to the business discipline, but broad overlap in the factors, or frames, that constitute organizations (structural, human relations, symbolic, and political) provides for its application to educational settings. For an in-depth explanation of this model, see Bolman and Deal's (2003) book *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. The overlapping factors include an established division of labor to achieve the mission, the presence of conflict for power and authority, and the existence of a shared set of traditions and values. This theoretical framework provided a bridge between me as the researcher and the participants in relation to their organizational roles, their struggles for power and authority, traditions of practice, and institutional values in the context of student learning outcomes assessment. As a result, the organizational frames model guided me to frame the interview dialogue with the participants, the discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions, and the study's conclusions and recommendations.

Reference

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Flow and the College Experience

Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2009)

(http://etd.utk.edu/2009/Spring2009Dissertations/LewterJohnA.pdf)

Andy Lewter

Dean of Students, Georgia College

Flow experiences are described as a state of consciousness where a person becomes totally absorbed in the experience. If college students experience flow, it is reasonable to conjecture that these experiences might positively affect their engagement, retention, academic progress, and graduation. To learn more about this possibility, the purpose of the study was to describe the flow experiences of undergraduate college students, guided by the following three research questions: (1) To what extent do undergraduate college students report having "flow" experiences? (2) How do undergraduate college students describe their "flow" experiences? (3) How have "flow" experiences affected undergraduate college student's college experience?

A total of 24 undergraduate college students from seven different subcultures (athletics, fine arts, outdoor recreation, academic scholars, community volunteers, student government, noninvolved) participated in one of six mixed focus groups. During the focus groups, the participants were given four written examples of flow experiences and asked to write down examples of any similar experiences in their own lives. Then, the participants were asked a series of semistructured, open-ended questions related to the research questions. A three-level qualitative analysis was used to interpret the participants' responses.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the psychological concept of "flow" as first described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1975. He began to investigate the range of experiences that became known as flow during the course of his doctoral research on male artists in the 1960s (Csikszentmihalyi, 1965). The artists in his study spent hour after hour painting or sculpting with great concentration, yet they

commonly lost all interest in a painting as soon as it was finished. He found that none of the extrinsic rewards like money or prestige seemed to motivate the artists. Even the finished product did not bring them satisfaction. Only the process of creation or the opportunity to create motivated them. They painted for the sake of painting.

This finding of the role of intrinsic motivation in creative endeavors did not accord with the prevailing sentiment at the time, with the possible exception of Maslow, who developed the concept of peak experiences to explain the motivation of those who worked hard because the work itself was rewarding, rather than for some external reward. Maslow linked this motivation to a desire for self-actualization, a need to explore one's potentialities and limitations through intense activity and experience. Maslow's concept of peak experiences laid the conceptual foundation for the phenomenon of flow.

Building on Maslow's concept of peak experience, Csikszentmihalyi explored activities outside of creative endeavors, questioned what other activities might produce flow experiences, and speculated whether it was possible for everyone to experience flow. Using in-depth interviews and observations of more than 200 individuals who spent time and energy on activities that provided few extrinsic rewards, he examined the participants' experiences and how they were feeling when things seemed to be going particularly well. These interviews led to the identification of a common set of components that distinguish flow activities from the rest of everyday life. These components included (1) a balancing of perceived challenge and perceived skill, (2) a merging of action awareness, (3) a clear set of goals, (4) the receiving of unambiguous feedback, (5) the loss of self-consciousness, (6) concentrating on the task at hand, (7) experiencing a sense of control, (8) a feeling of transformed time, and (9) the outcome of autotelic experience. These nine components appeared to be common to flow experiences regardless of the activity, and the interaction of these components led to the flow experience.

Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow had largely been studied in relation to sports, but few studies had used it broadly to study the college experience, as in this study. Other frameworks were considered, including Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement and Vincent Tinto's theory of student departure. However, neither seemed as appropriate or as potentially powerful as Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow. The conceptual framework of flow, drawn from positive psychology, was pivotal to every aspect of the study from conception, to design, to analysis of the data.

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Work, Life, and Community College Faculty: Understanding Community College Work–Life Balance Issues Through Socialization Theory and Academic Discipline

Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2013)

(http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/2442)

David S. Key

Associate Professor of History, Pellissippi State Community College

The purpose of my dissertation was to gain a greater understanding of work–life balance issues among community college faculty. As a result, I sought to identify community college work–life issues using Tierney and Rhoads's (1994) faculty socialization theory as the theoretical framework for the study. Furthermore, I was also interested in investigating how socialization theory might explain differences by academic discipline, particularly in terms of work–life balance issues and if such differences produced a culture that engendered work–life challenges unique to the community college.

During my graduate education, I became interested in faculty socialization and the impact it has on faculty work. While studying the concepts of socialization theory, I became more interested in how faculty culture is created and disseminated. Ultimately, my research led me to implementTierney and Rhoads's (1994) concept of faculty socialization and culture as my theoretical framework. This framework was developed for better understanding colleges and universities as cultures by pointing to the importance of the specific environment, the mission, and socialization processes. Tierney and Rhoads's theory continued earlier works focused on socialization and culture by Merton (1957), Clark (1987), Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Becher (1987), and Tierney (1988). Their framework, while steeped in organization theory, emphasized a more localized understanding of the socialization process. Accordingly, Tierney and Rhoads's (1994) emphasis at the local level serves to highlight the nuances that may exist between different academic institutions and cultures. Tierney and Rhoads's theory of faculty socialization and its emphasis on understanding the impact of socialization and cultures at the local level guided the formation and structure of my study, informed my research questions, and guided the analysis of the data by allowing for the use of concept-driven codes to help answer my research questions.

Data were collected through interviews with 11 full-time community college faculty members from the science and English departments who had at least one child. The participants included 1 male and 4 female English faculty members and 4 male and 2 female faculty representing science. One of the science faculty members identified as African American, while all of the remaining faculty identified as Caucasian. The findings revealed that all of these community college members struggled to balance their personal and professional lives due to the time demands associated with faculty workload and family life. In addition, the findings revealed differences between members of the two disciplines. For science faculty, instructional issues had the greatest effect on work–life balance, and for English faculty, it was grading. The faculty described how they were most often familiarized to faculty life through informal interactions with their colleagues that were both affirming and supportive. However, while the faculty felt supported as they transitioned into community college life, they were adopting behaviors that often created work–life balance issues specific to community college work. As Tierney and Rhoads's (1994) theory of socialization suggests, the formation of faculty culture is bidirectional. The faculty were adopting traits that they may eventually pass on to future faculty members, thus reaffirming a culture that is both specific to community college life and detrimental to the work–life balance of its faculty.

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Athletes' Experience of Poor Coaching

Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2009)

(http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/17)

Brian T. Gearity

Assistant Professor, Human Performance and Recreation, University of Southern Mississippi

The purpose of my doctoral dissertation study was to explore collegiate, professional, and semiprofessional athletes' perceptions/experience of poor coaching. The research design was guided by the tenets of existential phenomenology, which also served as the study's theoretical framework (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997).

Existential phenomenology is, at the same time, a philosophy and a qualitative research methodology. It grew out of the discipline of philosophy and the theorizing of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Alfred Schutz, who were interested in using logic and experience to understand phenomena such as consciousness, the body, time, death, and culture. Second-generation scholars such as Amedeo Giorgi, Howard Pollio, Max Van Manen, Clark Moustakas, and others from psychology, sociology, and education have drawn on phenomenology's philosophical roots to develop it as a contemporary qualitative research methodology, which finds justification in trying to get at people's perception of phenomena without having that perception directed or influenced in an impure way by the researcher.

To understand athletes' experience of poor coaching, I conducted and audiotaped 16 face-to-face, in-depth interviews of 30 to 85 minutes' duration with former or current collegiate, professional, and semiprofessional athletes. Staying true to Husserl's call to understand "the things themselves" (i.e., free from imposed understandings), my interview protocol relied on a single, grand-tour interview question: "Tell me about a specific time you experienced poor coaching." I used follow-up probes to further explore the athletes' experience. I stopped conducting interviews when I reached theoretical saturation, when no new experiences improved my understanding of poor coaching.

Since existential phenomenology relies on people's perception of phenomena, I did not have existing concepts available to use to interpret my data. I inductively interpreted the data to construct a theoretical description of athletes' experience of poor coaching. At the end of my study, I found it challenging to compare my findings with other existing theories. I was naive in not recognizing that we were looking at the same

phenomena using different lenses.

At the time of my study, research on effective coaching was beginning to emerge; however, there was very little research on poor coaching. I considered two other frameworks commonly used in sport studies before choosing the one I did: Chelladurai's multidimensional model of sport leadership and Bandura's self-efficacy theory. I found them too restrictive for my interest. The former, adapted to sport from the field of business, reduced coach behavior to five categories and was mostly concerned with athlete satisfaction, while the latter's focus was primarily self-efficacy and its development. I decided that existential phenomenology was an appropriate theoretical framework to guide my study because it allowed for a more expansive consideration of the experience of poor coaching from the athlete's perspective. Looking back on my experience, I also think I was influenced to choose this lens due to the support of a phenomenological research group and several faculty at Tennessee who were experts in phenomenology.

Reference

Pollio, H. R., Henley, T. B., & Thompson, C. J. (1997). *The phenomenology of everyday lift*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

The Principal's Role in Developing and Sustaining Professional Learning Communities: A Mixed-Methods Case Study

Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2012)

(http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/1356)

Ginger Mink Teague

Associate Director of Instruction, Project Lead The Way

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the principal in developing and sustaining professional learning communities in elementary school settings. This exploratory, sequential, mixed-method case study was conducted using Hord's (1997, 1998, 2008) five dimensions of a professional learning community (PLC) as the theoretical framework. The initial quantitative phase involved 107 teachers from eight elementary schools from the same school district in a state in the southeastern United States, responding to the Professional Learning Communities Assessment–Revised instrument (Olivier & Hipp, 2010), which is designed to assess perceptions concerning the extent to which PLC practices are found in their school settings. The quantitative data analysis led to the selection of two elementary schools with strong evidence of PLC practices to serve as cases for the qualitative phase that followed. Through interviews, observations, and artifacts, I was able to examine the ways in which the principal fosters or hinders the work of PLCs in elementary schools. Three themes were found to describe the principal's role in developing and sustaining PLCs: (1) relationships matter, (2) the principal's support is critical, and (3) structure is important. These themes were consistent with the supportive conditions dimensions as articulated in the theoretical framework (Hord, 1997, 1998, 2008).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From my review of the literature on PLCs and the role of principal leadership, two related theoretical frameworks, both grounded in the conception of learning communities, surfaced. First, looking outside of educational theory, Senge's (1990) work and research on learning communities offered a lens for the examination of PLCs and the role of the principal. A second framework, Hord's (1997, 1998, 2008) five dimensions of a PLC, was grounded in the school setting and was actually formulated from the work of Senge. It is this latter framework that I chose as the framework for this study.

After participating in a learning community that incorporated Senge's five disciplines, Hord (1997, 1998) undertook a study, designed to explore learning communities in school settings from a conceptual standpoint. Hord (1997) identified five dimensions of PLCs critical to effective learning communities: (1) shared values and vision, (2) shared and supportive leadership, (3) collective learning and application, (4) shared personal practice, and (5) supportive conditions. After I reviewed the historical development of PLCs and bodies of research on PLCs, Hord's five dimensions continued to stand out as the best lens for this study. The framework, which stemmed from successful practices in schools, offered a filter consistent with the purpose of the study for examining the role of the principal in developing PLCs and sustaining their practices.

The five dimensions first served as a filter for sorting and making sense of the wealth of literature reviewed for this study. With the term *professional learning community* often used to denote any group of educators that meet together for any purpose, being able to discern the characteristics of PLCs that are truly learning communities was important. The framework provided an understanding of successful practices of PLCs and also led me to pose questions about gaps in the research that needed to be addressed in this and future studies. While the literature on PLCs often pointed to the importance of the principal in PLC implementation, examinations of the role played by the principal were lacking.

As the study was conceived, Hord's (1997, 1998, 2008) framework guided every aspect of the study from the development of the research questions to the analysis of the data. To select schools to serve as cases for the qualitative phase, I needed to identify schools demonstrating successful PLC practices. Thus, the first research question explored evidence of the five dimensions of PLCs in the participating schools. The survey instrument utilized in this study was developed to assess perceptions of PLC practices. Olivier and Hipp (2010) created this instrument around research-based practices related to Hord's framework. As I sought to explore the principal's role, the interview questions used with them were developed to explore how the principal can hinder or promote the five dimensions. These practices also served as a guide for observations as I looked for operationalization of the practices associated with these dimensions. As the data were collected and analyzed, the framework served as a filter for making sense of the data collected in both quantitative and qualitative phases. I was able to organize the findings as well as ask questions and discover connections between the data and practices that had been found to be indicative of successful PLCs in research. Examining the principal's role in developing shared vision and values, in implementation of shared leadership, in promoting and enabling collective learning and shared practice, and in providing and developing supportive conditions provided insight into the ways in which a principal can foster or hinder the development and sustainability of PLCs. Not only did the framework serve as a lens for examining and analyzing the data, but in the final analysis, the themes developed reflected these PLC practices. Across and within the two cases, the themes

related to the principal's role in developing and sustaining PLCs were that relationships matter, principal support is critical, and structure is important. Each of these themes fell within the supportive conditions dimensions identified in Hord's framework (1997, 1998, 2008). Thus, Hord's five dimensions of PLCs offered a theoretical framework that moved the research "beyond the realm of the descriptive into the realm of the exploratory" (Bettis & Mills, 2006, p. 68).

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Closing the Loop

Norma T. Mertz
Vincent A. Anfara Jr.

Any serious consideration of research methods in social science runs squarely into basic issues of the relationship between theory and the research process. Whether one approaches the research process from a quantitative or a qualitative perspective, theory has an important role to play. This book was designed to highlight that role, to step into the conceptual confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the nature and role of theory in qualitative research and to address, directly and by example, what a theoretical framework is, how it is used in qualitative research, and how it affects such research. The contributing authors provide accessible, understandable, self-conscious descriptions of the use of theoretical frameworks in a wide range of qualitative studies. In this way, they allow the readers to "see" contextually how such frameworks are used, enabling them to then go to the published research on which the descriptions are based and assess what has been said against what has been reported. It is clear from the authors' descriptions that theory makes an enormous difference in how we practice qualitative research.

We see the role of theory in qualitative research as basic, central, and foundational, although it may not be consciously recognized or even identified. Theory influences the way the researcher approaches the study and pervades almost all aspects of the study. It is a lens, as two contributors (Harris, Chapter 8; Henstrand, Chapter 2) note, framing and shaping what the researcher looks at, how the researcher thinks about the study and its conduct, and, in the end, how the researcher conducts the study. Other contributing authors use equally powerful metaphors to describe the role that theory plays in qualitative research: a giant sieve (Fowler, Chapter 3), a road map (Kearney & Hyle, Chapter 10), and an illuminating tool (Mutch, Chapter 9). These metaphors are powerful devices for understanding the relationship of theory and research and providing insightful "ways of thinking" and "ways of seeing" (Morgan, 1986, p. 12). To greater and lesser extents, the contributing authors demonstrate the pervasive nature of theory in their qualitative research studies. Clearly, not all contributors speak to the effect of the theory they used on every aspect of their study, but some do, and collectively they make this pervasiveness evident.

Although an increasing number of educational researchers practice and/or are being trained in the use of qualitative methods, we are mindful that the role of theory in such research has long been denied or obscured. Indeed, if acknowledged, theory was perceived to be the *product* of qualitative research. We live now in a period characterized by the "loss of theoretical innocence" (Flinders & Mills, 1993, p. xi). Our faith in "immaculate perception," as Flinders and Mills so eloquently put it, is on the wane. Qualitative researchers cannot opt out of attending to theory or of examining the role it plays in their research. Research cannot be conducted without the conscious or unconscious use of underlying theory (Broido & Manning, 2002; Papineau, 1979). Indeed, Garrison (1988) contends that those who claim to do atheoretical research do one of

the following: hold the theories tacitly, hold them explicitly but do not make them public, or "pack structural concepts that properly belong to theory into their methodology where they are hidden from their view" (p. 24) and ours.

As suggested by the contributing authors, the role of theory in qualitative research extends beyond the confines of a particular study. It situates qualitative research clearly within the scholarly conversation, adds subtlety and complexity to what appear at first glance to be simple phenomena, and allows for building a repertoire of understandings, diverse perspectives of the same phenomenon. Interestingly enough, this positions social science research more in line with research in the natural sciences. "Philosophers of science have repeatedly demonstrated that more than one theoretical construction can always be placed upon a given collection of data," while noting that "the invention of alternates is just what scientists seldom undertake except during the pre-paradigm stage of their science's development and at very special occasions during its subsequent evolution" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 76).

LESSONS FROM THE CONTRIBUTORS

The contributing authors provide lessons for us about the nature and use of theoretical frameworks in qualitative research. Among these lessons are the value of using theories from a wide variety of fields other than one's own; the challenges and problems one might have when using a particular theory and the fact that it might not fully explain the phenomenon being studied; how using different frameworks on the same data and incorporating several frameworks into a primary framework can broaden and deepen the understanding derived; that several different theoretical frameworks could have been used other than the one selected; how the theoretical framework affects every aspect of the study; and how it can potentially disrupt the dominant narrative in the field and even what counts as knowledge about a phenomenon.

But most pointedly, in sharing their journey and thinking, the authors provide insight into the two critical questions most often raised by students and neophyte researchers:

1. How do I find a theoretical framework?
2. What effects does it have on my research?

In addition to addressing these questions, drawing on the contributions of the authors in this book, we offer some suggestions for accomplishing what has been discussed.

How Do I Find a Theoretical Framework?

The challenge of finding a theoretical framework is not confined to students or neophyte researchers. Even seasoned qualitative researchers can struggle with the process of finding and selecting an appropriate framework for the studies they choose to undertake. Admittedly, finding a theoretical framework, especially one that works well for the phenomenon being studied, is not always an easy process. As illustrated in the accounts in this book, while some found themselves attracted to theories they learned about as doctoral students (e.g., Patton, Chapter 4; Henstrand, Chapter 2; Bettis & Mills, Chapter 6; Peterson, Chapter 11),

before they had specifically composed their studies, others tested recognized theories in new ways (e.g., Merriam, Chapter 5) or explored the literature deeply, within or outside their fields, searching for ones that were suitable (e.g., Fowler, Chapter 3; Harris, Chapter 8; Kearney & Hyle, Chapter 10; Mutch, Chapter 9; Strayhorn, Chapter 7). Some found the theory they came to embrace in the process of or after data collection (e.g., Mills & Bettis, Chapter 6; Strayhorn, Chapter 7).

The process of finding and selecting a particular framework may not be easy, nor is there a tried and true method for finding one, but it is critical to most qualitative studies. Although you may be lucky and find one quickly and painlessly, or even have one handed to you by a professor for your thesis or dissertation, the fact remains that in all likelihood you will have to actively search for a theoretical framework. No doubt this pursuit will be characterized by intensive reading of existing research both within and outside one's field, discussion with colleagues, and finding, reflecting on, and discarding several potential theoretical frameworks before one is finally chosen. You will, in all likelihood, know when you have found the "right" one for you to use: when it resonates with the way you are thinking implicitly about the problem you are researching, when it makes sense and provides clarity for those thoughts, when it seems to provide direction for the study, and when it just seems to fit, as suggested by a number of the contributors. As revealed in the chapters, the researchers averred that the theoretical framework they had found provided "ways of thinking" and "ways of seeing" (Morgan, 1986, p. 12) that unveiled understandings of the phenomena being studied in novel and interesting ways.

In the search for an appropriate framework, keep in mind the lessons shared by Mills and Bettis (Chapter 6) and Kearney and Hyle (Chapter 10). First, as Mills and Bettis demonstrate, there is more than one lens or perspective to bring to bear on a particular problem, and multiple perspectives deepen our understanding of a phenomenon. Thus, the issue of whether or not the framework you embrace is the "right one" may be a moot point. There are several right ones that might be used, as Peterson (Chapter 11) illustrates. Second, Kearney and Hyle (Chapter 10) point out the value of using theories from other fields to bring new insights into a phenomenon under study. Finally, whereas some researchers use a particular theoretical framework for an extended period of time (e.g., Harris, Chapter 8; Merriam, Chapter 5), others change frameworks with each study undertaken, and it is perfectly responsible and acceptable to use more than one framework for your study, as identified by several of the contributing authors.

One approach to beginning to find a theoretical framework might be to study a top-tier scholarly journal that requires its authors to identify the theoretical framework used. One journal that fits this criterion is *Educational Administration Quarterly*. If readers were to look at Volume 37, Issue 1, published in February 2001, for example, it is interesting to note that the Pounder and Merrill (2001) article uses job choice theory to study job desirability of the high school principalship; Ortiz (2001) applies the theory of social capital to interpret the careers of three Latina superintendents; Nestor-Baker and Hoy (2001) employ practical intelligence and tacit knowledge to study school superintendents; and Geijsel, Sleegers, Van den Berg, and Kelchtermans (2001) use professional development, decision making, and transformational leadership to analyze the conditions that foster the implementation of large-scale innovation programs in schools. Each of these articles has a section titled theoretical framework or conceptual framework, two phrases that are often used interchangeably, in which the researchers describe the theory they had used. We encourage readers to spend some time looking at the published research in their field and in allied fields and identifying the

theoretical frameworks used as a way to stimulate thinking about theories and their relationship to research projects.

Qualitative researchers are encouraged to be persistent in the search for theoretical frameworks and to think beyond the confines of their disciplinary focus. Consider how theories from economics, sociology, political science, anthropology, and other fields of study might thoughtfully be used to study phenomena in interesting and distinctive ways.

What Effect Does the Theoretical Framework Have on My Research?

In discussing the effects of a theoretical framework on the research process, the contributors to this book offered interesting insights, which we have categorized into four dimensions. A theoretical framework has the ability to (1) organize and focus a study, (2) reveal and conceal meaning and understanding, (3) situate the research in the scholarly conversation and provide a vernacular, and (4) reveal its strengths and weaknesses.

ORGANIZE AND FOCUS A STUDY

The ability of a theoretical framework to organize and focus a study involves a number of issues. First, qualitative researchers often feel overwhelmed by the mountains of data (e.g., interview transcripts, documents, observations/field notes) that can be collected. By acting as a "sieve" (Fowler, Chapter 3) or a "lens" (Harris, Chapter 8; Henstrand, Chapter 2), the theoretical framework assists the researcher in the process of sorting through these data, of knowing how the pieces drawn from the various data relate and where they fit. Second, the theoretical framework "frames" every aspect of the study, shaping and directing it in ways consistent with the theory, from the design to the interpretation of the findings, the process as well as the product (Patton, Chapter 4; Fowler, Chapter 3; Henstrand, Chapter 2; Peterson, Chapter 11; Merriam, Chapter 5), from the questions asked (Patton, Chapter 4; Fowler, Chapter 3; Harris, Chapter 8; Kearney & Hyle, Chapter 10; Peterson, Chapter 11), to the sample selected (Merriam, Chapter 5), and the data collection and analysis derived (Fowler, Chapter 3; Harris, Chapter 8; Henstrand, Chapter 2; Merriam, Chapter 5; Mills & Bettis, Chapter 6; Peterson, Chapter 11; Strayhorn, Chapter 7). And even the literature review (Patton, Chapter 4), the need for the study (Strayhorn, Chapter 7), and the interpretation of the findings (Patton, Chapter 4; Strayhorn, Chapter 7) are affected. Indeed, the theoretical framework affects every aspect of the study from beginning to end, as suggested by Mutch. The concepts, constructs, and propositions that are part and parcel of a theory help the researcher in formulating these component parts of the research process. Third, qualitative researchers are keenly aware of the subjectivity and bias in their research. The theoretical framework can help the researcher control this subjectivity by the self-conscious revisiting of the theory and the concomitant awareness that one is using a particular perspective (Harris, Chapter 8; Henstrand, Chapter 2). Fourth, the theoretical framework provides powerful concepts that may be used in the coding of data (Mills & Bettis, Chapter 6).

The degree to which the contributing authors wrote about the effects of the theoretical framework on their research varied. As stated earlier, we, along with many of the contributors, hold that every aspect of the qualitative research process is affected by the theoretical framework. It influences every choice we make during

the research process and guides the researcher's thinking about the phenomenon under investigation. In short, the theoretical framework forces the researcher to be accountable to ensure that the methodology, the data, and the analysis are consistent with the theory.

In considering what advice might be useful, we encourage qualitative researchers to thoroughly understand the theoretical framework chosen to "frame" their study. Consider the potential problems you might encounter in attempting to import and apply a theory from another field (e.g., economics, political science), in particular its applicability and fit. Investigate how other researchers have used the theory to see if and how it has been applied to research within and outside your field. Be self-conscious about the ways the theoretical framework affects every aspect of the research process. Indeed, it might prove useful to document these effects in a journal kept during the research project.

REVEAL AND CONCEAL MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING

The contributing authors noted the ability of the theoretical framework to reveal and conceal meaning and understanding. As Eisner (1985) reminded us, "When you provide a window for looking at something, you also . . . provide something in the way of a wall" (pp. 64–65). Although we acknowledge that theories can allow us to see familiar phenomena in novel ways, they can also blind us to aspects of the phenomena that are not part of the theory. As part of theory's ability to reveal and conceal, we are cognizant that a theoretical framework can distort the phenomena being studied by filtering out critical pieces of data.

Researchers need to recognize this characteristic of a theoretical framework and give serious thought to what is being concealed. This ability to reveal and conceal makes it all the more important for researchers to tell their readers, if possible, what is concealed. This is, after all, the essence of a study's delimitations. And while the choice of a theoretical framework clearly delimits a study, we have seen little recognition of this fact in theses, dissertations, or journal articles.

In the real world, few have time to engage in the following activities, but we feel it important to mention them nonetheless. Consider designing a study with one theoretical framework and then redesigning it using an alternative framework. What effect does this have on the questions asked? What effect might the differing frameworks have on the analysis derived? How might your data collection strategies change? A little more realistic exercise would involve getting a colleague to study the same phenomenon using a different framework, as did Mills and Bettis (Chapter 6). Again, how did the different frameworks affect the research processes? One would imagine that the more "ways of thinking" and "ways of seeing" (Morgan, 1986, p. 12), that is, theoretical frameworks, employed in our attempts to understand some reality, the closer would this ultimately bring us to an understanding of that reality, an ontological issue to be debated at another time.

SITUATE THE RESEARCH IN A SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION AND PROVIDE A VERNACULAR

In the process of advancing knowledge, the theoretical framework allows researchers to situate their research and knowledge contributions in a scholarly conversation (Fowler, Chapter 3; Harris, Chapter 8; Henstrand, Chapter 2; Mills & Bettis, Chapter 6; Peterson, Chapter 11; Strayhorn, Chapter 7). It allows them to link to the broader body of literature (Harris, Chapter 8) and talk across disciplines (Henstrand,

Chapter 2; Mills & Bettis, Chapter 6; Mutch, Chapter 9) using the known and accepted language of the theory. It is this established language that assists in making meanings of the phenomena being studied explicit. The theoretical framework also provides convenient labels and categories that help in explaining and developing thick descriptions and a coherent analysis (Harris, Chapter 8; Merriam, Chapter 5; Mutch, Chapter 9; Peterson, Chapter 11; Strayhorn, Chapter 7).

In reflecting on this effect of the theoretical framework, it is important for qualitative researchers to learn the language of the theory being used and to use it precisely and clearly. It is also necessary to make every attempt to state your contributions to the scholarly conversation without overreaching the appropriate parameters—parameters that will be dictated by the data you have collected and the analysis you have formulated. Part of participating in this scholarly conversation and documenting your contribution involves looking carefully at the relationship between your study and the theory you have used. Does your research support the existing theory, does it advance the theory in some meaningful and important way, or does it lead to questions about the theory (Fowler, Chapter 3)? These are important questions that should not be avoided in this discussion.

REVEAL ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As the contributing authors reflected on the effects of the theoretical framework on their research, it became evident that no theoretical framework adequately describes or explains any phenomenon (Fowler, Chapter 3; Harris, Chapter 8; Kearney & Hyle, Chapter 10; Merriam, Chapter 5; Strayhorn, Chapter 7). Some of the contributors expressed concern about the power of a theoretical framework to be too reductionistic, stripping the phenomenon of its complexity and interest (Mutch, Chapter 9), or too deterministic, forcing the researcher to "fit" the data into predetermined categories (Harris, Chapter 8). Indeed, others have been concerned about the power of the existing literature on a topic to be "ideologically hegemonic" (Becker, 1986), making it difficult to see phenomena in ways that are different from those that are prevalent in the literature. Other contributors to this book discussed the fact that these strengths and weaknesses provide sufficient reason to employ multiple frameworks in one study (Kearney & Hyle, Chapter 10).

Researchers need to be prepared for the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical framework chosen to be revealed during the process of conducting a research project, and to look specifically for those strengths and weaknesses and for the challenges the weaknesses present. Although the "fit" of the theoretical framework for a study may be evident, it may in fact become necessary to discard the theoretical framework one has chosen and start the process of searching for a new one once again. Researchers need to be wary of dropping data in light of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of any theory. It could be that these data help in the advancement of the theory or in its being refuted.

The relationship between theory and qualitative research remains complicated. We hold that it is impossible to observe and describe what happens in natural settings without some theory that guides the researcher in determining what is relevant to observe and what name to attach to what is happening. As noted by Schwandt (1993), the theory allows us to "enter the field with a theoretical language and attitude" (pp. 11–12). Qualitative forms of inquiry demand that theory (i.e., theoretical frameworks) be used with imagination

and flexibility. As John Dewey (1934) noted, it is part of our need to reeducate our perceptions.

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About the Editors

Vincent A. Anfara Jr. (1954–2013) was Professor of Educational Administration and Supervision at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Before entering the professoriate, he taught for 23 years in both middle and high schools in Louisiana and New Mexico. His research interests included middle school reform, leadership in middle schools, issues related to student achievement, and qualitative research methods. He was a past president of the American Educational Research Association's Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group, chair of the National Middle School Association's Research Advisory Board, and a member of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. He was appointed an ERIC Content Expert in middle grades education for 2007–2009 and was a member of the American Educational Research Association's Special Interest Group, Executive Committee and Program Committee. He authored more than 80 articles published in journals including *Educational Researcher, Middle School Journal, Research in Middle Level Education Annual, Education and Urban Society, The Journal of School Leadership*, and the *NASSP Bulletin*. His most recent books include *The Encyclopedia of Middle Grades Education* (with Andrews & Mertens, 2005), *The Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Principal: A Leadership Model and Measurement* Instrument (2006), and *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research* (with Mertz, 2006). He received his PhD in educational administration from the University of New Orleans in 1995.

Norma T. Mertz is Professor of Higher Education at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Before becoming a faculty member in educational administration at The University of Tennessee, she prepared teachers to work in urban, inner-city schools as an assistant professor at Eastern Michigan University and Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges; and after joining the University of Tennessee, she was assistant director of the Race Desegregation Assistance Center and director of the Sex Equity Assistance Center. Her research centers on gender and leadership, equity in administration, mentoring, and organizational socialization, and she has published research on these topics in journals including *Educational Administration Quarterly, Urban Education, Journal of School Leadership, Planning and Changing*, and *Communications of the ACM*. She is the editor of *Breaking Into the All-Male Club: Female Professors of Educational Administration* and author of recently published chapters on recruiting, hiring, and retaining female faculty of color in *Women of Color in Higher Education*, on change in educational administration in *Disrupting the Status Quo?*, and on mentoring in *Developing Successful Diversity Mentoring Programmes*. Along with Vincent A. Anfara Jr., she was coeditor of the first edition of *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research*. She received her graduate degrees (master's and doctorate) in curriculum and teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University, with a collateral in anthropology.

About the Contributors

Pamela J. Bettis is associate professor in the Cultural Studies and Social Thought in Education program at Washington State University. Her areas of research include the social context of education and how gender operates in schools. She is the coauthor of *Cheerleader! An American Icon* (2003) and *Geographies of Girlhood: Identities In-Between* and has had work published in *Sociology of Education, Gender & Society, Educational Foundations*, and *Sex Education*.

Frances C. Fowler is Professor Emerita at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where she was a full professor and Director of Graduate Studies until her retirement. She taught courses in education politics and policy, school finance, and school law. The author of numerous articles and book chapters, she is also the author of *Policy Studies for Educational Leaders: An Introduction*, which is in its fourth edition and has been translated into Japanese, Mandarin, and Korean.

Edward L. Harris is Professor, Williams Chair of Educational Leadership and administrator for the Brock International Prize in Education, Oklahoma State University. His research, teaching, and service activities focus on qualitative research, school culture, and leadership. He earned a PhD in educational administration from Texas A&M University.

Joyce L. Henstrand recently retired as superintendent of the Reynolds School District in Fairview, Oregon. During her career in education, she also worked as a language arts teacher, department chair, high school principal, and Director of Instruction, focusing on improving literacy. Her case study described in this book was given the annual dissertation award by the American Education Research Association Division A in 1992. She earned a BA in English literature at State University of New York at Buffalo and a PhD in educational policy and management from the University of Oregon.

Adrienne E. Hyle is professor and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas at Arlington. She has more than 25 years of experience researching and writing in the areas of leadership, organizational change, and K–12/higher education faculty and gender issues. She has written more than 40 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters in addition to coauthoring or editing books on the socialization of women faculty (*From Girls in Their Elements to Women in Science*), the international uses of memory work (*Dissecting the Mundane*), and women leaders in higher education (*Women at the Top*).

Kerri S. Kearney has a professional background in both education and corporate America and began her faculty career at Oklahoma State University in 2004. Her research interests focus on leadership and change across a variety of organizational and individual contexts. Current research interests include exploring the role of individually held values in leadership and the use of arts-based methodologies in qualitative research. She holds an MBA in management and an EdD in educational administration.

Sharan B. Merriam is Professor Emeritus of Adult Education and Qualitative Research at The University of Georgia in Athens. Her research and writing activities have focused on adult and lifelong learning and qualitative research methods. For 5 years, she was coeditor of *Adult Education Quarterly*, a major research and theory journal in adult education. She has published 27 books and more than 100 journal articles and book chapters. She is a four-time winner of the prestigious Cyril O. Houle World Award for Literature in Adult Education. Her most recent books are *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice* (2014), *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Contemporary Issues in Adult Education* (2011), *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (2009), and *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing* (2007). She has been a Fulbright scholar and a senior research fellow in Malaysia, and a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at universities in South Korea and South Africa.

Michael R. Mills is Associate Professor of Higher Education at St. Cloud State University, where he directs the higher education doctoral program and teaches courses on the organization, administration, and financing of universities and colleges. His research and writing focus on the role of organizational culture, sense making, and identity in higher education. He had 10 years of experience in institutional research and academic administration before entering the professoriate. He earned his doctorate from the University of Michigan, his master's degree from the New School for Social Research, and his baccalaureate from Centre College.

Carol A. Mutch is Associate Professor of Critical Studies in Education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She researches, teaches, and writes on educational policy, curriculum development, research and evaluation methods, and, most recently, due to the devastating earthquakes in her city of Christchurch, the role of schools in disaster response and recovery. She is the author of several books on educational research and numerous book chapters and journal articles. She has received awards for her teaching, research, and academic service.

Lori D. Patton is associate professor in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Program in Indiana University School of Education. Her research agenda focuses on issues of race/racism in higher education, Blacks in higher education, inclusive campus environments and the role of cultural centers, and college student development theory. She is one of the authors of the second edition of *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, coeditor of *Responding to the Realities of Race*, and editor of *Campus Culture Centers in Higher Education*. Her larger body of scholarship has been published in a range of top-tier, peer-reviewed journals, edited books, and monographs.

R. Darrell Peterson is director of the Office of Graduate Student Life at Boston College. With more than 15 years of experience in higher education and student affairs, he has held various positions at institutions across the country with a focus on leadership development and student success. His research interests include student leadership development, changing demographics, and historically Black colleges and universities. He earned a PhD in educational leadership and policy studies from Iowa State University. He earned his master's degree in college student personnel administration and bachelor's degree in communication from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Terrell L. Strayhorn is Professor, EHE Diversity Officer, and Director of the Center for Inclusion, Diversity

& Academic Success at The Ohio State University. Author of seven books (including *College Students' Sense of Belonging* and *Theoretical Frameworks in College Student Research*), more than 40 book chapters, and more than 100 journal articles, reviews, and reports, his research focuses on vulnerable populations in higher education, especially minoritized social identities and the economically disadvantaged, as well as issues of equity, diversity, student learning, and quantitative methods. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Virginia and his doctorate from Virginia Tech.