Achieving the Goals of the Scientist-Practitioner Model:

The Seven Interfaces of Social and Counseling Psychology

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Counseling psychology and social psychology have commingled theoretically and empirically for many years, but both fields have much to gain from a more complete integration across seven domains: educational *(learning, teaching, and training),* professional *(relationships between researchers and practitioners),* practical *(integrated attempts to solve individual and societal problems),* methodological *(shared empirical procedures and standards),* theoretical *(attempts to construct conceptual models that span disciplines),* metatheoretical *(shared assumptions about the phenomena under study), and* epistemological *(fundamental assumptions held in common about how knowledge is expanded). After estimating the strength of the union between social and counseling psychology on each of these seven planes, suggestions for fortifying the weaker links and enhancing the vitality of the stronger links are offered.*

Significant scientific advances often occur when researchers in different fields unite in a common effort. When biologists and chemists merged in biochemistry departments and astronomers joined with physicists in the study of astrophysics, these interdisciplinary research teams generated new insights into problems that researchers working independently could not easily solve.

Similar gains are accruing at the boundary between social psychology and counseling psychology. The intimate relationship between these two fields

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has long been recognized, for as early as 1952 Division 17's Committee on Counselor Training included social psychological topics when they identified the basic areas that should be studied by counseling students. Robinson's (1955) call to study "the social psychology of the interview" (p. 168), Goldstein's (1966) analysis of extrapolation, and Strong's (1968) provocative characterization of counseling as interpersonal influence all drew on the inherent concordance of social psychology and counseling psychology. As Strong, Welsh, Corcoran, and Hoyt (1992) concluded after reviewing the history of the relationship between the two fields:

> Many ideas developed by social psychologists have been applied to understand the social process of counseling. In fact, every major idea developed in social psychology has been applied to counseling psychology, and in each case soon after it emerged in social psychology. (p. 150)

These applications of social psychology to counseling psychology only begin to tap the vast benefits to be gained by a full integration of the two fields. Most prior efforts have taken a concept or theory from social psychology and applied it to a process of interest to counseling psychologists. Rarely have issues of interest to counseling psychologists prompted social psychologists to develop or revise their theoretical viewpoints (Frazier, Gonzales, & Rudman, 1995). Furthermore, social psychological journals publish few findings garnered from counseling settings, and counseling journals eschew laboratory analog studies of counseling processes. Social psychologists active in counseling settings are rarities, as are counseling psychologists who maintain programs of laboratory research (Harvey & Stein, 1995). Prior successful syntheses should not be dismissed, but neither do they define the limits of a full-blown social-counseling interface.

In this article we identify ways to create a more extensive interface between social and counseling psychology. We suggest that social and counseling psychology, although in many respects independent entities, interface in seven distinct domains: educational, professional, practical, methodological, theoretical, metatheoretical, and epistemological (see Table 1). In examining the various points of contact between the fields, we will see that the interface is succeeding in certain domains but lags behind in others. This analysis not only highlights points of agreement and contention between the fields but generates recommendations regarding ways to develop and strengthen the connections between social and counseling psychology.

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TABLE 1: The Seven Domains of the Interface Between Social Psychology and Counseling Psychology

Interface	*Definition*	*Example Issues*
Educational	Common educational and training experiences	What educational experiences should be included in the training of practitioners? Should the training of academic social psychologists include work in mental health settings? What areas define basic studies in psychology?
Professional	Relationships between scientists and practitioners	How should the scientific and professional facets of psychology be linked? What are the minimum standards that must be attained by a practicing psychologist? How should professional organizations be structured to serve both social and counseling psychologists?
Practical	Integrated attempts to solve individual and societal problems	How can the utility of group approaches be increased? Why do paradoxical therapies work? How can we prevent premature termination of treatment? How can the level of aggression in our society be reduced?
Methodological	Shared empirical procedures and standards	How can the results of multiple independent studies be combined statistically? How can the placebic effects of a treatment be distinguished from the treatment-specific effects? How can the key qualities of one's social support network be assessed?
Theoretical	Efforts aimed at constructing discipline-spanning conceptual models	What interpersonal and intrapersonal factors contribute to adjustment versus dysfunction? How do individuals cope with stressful environmental events? What cognitive factors determine career decision making?
Metatheoretical	Shared assumptions about the phenomena under study	What is the essential nature of any one human being? Is behavior caused by exogenous or endogenous factors? Are humans governed more by rationality or irrationality? Is the human species unique?
Epistemological	Fundamental assumptions held in common about how knowledge should be expanded	How should human thought, feeling, and emotion be studied? What is the relationship between conceptual understanding and empirical findings? Is psychology a science in the same sense that physics is a science? Do laws of human behavior exist?

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THE EDUCATIONAL INTERFACE

The shared educational experiences of counseling and social psychologists remains one of the oldest links between the two fields. Counseling emerged as a health care profession during the late 1940s as psychologists initiated changes in their training philosophies to integrate the scientific side of their discipline with its applied side (Whiteley, 1984). Experts held regional and national sessions to study scientific psychology and its application, with a particular focus on the scientific foundations of mental health applications. Attendees at conferences such as the Northwestern Conference held in Evanston, Illinois, in 1951 concluded that practitioners should be trained to carry out research and develop general theories of human behavior.

This scientist-practitioner model was accepted widely and provided the foundation for the American Psychological Association Committee on Counselor Training's (American Psychological Association, 1952) training recommendations. That model assumes a counseling psychologist is, first and foremost, a psychologist, whose training in science equals that of a doctoral student trained in one of the basic subdisciplines of psychology. The model advocated "an integrated approach to knowledge that recognizes the interdependence of theory, research, and practice" (Meara et al., 1988, p. 368). Counseling psychologists must know "how individuals learn to interact within social groups" and gain "a knowledge of a great many aspects of our social structure" (American Psychological Association, 1952, p. 178). Training guidelines have changed over the years, but they usually recommend a set of core courses that includes social psychology and other areas of psychological science (O'Sullivan & Quevillon, 1992).

Even though social and counseling psychologists share some common educational and training experiences, the educational interface is often relatively superficial. Counseling students can typically meet the requirement for training in social psychology (or any other area) by taking a single, introductory-level proseminar that may provide little content of applied significance. Many of the topics covered in such courses—attribution, relationships, the self, attitude change, group behavior, social influence, and so on—are relevant to counseling psychology, but the linkages may not be obvious to the first-year graduate student, and instructors seldom make them explicit. A crowded syllabus, students from diverse backgrounds, and an instructor who is not interested in dysfunction, diagnosis, and treatment means that topics of value to the counseling psychologist are given short shrift.

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On the social psychology side of the educational interface, graduate students outside of counseling psychology are rarely encouraged to study abnormal behavior, assessment, or therapeutic methods. Graduate students in social psychology who express an interest in applied questions may even be suspected of misrepresenting their career aspirations, and students who are not in the counseling program are sometimes prohibited from taking courses in the field. Even the social psychology faculty may suspect that a student who is interested in application is not dedicated to social psychology. If social psychology students wander into applied courses, they often find that little of the course content is tied, even indirectly, to social psychological perspectives. In short, linkages between the fields are seldom drawn explicitly in graduate education.

Some training programs escape this criticism, but most could strengthen their integration of social and counseling psychology (Heppner et al., 1992). First, students in counseling psychology should take courses in social psychology beyond the survey course. Even though skills-oriented requirements instituted by accrediting agencies have reduced the breadth of training of many programs, room in the curriculum should be left for advanced courses that explicitly integrate aspects of social and counseling psychology (Leary, 1985). Faculty should also use alternative teaching methods, such as short courses, workshops, colloquia series, World Wide Web instruction, and cross-program graduate teaching assignments, to deliver information about social psychological perspectives to students.

Second, students in social psychology programs should be encouraged to take courses dealing with abnormal behavior, adjustment, assessment, and therapeutic processes. If social psychologists are to contribute in a meaningful way to our understanding of interpersonal processes in the development and treatment of behavioral and emotional problems, they must have more than a passing familiarity with mental health concepts, theory, treatment, and research. A working knowledge of counseling psychology is as important for a research-oriented social psychologist who studies interpersonal aspects of disorder, diagnosis, and treatment as it is to the counseling researcher or practitioner.

Third, scientist-practitioner training programs could supplement traditional teaching methods, such as classroom instruction and mentoring, with community-based instructional components (Heppner et al., 1992). McCall (1996), for example, argues against traditional approaches to undergraduate and graduate education and recommends creating integrative centers that examine significant social problems. Altman (1996) describes such a program currently functioning at the University of Utah, where faculty teach courses that integrate basic and applied studies of social and environmental

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problems and students must complete service learning projects. These programs serve as models for new methods of training, and their graduates can reshape more traditional programs when they join their faculty (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1991).

THE PROFESSIONAL INTERFACE

The many varieties of psychologists—whether they be social, counseling, developmental, physiological, cognitive, clinical, or industrial—share a professional identity as psychologists. The differences among various types of psychologists, however, have resulted in an increasingly differentiated discipline. Moreover, the scientist-practitioner schism has grown deeper in recent years, and many now wonder whether psychology is best considered to be many disciplines rather than one (Barlow, Hayes, & Nelson, 1984; Fowler, 1990; Gelso et al., 1988). As a result of specialization, academic and applied psychologists often insulate themselves from one another, attending different professional meetings (or, at least, different sessions of the same meeting), reading different journals, and forming different professional cliques.

Such professional segmentation is inevitable (Bevan, 1982). Even so, the lack of a unified professional identity and the ensuing isolation has generated a certain degree of in-group/out-group stereotyping. The counseling psychologist, for example, may embrace a stereotypic view of social psychologists and other basic researchers that assumes most are theory-driven researchers who are content to conduct research in contrived settings with nonrepresentative samples. Social psychologists, too, may hold stereotyped views of counseling psychologists, and these stereotypes may bias their appraisal of applied research (Bednar & Kaul, 1979; Leary & Miller, 1986). The heterogeneity of the other group may also be overlooked. Although counseling psychologists are so diverse in their orientations, training, and professional activities that any generalization about them is an overgeneralization (Watkins, Lopez, Campbell, & Himmell, 1986), social psychologists may view all counseling psychologists as practitioners. Similarly, despite increases in the diversity of social psychology, most nonsocial psychologists continue to view them as laboratory researchers who are not interested in the study of adjustment.

Such social categorizations invite inaccuracies. Even this analysis, by speaking in general terms about social and counseling psychology, fails to take into account the characteristics of all social and counseling psychologists. A so-called social psychologist may teach in an academic setting, work for business or industry, consult with government agencies, conduct basic

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and applied research, carry out surveys, or even perform a variety of professional services (e.g., workshops, group-based change programs, management training). Similarly, a so-called counseling psychologist might teach and do research at a university, conduct traditional one-on-one individual therapy in a private practice, provide services in a hospital or other health care setting, consult with organizations, carry out behaviorally oriented interventions with college students, or work in a research lab. For the sake of convenience in communication we use the terms "counseling psychologist" and "social psychologist," but in so doing the homogeneity of both groups is exaggerated.

Fortunately, studies of prejudice and its reduction offer a number of suggestions for improving the quality of the professional social-counseling interface (Cook, 1985). First, an active attempt should be made to minimize the categorization of psychologists into "social" or "counseling" or any other group. The diversity within social, counseling, and other subfields of psychology is so great that these terms are misnomers. Categorization can be defeated by creating interest groups based on shared content domains—such as behavioral health, interpersonal behavior, or cognitive processing—rather than academic origin. Professional organizations can also reduce categorization by creating divisional groupings based on similarity of interests rather than professional identity. The APA's newly formed Division 49, Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy, provides an example. Its members include both clinical and counseling practitioners (from Divisions 12, 17, and 29) and social psychologists (from Divisions 8 and 14) who are united by their shared interest in group phenomena (Forsyth, in press).

Second, direct personal contact is needed in informal circumstances that disconfirm prevailing stereotypes about both groups. Departments and professional association should strive to create meetings, conferences, and events that bring together all types of psychologists from all types of settings: psychology departments, university counseling centers, divisions housed in schools of education, and other units. Such events could also create contact between academic psychologists and practitioners in the community. Although *academic* counseling and social psychologists interact freely in many settings, few opportunities exist for practitioners to interact with research psychologists of any ilk.

Third, joint cooperative ventures aimed at superordinate goals will also minimize deleterious in-group/out-group effects. Collaborative efforts involving social and counseling psychologists will be more comprehensive than a single individual's attempts to interface the fields (Heppner et al., 1992). Such efforts are also more likely to be more influential in both fields than work stemming from either camp alone, and the collaborators themselves will undoubtedly learn from collective efforts. Even when collabora-

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tive work is not possible, researchers and writers should seek (and heed) the input of individuals from a variety of basic and applied subfields of psychology in the process of conducting work that interfaces social and counseling psychology. Other solutions, such as combining efforts to confront a common "threat" (such as reductions in funding to psychology by the National Science Foundation) would also promote the integration of social and counseling psychology at the professional level.

THE PRACTICAL INTERFACE

The third linkage pertains to practice: the usefulness of an integrated social-counseling psychology in solving applied problems at the individual and societal level. This domain is consistent with the scientist-practitioner model and its emphasis on integrating practice with theory-based psychological research. It is also consistent with the emphasis that many social psychologists place on developing theories that speak to important societal issues such as prejudice and conflict as well as those that pertain to individual adjustment and health (e.g., self-esteem, interpersonal relations, coping).

Yet the strength of the all-important link between scientific pursuits and professional practice is debatable. Some argue that social psychology yields many suggestions for the enhancement of practice, and even suggest that social psychologists themselves should get involved in service delivery (C. Hendrick, 1983; cf. S. Hendrick, 1983). Others, however, note that the field's impact on practice has been negligible (see Sarason, 1987; Strong, 1987, 1995). Moreover, whereas those like Bednar and Kaul (1979, p. 319) argue that a "greater integration of the insights of the practitioner and the controlled investigations of the researcher is mandatory for either to achieve greater levels of professional development," others maintain that training in basic research yields few if any benefits for practitioners (Frank, 1984). Despite efforts to base psychological practice on a body of scientifically attained knowledge and to make behavioral scientists more responsive to the needs of those who deliver services, the science and practice of psychology continue to lead an uneasy coexistence (Bernstein & Kerr, 1993; Howard, 1986; Stone, 1986).

What can be done to strengthen the practical interface between scientist and practitioner? Lewin's (1951) classic conceptualization of "action research" offers two basic prescriptions. First, practitioners are to remember his dictum: "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." At a general level, social psychological conceptualizations may offer insight into why

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certain therapeutic procedures are effective, as well as suggestions for enhancing treatment effectiveness. Studies of paradoxical treatment, for example, suggest that telling clients to engage deliberately in the behaviors they want to eliminate reduces the target behaviors. Although the mediating mechanisms have not been unequivocally identified, social psychology's reactance theory identifies factors that enhance the power of paradoxical therapy. If the therapist is careful to appear dominant, eager to persuade, and demanding while maximizing client choice, then the impact of a paradoxical directive should be greater (Tennen & Affleck, 1991). Social psychology may also be the source of novel treatment procedures. Encounter groups, for example, can be traced to Lewin's early analyses of how training is best achieved through group participation (Forsyth, 1991). Similarly, a number of current attribution therapies were derived directly from relatively esoteric theories of the structure of causal thought (Murdock & Altmaier, 1991), and self-presentation theory offers novel perspectives on the treatment of social anxiety and phobia (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). Counseling psychologists should explore the practical implications of social psychology research findings (Cohen, Sargent, & Sechrest, 1986).

Second, social psychological researchers must develop theories and conduct empirical studies that seek to account for phenomena of interest to practitioners. Researchers are often quick to remind practitioners that a good theory is useful, but these researchers should not forget that Lewin also insisted that psychologists must strive to develop theories that can be used to solve important social and psychological problems. Social psychology has an applied side, but these applications have traditionally involved business settings, organizational behavior, environmental psychology, and social issues more than the prevention and treatment of individuals' difficulties. Investigators should extend their applications to include processes that are of central importance to counselors and psychotherapists. Practitioners are not solely responsible for applying basic scientific findings in applied settings; rather, basic researchers must be capable of generating explanations that will prove useful to counseling psychologists.

THE METHODOLOGICAL INTERFACE

The social psychologist and the counseling psychologist share one essential quality: both are trained to carry out scientific research. Although recommendations for training have changed over the years, the essential assumption of the original scientist-practitioner model remains (American Psychological Association, 1952):

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> It must be emphasized that on counseling psychologists falls the chief responsibility for conducting the research upon which depends the possibility of more effective counseling. Any applied field needs roots in the basic scientific discipline which lends substance to its work. It is therefore imperative that psychological counseling remain firmly established within the orbit of basic psychological science and the related disciplines, and that counseling psychologists acquire the research skills which make possible the enlargement of knowledge. We feel strongly that research must continue as a basic job of the counseling psychologist and that he (or she) must be trained accordingly. (p. 176)

This shared methodological expertise and obligation provides a wide road for bridging the gap between social and counseling psychology. Social psychologists can make no special claim for expertise in research methodology, but the field's penchant for sophisticated statistical and methodological practices makes it a valuable resource for applied researchers. Conversely, the unique methodological problems faced by researchers in counseling, community, and clinical settings have stimulated a number of methodological developments that have been adopted by social psychologists. As more social psychologists moved out of the laboratory in the 1980s, they took increasing advantage of these methods in their own work (Higgenbotham, West, & Forsyth, 1988). Counseling and social psychologists, too, are united by their interest in the measurement of both individual differences and interpersonal behavior; both devote considerable time developing new inventories and behavioral coding systems (Dawis, 1987, 1992).

Even the methodological link between social and counseling psychology can be strengthened, however (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1992). Both disciplines tend to adopt methodological standards that are based more on tradition than scientific adequacy. Despite some liberalization in recent years, social psychologists continue to prefer laboratory work, experimental procedures, large *ns* that allow conclusions based on group means, and measurement methods that are tailored to the specific conditions under investigation. Counseling psychologists, to speak in general terms, tend to rely more heavily on studies conducted in field settings (often with college-student populations), quasi-experimental or nonexperimental procedures, and measures that have been previously tested for reliability and validity in counseling settings. The primary consequence of these differences in emphasis is that social and counseling psychologists unfairly denigrate the efforts of the other field. Stereotypes once again guide perceptions, as basic researchers assume applied studies are unsophisticated in terms of their design and analysis and applied researchers and practitioners assume basic social psychological research is esoteric, overly complex and contrived, excessively statistical, and minimally applicable.

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To overcome this impediment to a successful interface, researchers should remain open to methodologies and procedures that, although different from their own preferred approaches, nonetheless yield useful information about the hypotheses under investigation (Forsyth & Strong, 1986; Galassi & Gersh, 1993). They should strive to enlarge their own methodological arsenals by making use of the techniques and procedures developed by the other discipline (Higgenbotham et al., 1988). A tight laboratory experiment may be high in internal, statistical, and construct validity, but it may not be as defensible when external validity issues are raised. Studies conducted in therapeutic settings, because they often cannot make use of randomization procedures, tend to be lower in internal validity, yet the gains in external validity are substantial. Counseling and social psychologists should also collaborate on joint research ventures, thereby bringing their unique skills to bear on the same problem. All methods, whether experimentation, case study, survey, archival, or qualitative, have limitations, but when properly performed all offer a means of testing hypotheses about human behavior. Methodological diversity will only enhance our science.

THE THEORETICAL INTERFACE

The theoretical interface involves the integration of facets of counseling and social psychology in constructing conceptual models that are more encompassing than those developed in either field in isolation. The original learned helplessness theory offered by Seligman (1975) and his colleagues, for example, could not deal adequately with instances in which people faced uncontrollable circumstances but did not perceive the setting as out of their control. When integrated with attribution theory, however, the model increased in strength and comprehensiveness (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). The sociometer model, which offers a social psychological perspective on the function of self-esteem, provides a theoretical account for why low self-esteem is associated with emotional and behavioral problems (Leary & Downs, 1995; Leary, Schreindorfer, & Haupt, 1995). Analyses of attitude change (e.g., Heesacker, Conner, & Prichard, 1995), interpersonal relationships (e.g., Hendrick, 1995), and coping (Elliott & Marmarosh, 1995) also provide theoretical bridges between social and counseling psychology (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Elliott, 1995).

Future work, however, needs to more fully integrate counseling and social perspectives into broad theoretical frameworks. As recent reviews of current practices indicate, counseling researchers are more likely to draw on developmental theories, personality theory, and psychoanalytic concepts rather

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than social psychological theory when conceptualizing their research agenda (Dawis, 1992; Gelso & Fassinger, 1992; Sayette & Mayne, 1990; Strong et al., 1992). Social psychology, with its emphasis on situational factors on behavior, would therefore add a significant domain to current theoretical formations (Rosenzweig, 1949).

Unfortunately, the conceptual road between social and counseling psychology is often viewed as a one-way street moving from social psychology to practice. For example, Maddux and Stoltenberg (1983) urged clinical and counseling psychologists to *use* social-psychological theories when studying the origin of dysfunctional behavior and methods of treatment, and Weary (1987, p. 160) proposed that social-psychological principles are critical for understanding "the definition, development, maintenance, and modification of maladaptive behaviors." Yet, if social psychological theories are to help us understand health maintenance, dysfunction, and therapeutic change, social psychologists must use applicability as a standard for evaluating the adequacy of their theories. If, for example, the elaboration likelihood model of attitude change is accurate, then it should be able to account for changes that occur as a result of therapeutic influence (Cacioppo, Claiborn, Petty, & Heesacker, 1991; Heesacker et al., 1995; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). If attributions play a fundamental role in structuring our view of the social world, then adjustment may be influenced by these attributions. If individuals who are cut off from a social network suffer the damaging consequences of loneliness, then interventions designed to increase social support should eliminate these dysfunctional outcomes. Even though the emphasis is on practical application, such applications are nonetheless useful in evaluating social psychological research and theory.

Furthermore, social psychologists must become more willing to adopt concepts from the applied psychologies. Many concepts and theories that were initially developed to account for issues and problems of practical significance are of direct relevance to social psychology, but social psychologists have neither immersed themselves adequately in areas of counseling psychology that are related to their own work nor incorporated useful concepts into their theories and research. As Strong and his colleagues (1992) noted, "The flow of ideas between social and counseling psychology has been decidedly one-sided" (p. 151).

THE METATHEORETICAL INTERFACE

Kuhn (1970) argued that scientists working in a particular field share a set of assumptions about the phenomena they study. These metatheoretical

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assumptions, although rarely discussed explicitly, guide the theories formulated and the methods used by researchers. Should we be concerned with unconscious processes, or focus only on observable behavior? Is behavior caused by forces present in the immediate external environment, or by historical factors whose force is still felt in the distant future? Can psychological processes be broken down into specific elements, or should we take a holistic approach that avoids analysis? Watson (1967) called such assumptions "prescriptions," and argued that they serve to orient researchers and theorists when they conceptualize problems within psychology.

Social and counseling psychology are metatheoretically similar in some respects. Both fields, rooted in Western thought, focus on individuals rather than collectives, consensus seeking rather than dissent, and independence rather than interdependence (Smith & Bond, 1994). But social psychologists, more so than counseling psychologists, stress environmental determinism over biological determinism, situationism over personologism, and interpersonal causes (sociogenicism) over psychological causes (psychogenicism). In contrast, counseling psychologists (at least by tradition) tend to focus first on internal, psychogenic determinants of behavior. With behaviorally oriented approaches such as Ivey's microcounseling (Ivey & Authier, 1978) or Carkhuff's human-resource-development approach (Carkhuff, 1977) providing notable exceptions, the theorists who provided the foundations for much contemporary counseling conceptualization and intervention offered models that included reference to the structure of personality, dynamic intrapsychic mechanisms, and the relationships between the individual's particular qualities and his or her behavior. Adler, Freud, Maslow, Murray, Rogers, and others were generalists, but at the core their theories assumed that personality, needs, motivations, and other psychogenic mechanisms play a pivotal role in adjustment and dysfunction.

These distinctive roots shape the two fields' perspectives on individual differences. Social psychologists agree with Lewin (1951) that behavior is a function of the person and the environment, $B = f\,(P, E)$, but they stress the E over the P. Counseling psychologists, with the need to understand the problems of specific individuals, must return continually to the P in Lewin's classic formula.

In consequence, the two fields vary when approaching issues of diversity in ethnicity, gender, race, and culture. To the social psychologist (to again generalize, and therefore *over*generalize), such factors are demographic background factors that may moderate the strength of relationships among social psychological determinants of actions, but rarely are they considered to be of interest in their own right. Counseling psychologists, in contrast, actively investigate ethnicity, race, gender, and culture (Lee, 1995; Treviño,

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1996). Social psychologists fashion general statements pertaining to social behavior that apply irrespective of cultural background; counseling psychologists are sensitive to exceptions to these general tendencies that can be observed in subgroups in the culture at large.

A final metatheoretical difference concerns humanism and egoism. Many practicing therapists are humanistic in orientation in the sense that they assume that individuals strive to achieve personal growth and development, are capable of establishing meaning in the world around them, accept responsibility for their actions, and are open to a variety of growth-promoting experiences (Howard, 1992). Social psychologists, in contrast, tend to view people as self-serving information processors. Although not radically behavioristic, most assume that hedonism guides human actions. Rather than viewing people as seekers of self-improvement and actualization, social psychologists generally assume that people are self-centered (Forsyth & Leary, 1991).

Although social and counseling psychology differ on these and other metatheoretical assumptions, these differences need not necessarily impede the social-counseling interface. Expressed in Kuhnian (1970) terms, they need not generate incommensurate paradigms. Rather, these assumptions provide the underlying defining structure of theory in psychology and insure a constant dialectical interplay among opposing theoretical camps. Moreover, the exclusive adoption of either view is severely limiting. Pure sociogenicism constrains the study of behavior, whether normal or abnormal, whereas pure psychogenicism forces theorists, researchers, and practitioners to rely too heavily on traditional personality theories, traits, and dispositional variables (Sarason, 1981). A social psychology based on egoism as the primary social motive is a restricted social psychology (Vitz, 1977, 1985; Wallach & Wallach, 1983), as is a purely humanistic psychology that cannot account for nonconscious motivations and irrational behavior.

The interface, rather than requiring the rejection of one view or the other, argues for a synthesis that retains the strengths of each while avoiding each's weaknesses. Such a synthesis may be taking place with regards to the study of diversity. Under the continual pressure of social identity theorists such as Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell (1987), conceptual analysis of the consequences of a group-based social identity have come to dominate studies of the social self (Brewer, 1991). Triandis's (1996) insightful analyses of cultural syndromes also provide researchers with a guiding conceptual framework for generating predictions about differences in social behavior across culture, as have Crocker's studies of social self-esteem and membership in minority groups (e.g., Crocker, Luhtanen, Blane, & Broadnax, 1994; Crocker & Major, 1989). Indeed, a recent handbook of social psychology

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(Higgins & Kruglanski, 1996) includes a number of chapters examining questions related to diversity (e.g., Deaux, 1996; Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996; Ruble & Seidman, 1996). As social psychologists become more successful in integrating race, gender, ethnicity, and culture into their research programs, we can hope that the findings generated will be of greater interest to the counseling psychologist who is sensitive to multicultural and cross-cultural issues.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL INTERFACE

How psychologists deal with educational, professional, applied, methodological, theoretical, and metatheoretical issues reflects, in many cases, their epistemological assumptions. How should our knowledge of human behavior be refined and extended? Should we rely on evidence gathered during practice, or should we adhere to the methods of empirical research used with such success by the physical sciences? Should we take advantage of the interpretative methods of investigation used in some branches of anthropology and linguistics, or insist on quantitative evidence? Should we strive to develop general, nomothetic statements about the causes of behavior, or should we focus on single-case, ideographic descriptions? To answer these questions, we must explore our epistemological assumptions and the philosophy of science that sustains them.

Opinions on these large questions of philosophy of science are becoming more diverse. Many researchers and editorial boards still endorse positivism and the goal of constructing coherent models that account for general tendencies in human behavior. Positivists advocate systematizing our knowledge by (a) relating observations back to theoretical constructs that provide the framework for interpreting data and generating predictions; (b) testing hypotheses using objective, empirical methods rather than logical claims, subjective feelings, or authorities' opinions; (c) striving for consensus among members of the discipline concerning acceptable and unacceptable explanations of observations; and (d) reducing the impact of personal values on the data collection procedures or statistical analyses (Gelso, 1991; Strong, 1991).

So-called constructivist philosophies of science, such as sociorationalism, hermeneutics, textual analysis, and ethnomethodology, offer a counterpoint to positivism (Hoshmand, 1989). Most constructivists argue that psychologists should not emulate an approach that is suited for the natural sciences. They prefer methods that take into full account the reflexive, interpretive, constructivistic nature of all human activity. These epistemologies recom-

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mend the in-depth study of behavior as it occurs in ongoing settings using ethnography and detailed interviewing, the intimate involvement of the researcher in the data collection process, and close scrutiny of the participants' construction of the situation. Constructivistic philosophies of science do not dominate practice, but these approaches are quite consistent with practitioners' ideographic and phenomenological-humanistic traditions (Allport, 1938). Constructivism also provides an alternative to researchers who wonder if cultural, ethnic, and gender biases have determined the theories positivists build and the methods they use to test them.

A stronger social-counseling interface requires a stronger interface between these two philosophies of science. Both approaches offer a means of acquiring knowledge, and both are capable of informing practice. Practitioners rarely carry out traditional types of research, but their status as health care providers depends on scientific validation of their methods. Wholesale adoption of a constructivist view would strip away the standards that prize objectivity over sentiment, parsimony over intuition, and empiricism over authority. What is required for progress in the understanding of human behavior is an epistemological system that takes the best from positivism and the best from constructivism, and synthesizes them in a dialectical philosophy of science (Hoshmand & Polkinghorne, 1992).

CONCLUSIONS

The word *interface* originally referred to a mechanism or method for linking together two systems to achieve a high degree of synchronous operation. More than a shared boundary or area of common interest, the term interface connotes an intermingling of two processes or operations that had once operated independently.

A few notable contributions not withstanding (e.g., Dorn, 1984; Frank, 1961; Strong, 1968), explicit and widespread attempts to establish connections between social and counseling psychology have emerged only in the last decade. In this relatively short span of time, clear progress has been made toward fostering cross-fertilization between the fields, but, as we have seen, this progress has been more pronounced in some domains of the interface than in others. Continued attention to impediments to scholarly and professional dialogue across the domains of the interface will not only further enhance psychological theory, research, and practice but will ultimately benefit social and counseling psychologists and the publics they serve.

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