Identity-Based Processes and Clinical Social Work Education

by

Michelangelo Trujillo

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Social Work and Sociology)
in the University of Michigan
2024

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Joseph A. Himle, Co-Chair
Professor Alford A. Young, Jr., Co-Chair
Professor Fatma Müge Göçek
Professor Richard M. Tolman

Michelangelo Trujillo

freezing@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0009-0002-4459-5571

© Michelangelo Trujillo 2024

Dedication

For Sebastian, Andy, Eva, Isabella, Lucas and Myett. You are precious. Never forget it.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the tremendous amount of time, guidance and support of my dissertation committee: Joe Himle, Al Young, Müge Göçek and Rich Tolman.

To the friends and colleagues without whose advice, support, and feedback this would have never been possible: Peter Felsman, Chloe Armstrong, Katy Clark, Persephone Hernandez-Vogt, and Adriana Ponce; to Dylan Mana – you were right, I should have followed your plan; to Vera Garibaldi, thanks for your support and encouragement.

Intellectual debts and inspiration owed to Howard Hertz, Hannah Arendt, Loïc Wacquant, Pierre Bourdieu, Daphna Oyserman, Carolyn Myss, Gordon Brown, early Metallica, Propagandhi, TJ & Dave, and James Baldwin.

Table of Contents

Dedication ii

Acknowledgements iii

List of Tables ix

Abstract x

Chapter 1 Introduction Addressing Gaps in the Clinical Social Work Education Literature: Exploring the Role of Clinical Social Work Student Identities for Clinical Social Work Education 1

- 1.1 Chapter 2 3
- 1.2 Chapter 3 5
- 1.3 Chapter 4 6

Chapter 2 Examining the Role of Fixed and Growth Mindsets for Clinical Social Work Education: Factors Predicting Learning Goals versus Performance Goals and the Likelihood of Asking for Help When Struggling 11

- 2.1 Introduction 11
- 2.2 Fixed and Growth Mindsets 12
- 2.3 Study Objectives 14
- 2.4 Methods 15
  - 2.4.1 Recruitment 15
- 2.5 Measures 15
  - 2.5.1 Mindsets Measures for Empathy and Listening 15
  - 2.5.2 Performance Goals versus Learning Goals 17
  - 2.5.3 Likelihood of Discussing a Clinical Challenge or Demonstrating a Technique 17
  - 2.5.4 Controls 18

2.5.5 Sample Characteristics 19
2.6 Results 19
2.6.1 Multivariate Analysis of Preferences for Learning Goals vs. Performance Goals .. 19
2.7 Taking Risks to Learn 21
2.7.1 Likelihood of Discussing Struggles with Supervisors or in Class 21
2.7.2 Likelihood of Volunteering to Demonstrate a New Technique in Class 22
2.8 Discussion 23
2.8.1 Summary of Findings 23
2.9 Implications for Clinical Social Work Education 24
2.10 Future Research 27
2.10.1 Identity-Based Processes in Social Work 27
2.10.2 Evaluating Mindsets 28
2.10.3 Educational Outcomes 29
2.11 Study Limitations 30
2.11.1 Sampling 30
2.11.2 Mindsets for Empathy and Listening 31
2.12 Conclusion 33
Chapter 3 Identifying Themes in the Possible Selves of Clinical Social Work Students: Healing Involvement, Avoiding Harm 35
3.1 Introduction 35
3.2 Possible Selves and Clinical Social Work Education 36
3.3 Possible Selves and Motivation 37
3.4 Measures 38
3.5 Recruitment and Sample 41
3.6 Analysis 41
3.6.1 A Comment on Researcher Identity 41

3.6.2 Coding the Possible Selves Data ... 42
3.6.3 Assessing for Balance ... 45
3.7 Results ... 46
3.7.1 Themes for Positive Possible Selves ... 46
3.8 Theme I: Helping Skills ... 46
3.8.1 Interpersonal Engagement Skills ... 46
3.8.2 Cultural Engagement Skills ... 48
3.9 Theme II: Positive Work Related Experiences ... 49
3.9.1 Professional Growth ... 50
3.9.2 Social Change Advocate ... 50
3.9.3 Professionalism ... 52
3.10 Themes for Negative Possible Selves ... 53
3.11 Theme I: Causing Harm ... 53
3.11.1 Harmful Action-States ... 53
3.11.2 Cultural Disengagement ... 56
3.12 Theme II: Negative Work-Related Experiences (n = 18) ... 57
3.12.1 Burnout ... 57
3.12.2 Unfulfilling Work ... 58
3.12.3 Lack of Professional Growth ... 59
3.13 Assessing Balance ... 60
3.14 Discussion ... 61
3.15 Future Research ... 62
3.15.1 Increasing Social Work Student Engagement ... 62
3.15.2 Implications for Social Work Mindset Measures ... 63
3.15.3 Possible Selves and Identity Control Theory ... 64

3.15.4 Longitudinal Data: Assessing in Possible Selves Change Over Time 67

3.15.5 Possible Selves and Imagined Futures 67

3.16 Conclusion 70

Chapter 4 Towards a Dual Process Model of Identity as a Framework for Identifying Implicit and Explicit Barriers to Effective Clinical Social Work Practice 76

4.1 Introduction 76

4.2 Chapter Outline 80

4.3 Sociological Dual Process Theory 82

4.3.1 Theoretical Accounts of Sociological Dual Process Theory 82

4.4 Memory Systems and Sociological Dual Process Theory 85

4.4.1 Declarative Memory 85

4.4.2 Nondeclarative Memory 87

4.5 Strengths of Sociological Dual Process Theory 89

4.6 Limitations to Sociological Dual Process Theory 91

4.6.1 Vaisey's Empirical Test of "Culture in Action" 93

4.6.2 Psychologically Reductive Measures 98

4.7 Identity Theory 104

4.7.1 Identity Verification 104

4.7.2 Identity Salience 107

4.8 Limits to the Identity Theory Framework 109

4.8.1 Measuring Identity Salience 110

4.8.2 Summary 114

4.9 An Integrative Solution 116

4.9.1 Outline of a Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) 117

4.10 Identifying Implicit Barriers to Effective Clinical Practice 121

4.10.1 Countertransference 125

4.10.2 Activation of Maladaptive Attachment Style Content 126
4.10.3 Summary 128
4.11 What Does This Mean for the Practice of Social Work? 130
4.11.1 Social Work Student Identity and Cultivating an Interest in Learning 130
4.11.2 Video Recorded Practice as a Site of Socialization for Student Self-Monitoring 137
4.11.3 Identity-Based Processes and the Implementing Video Recorded Practice (VRP) 141
4.11.4 Video Recorded Practice and Identity Verification in Groups 144
4.12 Limitations 147
4.13 Developing a Deliberate Practice Approach to the use of VRP 154
4.14 Conclusion 158
Chapter 5 General Discussion of Findings and Implications for Future Research 160
5.1 Sample 169
5.2 Limitations and Future Directions 170
5.3 Concluding Comment 173
Works Cited 174

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Preferences for Learning versus Performance Goals 20

Table 2.2: Likelihood of Discussing Struggles and Volunteering to Demonstrate New Technique in Class 22

Table 3.1: Interpersonal Engagement Skills (n = 22) 48

Table 3.2: Cultural Engagement Skills (n = 10) 49

Table 3.3: Professional Growth (n = 9) 50

Table 3.4: Advocate for Social Change (n = 8) 52

Table 3.5: Professionalism (n = 3) 52

Table 3.6: Harmful Action-States (n = 24) 55

Table 3.7: Cultural Disengagement (n = 11) 57

Table 3.8: Burnout (n = 8) 58

Table 3.9: Unfulfilling Work (n = 6) 59

Table 3.10: Lack of Professional Growth (n = 4) 59

Table 3.11: Balanced Possible Selves Pairings 61

Table 4.1: Dual Process Models of Cultural Learning, Storage, Thinking and Acting 89

Table 4.2: Implicit and Explicit Identity Congruence in Clinical Interactions 121

Table 4.3: TDPA for the Hope & Expectancy Domain of Deliberate Practice 156

Abstract

The development of competencies is a central concern within the social work profession. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) code of ethics, for example, states that social workers develop and maintain competencies relevant to their professional obligations, designating "competence" as one of six core values of the social work profession. The Council of Social Work (CSWE) accreditation standards similarly consist of the designation of specific competency guidelines. Despite this, there is no existing social work education research examining how social work student identities and identity-based processes are implicated within the context of social work education. This gap in the social work education literature is concerning because research on identity and self-concept have been shown to predict of a range of behaviors and preferences known to be important for learning. This dissertation begins to address this gap in the social work education literature by conducting three studies that draw on different theories of identity to examine their relevance to clinical social work students and clinical social work education.

Chapter 2 examines the relationship between fixed and growth mindsets and the learning orientations of sample of clinical social work students. Mindsets are beliefs about the malleability or fixity of a domain specific ability and have been shown to predict behaviors and preferences known to support or impede educational outcomes. This chapter examines the relationship between fixed and growth mindsets and the likelihood of asking for help when struggling, preferences for learning goals vs performance goals, and the likelihood of volunteering to demonstrate a newly learned skill in class.

Chapter 3 draws on the theory of *possible selves*, understood as the future imagined selves we hope to become or avoid becoming. Possible selves have been shown to be an important source of motivation to behave in ways that support the realization of these imagined future selves via their influence on self-regulation in the present, and like mindsets, have also been shown to predict educational outcomes. Chapter 3 consists of a qualitative thematic analysis of *social work possible selves* for a sample of clinical social work students.

Chapter 4 is a theoretical discussion, synthesis, and application of identity theory and Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT). Identity theory is a developed approach to understanding the situated, dynamic, and interactive features of identity and identity-based processes yet does not distinguish between the explicit (deliberate) and implicit (automatic) aspects of identity. Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT), in contrast, provides what is arguably the most developed account of implicit and explicit cognitive processes within sociological literature to date, yet has typically relied on psychologically reductive measures ill-suited for the study of more complex and dynamic features of social explanation. I propose a Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) that draws on the strengths and addresses the limitations of each. I illustrate the benefits of this model for social work educators by examining how the use of video recorded practice sessions can serve as a site for the identification of implicit and explicit barriers to clinical practice. I then explore how the identities of different social work actors (e.g., students, clients, and faculty) might be implicated in the implementation of video recorded practice into social work curriculum.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Addressing Gaps in the Clinical Social Work Education Literature: Exploring the Role of Clinical Social Work Student Identities for Clinical Social Work Education

Little is known about the role that student characteristics have for the development of social work competencies. Research that has examined characteristics of social work students has focused on a variety of other topics, including assessments of professional identity (Bogo et al., 1993; Germain, 1981; Hyslop, 2018; Robinson & Goldingay, 2023; Wills et al., 2019), self-efficacy (Holden et al., 2002; Holden et al., 2017), attitudes towards older adults (Mendoza et al., 2020), eco-social work (Reu & Jarldorn, 2022), LGBTQ client inclusivity (Westwood, 2022), and the clients they serve (Skoura-Kirk, 2023), for example. There is a significant psychological and sociological literature which has engaged with understanding how self-concept (Nurious, 1989; Oyserman et al., 2012), identity-based processes (Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Stets & Burke, 2022), and self-theories (Dweck, 1999) are important to social and motivational processes which have been shown to support or impeded educational outcomes. Despite this, there is currently a significant gap in the social work education literature, which has yet to engage with and apply these theories to better understand their role in social work education and the development of social work competencies.

The lack of research examining the role of identity-based processes within the context of social work education is concerning for at least two reasons: first, social work competencies are a central ethical and pedagogical concern within the social work profession (Bogo et al., 2014). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) code of ethics mandates that social

workers develop, remain proficient in, and stay up-to-date with the empirical literature on competencies relevant to their professional obligations. The NASW has designated "competence" as one of six core values of the social work profession, stating that social workers must "develop and enhance their professional expertise" and "continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice" (NASW, 2017). Similarly, the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), responsible for the accreditation of degree conferring social work education programs, has outlined specific competencies which must be included in social work curriculum in order to meet accreditation standards. Competencies the CSWE has identified for advanced clinical social work practice includes engaging "diversity and difference in practice," being able to "engage in research-informed practice and practice informed research," as well as assess, intervene and evaluate (EPAS, 2008). A primary goal of social work education is to effectively facilitate the development of clinical social work competencies and ensure "that students are prepared to practice safely, competently, and ethically with all clients, constituents, and the public" (CSWE, 2022). While there is some existing research on evidence-based strategies for teaching clinical (i.e., psychotherapy) competencies (see Bogo et al., 2014; McHugh & Barlow, 2012; Miller et al., 2020; Rousmaniere, 2017), accreditation guidelines are largely articulated at a more general level, with accreditation mandates largely focusing on descriptions of competencies and course *content*, with less attention given to a corresponding formalized evidence based *processes* that support the development of social work competencies.

The second reason a lack of research on social work student identities is concerning is because multiple theories of identity suggest that identity-based processes play an important role in predicting behaviors and preferences known to be important to educational outcomes (Dweck

1999; Elmore & Oyserman, 2012; Oyserman, 2008; Oyserman et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2014). Identities are broadly understood to play an important role in the attribution of meaning to experiences of effort within a learning context, which in turn influence self-regulatory capacity and motivation to engage in behaviors that support educational success. Importantly, clinical social work students are required to develop advanced practice competencies in a number of evidence based psychotherapy treatment modalities, case formulation, treatment planning, and mental health diagnoses. While there is significant literature focused on the effectiveness of a wide range of mental health interventions and treatment modalities, the characteristics of clinical practitioners themselves remain under-studied (Crits-Christoph & Mintz, 1991). Orlinksy & Rønnestad, for example, have noted that "very little systematic data are available regarding the basic characteristics of psychotherapists" (2005, p. 5).

This dissertation seeks to address this gap in the social work education literature by applying psychological and sociological theories of identity and cognitive processes to better understand the relationship between social work student identities, cognition, and clinical social work education. Specifically, the second chapter of this dissertation is a quantitative study that examines the role of fixed and growth mindsets for clinical social work education; the third chapter of this dissertation is a qualitative thematic analysis of the possible identities of clinical social work students; and the fourth chapter of this dissertation develops an integrative dual process model of identity that incorporates the strengths, and addresses a number of limitations, within the identity theory and sociological dual process theory literatures.

1.1 Chapter 2

Mindsets refer to beliefs about the self, or *self-theories*, regarding the relative malleability or fixity of a domain specific ability or trait. A *fixed* mindset refers to the belief that an ability or

trait is fixed and unchangeable, whereas a *growth* mindset refers to the belief that that same ability or trait can change and grow over time and with effort. Importantly, research suggests that mindsets predict behaviors that support educational success (Rhew et al., 2018), improvement in grades (Yeager et al., 2016), with multiple meta-analytic reviews supporting the contention that mindsets predict a range of behaviors and preferences important to learning (Burnette et al., 2013; Costa & Faria, 2018; Sarrasin et al., 2018). While research on mindsets has primarily focused on learning within the context of middle and high school education, there is an increasing literature examining the implications of mindsets for the development of competencies within the health professions (Memari et al., 2024; Richardson et al., 2021; Wolcott et al., 2021). Specifically, mindsets are considered an important predictor of the self-regulatory capacity necessary for life-long learning, which is an important mandate across the health professions, including social work. Importantly, there is no existing research in which the mindsets of clinical social work students, or social workers more generally, have been studied. Assessing whether mindsets impact the learning preferences and behaviors of clinical social work students is important for clinical social work educators, as it addresses the question of whether beliefs about the fixity or malleability of social work-related abilities can positively or negatively impact the development of social work competencies. This would allow social work educators to target any mindset related barriers to the development of social work competences and improve social work education. Understanding if and how mindsets impact learning behaviors important for the development of clinical social work competencies stands as an important gap in the social work education literature.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation addresses this gap in the social work education literature by conducting an original survey-based study in which I examine the relationship between fixed and

growth mindsets and the likelihood of (a) asking for help when struggling, (b) preferences for *learning goals* over *performance goals* (i.e., good grades), and (c) the likelihood of volunteering to demonstrate a newly learned skill in class. Additionally, I also examine the relationship between social work students' prior social work-related experiences, relevance of their undergraduate degree to the field of social work, and other student characteristics for these same outcomes of interest.

1.2 Chapter 3

Possible selves refer to the future imagined aspects of self-concept related to who we *hope to become* and hope to *avoid becoming* (Lee & Oyserman, 2009; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Destin, 2010). They reflect ideal hoped for future states of the self. Importantly, possible selves are aspects of self-concept which, like *mindsets*, have been shown to be an important source of motivation and behavior important for learning and educational success (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Oyserman et al., 2006; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). Possible selves are theorized to influence motivation due to the desire to *become* an ideal future self (e.g., being employed), or as a result of the desire to *avoid becoming* an undesired future self (e.g., getting fired). Possible selves are understood to function like other aspects of identity insofar as they consist of mental structures that, when brought to mind, can influence expectations, interpretations, and emotions, serving as a link between salient and valued imagined future versions of the self and present action.

Possible selves have been shown predict how students interpret and experience difficulty when learning, and whether effort is interpreted as evidence that a possible self isn't a realistic or reasonable goal (Oyserman et al 2006). For example, students might experience important social identities (e.g., race, gender, class, etc.) as incongruent with a learning context, leading to the

belief that experiencing challenges in a given situation is an indication that behaviors that support learning “aren’t for me”. Studies suggest that possible selves serve as an effective source of motivation and self-regulatory capacity when *positive* (desired) and *negative* (to be avoided) future selves support the same end-goal, or what is referred to as being “balanced” (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Additionally, possible selves are more likely to result in behaviors that support the realization of that identity when they include more extensive and specific *elaborations*, which refer to the self-reported actions being taken that support the realization of a possible identity (Oyserman et al., 2004). For example, someone with a possible self for “earning a degree” could report elaborations such as “studying nightly” or “going to office hours”. Research has also found that it isn’t uncommon for study participants to report few or no elaborations for a possible self, which is an indication that few actions have been taken to support the realization of that identity (Oyserman et al., 2006). Additionally, possible selves are more likely to result in behaviors aimed at supporting the realization of that identity when contextual cues support the activation of that possible self within domains relevant to that future self. Importantly, there is no existing literature in which the possible selves of social work students have been examined. To address this gap in the social work education literature, I use a modified possible selves measure to assess possible selves of social work students, focusing on their identities *as social workers*. I conduct a thematic analysis of the possible social work selves of a sample of first year clinical social work students, inductively identifying general themes and more specific sub-themes from the self-report data.

1.3 Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of this dissertation consists of a critical review of the strengths and limitations of identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2022) and the more recent sociological literature engaging

with dual process theories of cognition (Lizardo, 2019; Lizardo et al., 2016; Moore, 2017; Vaisey, 2009; Vaisey, 2014; Vila-Henninger, 2015). Recent sociological literature engaging with dual process theories of cognition, or what I refer to as Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT), is a recently developing application of dual process theories of cognition to a number of existing sociological topics. Dual process theory broadly refers to a subject area within the field of cognitive psychology that seeks to identify the characteristics, and study the operation, of *implicit* and *explicit* cognitive processes. Dual process theory has been described as "one of the most significant developments in the history of scientific psychology" premised on the view "that psychological processes can be divided into two distinct categories depending on whether they operate in an automatic or controlled fashion" (Gawronski et al., 2014, p. 3). Explicit cognitive processes are characteristically slow, linear, reflective, and limited by working memory, and reflect the verbal discursive data collected in interviews and self-reports; whereas implicit cognitive processes are characteristically fast, automatic, and operate outside of conscious control or awareness, and typically involve nondeclarative procedural memory and other automatic embodied cognitive processes (e.g., emotional reactions, riding a bicycle, etc.). Importantly, aspects of implicit and explicit cognitive processes are dissociable, and can therefore produce contradictory results within their respective processing domain. The phenomena of dissociability has been popularized by research on implicit bias and the use of the time-based Implicit Association Test (IAT), which has seen a significant literature focused on identifying divergent outputs between *explicit* reports of attitudes towards a target social identity (e.g. race, gender, etc.) and the *automatic associations* the IAT assessed for the same target identity. Within this literature, indications of bias are assumed to be reflected in any measured difference between explicitly reported attitudes and the implicit associations assessed using the

IAT. Sociologists have adapted these ideas most extensively for the analysis of culture (Lizardo et al., 2016; Lizardo, 2019; Vaisey, 2009), noting that existing sociological research has typically focused on measures that capture explicit deliberate consciousness via the use of survey or interview methods, which capture *culture in thinking*, while mistakenly making claims about *what people do*, or culture in action (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014; Vaisey, 2009). Distinguishing between explicit and implicit cognitive processes affords sociological analysis greater analytic clarity regarding the distinct role that each type of cognitive processing might have within a particular social process of interest. Despite the important theoretical and analytic advances made within the SDPT literature, there are only a small number of empirical tests of dual process theory conducted by sociologists. A limitation of this literature is a reliance on measures adapted from the field of cognitive psychology, which I argue, are psychologically reductive and ill-suited for the analysis of more complex social processes. Identity theory, in contrast, has a developed account of the complex dynamics and interactive processes that can occur over the course of a social process. Unlike the static snapshots of identity taken by measures such as the IAT, for example, identity theory recognizes the complexity and ongoing dynamics of situated action, where identities interact both internally, within individuals, and externally with the situations in which identity content has been brought to mind (Burke & Stets, 2022). Further, identity theory allows for the changing dynamics which can occur over the course of a social process, making for a more sociologically complex understanding of identity-based social processes than has so far been developed within the SDPT literature. Despite accounting for more complex features of social explanation, identity theory is limited in two important ways: first, it does not distinguish between implicit and explicit aspects of identity and cognitive

processing, and relies almost exclusively on self-report survey measures that primarily capture explicit cognitive processes.

By drawing on the benefits, and addressing the limitations of each framework, I propose an integrative Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI). The elements of this proposed framework follow the recommendations of Jerolmack & Khan (2014), who argue for the inclusion of observational data in studies making claims about actual behavioral outcomes. The dual process approach to identity I outline attends to both implicit and explicit cognitive processes, and the implications of their being dissociable. I illustrate the benefits of the DPMI as a framework for identifying implicit barriers to effective clinical social work practice. Specifically, the use of Video Recorded Practice (VRP) is an effective, yet underutilized, tool for the development of clinical social work competencies (Rousmaniere, 2017). One of the primary benefits of using VRP as a pedagogical tool is that it allows the practitioner to *see* aspects of their performance that would otherwise remain outside of their conscious awareness. Body language, tone of voice, speech prosody, the automatic activation of emotion or affect, eye contact, and facial expressions can all reflect the activation of nondeclarative implicit cognitive processes which can serve as barriers to effective clinical practice, and therefore also serve as important sites for learning. These expressions are fundamental to the effective and skillful ability to express empathy, respect, and positive regard, all of which are known predictors of effective clinical practice (Norcross & Lambert, 2019). Clinical social workers can also experience the automatic activation of emotional states that act as implicit barriers to effective clinical practice, including countertransference (Hayes et al., 2019) and the activation of maladaptive attachment style related content (Castonguay et al., 2010), both of which have been shown to negatively impact psychotherapy outcomes. Identity theory and SDPT provide a framework for understanding

implicit and explicit barriers to effective clinical practice through the concept of *identity verification* and *nonverification*. Identity verification refers to the desire to have an active identity recognized and confirmed by others and the contexts in which that identity is active. Identity theory has found that identity verification typically leads to positive emotions, while experiences of identity nonverification result in negative affect and emotion (Stets & Burke, 2014). Observing VRP sessions allows for the identification of both implicit and explicit barriers to clinical practice, identity verification and nonverification, and for the assessment of when explicit aspects of social work student identity diverge with or contradict implicit automatic cognitive processes. I further discuss what identity theory and dual process theory mean for clinical social work practice, specifically exploring how the identities of social work students, faculty, and social work administrators could influence the implementation of VRP into social work programs at different levels of social analysis, identifying limitations to the frameworks discussed in this chapter, and possible directions for future research.

Chapter 2 Examining the Role of Fixed and Growth Mindsets for Clinical Social Work Education: Factors Predicting Learning Goals versus Performance Goals and the Likelihood of Asking for Help When Struggling

2.1 Introduction

With recognition that didactics alone are not sufficient for developing clinical competencies (Miller et al., 2004; Forsetlund et al., 2021), there is growing interest in how to effectively teach clinical competencies (Brownson et al., 2017). Research suggests that learning clinical competences improved when learning contexts include opportunities for consultation, practice, modeling, reflection, and feedback (Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Mannix et al., 2006; Beidas & Kendall, 2010; Herschell et al., 2010; Rakovshik & McManus, 2010; McHugh & Barlow, 2012; Edmunds et al., 2013). However, there is little research examining how these specific learning processes might be impacted by factors known to be important to the learning preferences and behaviors of students.

Motivation researchers, for example, have found that a range of student characteristics can influence learning behaviors and preferences implicated in strategies that support learning and educational outcomes. Within this literature, student characteristics fall broadly under the umbrella of self-concept (Nurius, 1989), and can include any number of salient identities or beliefs about the self (Oyserman et al., 2012). For example, researchers have investigated specific identity categories, such as racial-ethnic self-schema (Oyserman et al., 1995; Oyserman et al., 2003; Altschul et al., 2008; Oyserman, 2008), gender (Markus et al., 1982; Bem, 1993; Charles & Bradley, 2009; Ridgeway, 2009), and age (Burley et al., 1999; Kooij & Zacher, 2016);

as well as more global beliefs about the self, such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Multon et al., 1991), fixed and growth mindsets (Dweck, 1999), beliefs about future "possible selves" (Barnett et al., 2019; Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Oyserman et al., 2006; Oyserman & Frybeg, 2006; Oyserman & James, 2011), and identity based motivation (Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Elmore & Oyserman, 2012). Research on the role that identity and self-concept can have for the development of social work competencies represents an important gap in the social work education literature.

2.2 Fixed and Growth Mindsets

Research on self-theories, or beliefs about the relative fixity or malleability of a particular skill, ability, or trait, has fallen under the umbrella of the concept of *mindsets*, which refer to beliefs about the relative fixity or malleability of a domain specific skill or ability (Dweck, 1999). Mindsets fall into two categories: a *growth mindset* referring to the belief that an ability or characteristic can change or grow over time with effort, and a *fixed mindset* referring to the belief that an ability or characteristic is fixed and unchangeable. Research on mindsets has been applied across a range of topics, including morality (Chiu et al., 1997), personality (Hong et al., 1999; Dweck, 2008), intergroup relations (Carr et al., 2012; Rattan & Georgeac, 2017), judgment and reaction (Dweck et al., 1995), psychological distress (Burnette et al., 2020), consumer behavior (Murphy & Dweck, 2016), employer performance appraisals (Heslin et al., 2005; Heslin & VandeWalle, 2011), leadership (Keating & Heslin, 2015), and memory (Plaks & Chasteen, 2013).

However, mindset research has primarily been assessed within the domain of education, providing evidence for the role the fixed and growth mindsets have for a range of behaviors and preferences important for learning and educational outcomes (see meta-analytic reviews by

Burnette et al., 2013; and Sarrasin et al., 2018). Within educational contexts, mindsets have been shown to predict the likelihood of asking for feedback when struggling (Hong et al., 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998), ignoring potentially useful feedback (Heslin & VandeWalle, 2005), responding negatively to constructive feedback (Blackwell et al., 2007), and persisting in the face of effort (Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Those with a *fixed* mindset tend to score worse on all of these outcomes and are also less likely to take risks that might reveal what they believe to be their *fixed* lack of ability. In contrast, those with a *growth* mindset are more likely to ask for help when struggling, persist in the face of effort and setbacks, indicate a preference for learning over getting a good grade, respond positively to constructive feedback, and see their grades improve over time.

The learning behaviors and preferences documented above are important within the context of clinical social work education for several reasons. Learning clinical social work competencies is often successful when the learner is able to tolerate the discomfort involved in having to exert effort and continue in the face of setbacks, seek help and guidance from an instructor, colleague, or clinical supervisor, receive and process feedback, and reflect on their performance constructively. Both in the classroom and within the context of a social work field placement, social work students are frequently tasked with demonstrating new skills in front of peers or supervisors, receiving critical feedback, and discussing difficulties with challenging clients. These common experiences are in the service of the development of skills and competencies that serve as the foundation for more effective clinical practice.

Social work education research, however, currently lacks critical engagement with the research on student characteristics and their role in the development of clinical social work competencies. Research on social work education has typically focused on issues related to

identifying and defining competencies (Sampson et al., 2018; Logie et al., 2013; Bogo, 2010; Bogo & Rawlings, 2014; Shulman, 1981, 1993), assessing social work student competencies via self-efficacy measures (Holden et al., 2002; Holden et al., 2007; Holden et al., 2017); the development and use of structured simulations to assess social work competencies (Bogo, 2010; Bogo et al., 2014); translating and integrating different competencies into social work curriculum (Cheung et al., 2019); or theoretical arguments for or against particular social work competencies (Bellamy et al., 2013; McCrystal & Wilson, 2009).

Research that has examined the characteristics of social work students has typically focused on identifying aspects of professional identity (Bogo et al., 1993; Germain, 1981; Hyslop, 2018), career and educational preferences (Rubin & Johnson, 1984; Butler, 1990; Butler, 1992; Abell & McDonnell, 1990), using students' social identities for the purpose of developing culturally informed social work practice (Brydon, 2011; Danso, 2018; Fisher-Borne et al., 2015; Garran & Rozas, 2013; Ortega & Faller, 2011; NASW, 2015) or research (Danso, 2015). Missing from this literature is research examining how factors related to the students themselves can influence learning outcomes. This lack of research on social work students themselves represents an additional gap in the clinical social work education literature.

2.3 Study Objectives

There is currently no existing research in which the mindsets of clinical social work students have been examined. This study seeks to address these gaps in the social work education literature through an examination of the role that fixed and growth mindsets have for predicting a number of outcomes shown in prior research to be influenced by mindsets. Specifically, this study examines the role that fixed and growth mindsets have for clinical social work students

likelihood of asking for help when struggling, preferences for learning goals vs performance goals, and the likelihood of volunteering to demonstrate a therapeutic technique in class.

2.4 Methods

2.4.1 Recruitment

Study participants were recruited from a sample of first year clinical social work students enrolled in one of eight sections of an introductory clinical social work skills course at a large Midwestern university (n = 203). Participants were recruited through a brief in-class presentation given during the second and third week of the Fall, 2015 semester. Sign-up sheets were passed around the classroom following a brief description of recruitment for a "learning orientation study", and interested students provided their name and email address to be contacted. Those students who indicated interest in the study were sent a link to a Qualtrics survey (described below). A $20 gift card was offered as an incentive for participating. Of the 203 students enrolled in the different course sections, 189 students provided their contact information (i.e., name and email address), with a total of 161 of those students completing the survey (85.18% response rate).

2.5 Measures

2.5.1 Mindsets Measures for Empathy and Listening

The main independent variable collected for this study was a measure of mindsets for *empathy* and *listening*, two skills meant to represent competencies understood to be *general* to effective social work practice. The mindset measure used in this study was modified from Dweck et al.'s (1995), using items that focused on abilities commonly understood to be general and foundational skills relevant to social work practice: *empathy* and *listening* (Duncan et al.,

2009; Norcross 2011). Following Dweck et al (1995), three items were used to assess mindsets for both *empathy* (α = .89) and *listening* (α = .92). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement using a 6-point Likert scale in response to statements such as: "*You have a certain amount of empathy, and there's nothing you can do to change that*." Possible scores for each item could range from 1 to 6. Following reliability tests and Principal Components Analysis (PCA), the three items used to assess each ability were averaged to form a single mindset score. In prior mindset research, composite mindset scores are derived from averaging the items used to assess mindsets for an ability, trait, or skill (Dweck et al., 1995). Averages are then used to construct a dichotomous mindset variable with mindset categories for *fixed* and *growth* for each ability assessed. Following Dweck et al. (1995), mindset categories were constructed by classifying those with an average mindset score of 3.0 or less as having a *fixed* mindset, and those with a score of 4.0 or above as having a *growth* mindset, while those who scored between 3 – 4 were discarded and not included in the final analysis "to ensure that only participants with clear theories are included" (p. 269).

The approach developed by Dweck et al. (1995), however, is based on an assumption that mindsets will be evenly distributed for a given ability. As Dweck et al. (1995) state, the distribution of mindset values is expected to be "evenly distributed between the two...groups" (p. 269), with a roughly equal number of participants in a given study having a fixed or growth mindset. In this present study, however, the distribution of mindset scores was heavily skewed towards the *growth* category. Mindsets for *empathy* included 111 participants (77%) who met the criteria for a *growth* mindset and 33 for a *fixed* (23%). Mindsets for *listening* were even more unevenly distributed, with 143 participants (94%) meeting the criteria for a *growth* mindset, and

9 for *fixed* (5.9%). Due to the significantly higher number of participants in the *growth* category, mindsets values were treated as linear, as opposed to dichotomous, in the analysis.

2.5.2 Performance Goals versus Learning Goals

Continuing to follow Dweck et al. (1995), three items were used to assess preferences for *learning goals* versus *performance goals* by asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements of preference for *learning* or *being challenged*, or getting *good grades*. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following three statements using a 6-point Likert scale with response options that ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree":

a) "*Although I prefer not to admit it, sometimes I'd rather get a good grade on an assignment than learn a lot*."
b) "*It's much more important for me to learn new things in my classes that it is to get the best grades.*"
c) "*If I* had *to choose between getting a good grade and being challenged in class, I would choose...*"

Additionally, a third item asked participants to provide a dichotomous response indicating their preference for "good grades" or "being challenged." Items were taken directly from prior research on mindsets conducted by Dweck et al. (1999).

2.5.3 Likelihood of Discussing a Clinical Challenge or Demonstrating a Technique

A vignette developed for this study assessed how likely a student would be to ask for help when struggling in their clinical work. The vignette stated the following: "*You have been working with a client for several months at your social work field placement. You are currently*

tired and overwhelmed with coursework and assignments. During a session with this client, you find that your mind is drifting and that you're having a hard time paying attention, although they don't seem to notice." Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to discuss this with their supervisor, and also in a social work course, using a 6-point Liker scale that ranged from "Very Likely" to "Not Likely At All."

A second vignette developed for this study assessed how likely a participant would be to volunteer to demonstrate a newly learned therapeutic technique in one of their social work courses. Participants indicated their level of agreement using a 6-point Likert scale response that ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

2.5.4 Controls

Additional survey items were used to collect information on the demographics of the sample, as well as a number of items believed to possibly influence the outcomes of interest. These included race, age, gender, undergraduate major, and prior social work-related work and volunteer experiences. It was expected that students with undergraduate degrees in disciplines understood to be topically *further* from that of social work (e.g., engineering, computer science, etc.) may be less comfortable engaging in some of the learning behaviors assessed due to the likelihood that they would be less familiar with the social work profession, while those with an undergraduate degree in disciplines topically *closer* to social work (e.g., psychology, public health, sociology) might be more comfortable with engaging in learning behaviors perceived as being at risk for scrutiny by others. For similar reasons, an additional control for "prior social work-related or volunteer experiences" was assessed, with respondents able to write in up to four different responses. This item was included due to the perception that incoming students with

pre-existing social work-related experience may be more likely to report behaviors that support learning.

2.5.5 Sample Characteristics

Study participants identified as 72.7% White (n = 117), 12.4% Black (n = 20), 7.45% Hispanic or Latino/a (n = 12), and 7.45% Asian (n = 12). A vast majority of participants identified as female (88.8%), slightly higher than is average in social work programs more broadly, with an average age of 26 (median = 24; range = 22 - 57, SD = 6.16). 72% of participants completed an undergraduate degree in the social sciences (n = 116), 14.9% in social work or another applied discipline (n = 24), 8.1% in the humanities (n = 13), and 5% in disciplines "other" than the humanities, social sciences, or applied professions (e.g., journalism, business, etc.) (n = 8).

2.6 Results

2.6.1 Multivariate Analysis of Preferences for Learning Goals vs. Performance Goals

Preferences for learning goals versus performance goals were assessed using three items. The first item asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "*Although I prefer not to admit it, sometimes I'd rather get a good grade on an assignment than learn a lot.*" Results found that Black participants were more likely to prefer learning over good grades as compared to their White counterparts (B = 0.9; p = 0.003**). Additionally, respondents with increased prior social work-related experiences were found to prefer learning over getting a good grade (B = 0.16; p = 0.042*). The second item asked participants to respond to the statement, "*It's much more important for me to learn new things in my classes that it is to get the best grades*." Results found male respondents preferred learning "new things" over "getting the

best grades" as compared to female respondents (B = 0.69; p = 0.013*), and respondents with more prior social work-related experiences also preferring to learn "new things" over "getting good grades" (B = 0.19; p = 0.005**).

The third item used to assess learning goals vs. performance goals asked, "*If I* had *to choose between getting a good grade and being challenged in class, I would choose...*" Response options included a dichotomous choice between preferring a "good grade" or "being challenged." Logistic regression analysis indicated that as participants age increased, the likelihood of preferring being challenged increased, with those 31 or older being more than 4 times more likely to prefer "being challenged" as compared to participants aged 21 - 25 years (OR = 4.2; p = 0.033). Similarly, those with more prior social work-related experiences also had a higher odds of preferring "being challenged" over getting a "good grade" (OR = 1.38; p = 0.028). Findings are summarized in table 1 below:

Table 2.1: Preferences for Learning versus Performance Goals

	Although I prefer not to admit it, sometimes I'd rather get a good grade on an assignment than learn a lot			*It's much more important for me to learn new things in my classes that it is to get the best grades*			*If I* had *to choose between getting a good grade and being challenged in class, I would choose...*[1]		
	B	SE	p-value	B	SE	p-value	OR	SE	p-value
Empathy	0.0463	0.1271	0.716	-0.0223	0.1076	0.836	1.0681	0.2503	0.778
Listening	0.06403	0.1390	0.646	-0.0292	0.1177	0.804	0.9830	0.2491	0.946
Gender	0.4916	0.3248	0.132	0.6900	0.2751	0.013*	1.2456	0.7577	0.718
Race[2]									
Black	0.8972	0.2975	0.003**	-0.2624	0.2520	0.299	2.1160	1.2653	0.210

[1] Logistic regression was used in this model, and age treated as a categorical instead of continuous variable.
[2] White is the reference category for race.

Hispanic or Latino/a	-0.2257	0.3663	0.539	-0.4693	0.3102	0.132	0.5985	0.3928	0.434
Asian	0.3495	0.3640	0.338	0.4825	0.3082	0.120	1.2627	0.8615	0.732
Age									
Age (cont)	0.0179	0.0158	0.257	0.0101	0.0133	0.447			
26 - 30							0.7542	0.3686	0.564
31+[3]							4.3986	2.9654	0.028*
SW Exp	0.1574	0.0796	0.050*	0.1924	0.0674	0.005**	1.3569	0.1979	0.036*
Major									
Social Sciences	0.0601	0.2715	0.825	0.0822	0.2299	0.721	1.1125	0.5341	0.824
Humanities	-0.2258	0.4157	0.588	-0.3528	0.3521	0.318	1.5890	1.2062	0.542
Other	0.1340	0.5103	0.793	-0.3242	0.4321	0.454	3.7354	4.5382	0.278
R-squared	0.1235			0.1285			0.0787		

2.7 Taking Risks to Learn

Two items were used to assess study participants' willingness to engage in learning experiences that could be considered as involving a degree of risk.. Both items asked respondents to respond to a vignette that described a scenario in which the study respondent was experiencing difficulties at their field placement. Participants were then asked to indicate the likelihood they would discuss their struggles with (a) their field placement supervisor, or (b) within a social work course. Finally, a third item asked how likely a respondent would be to volunteer to demonstrate a newly learned therapeutic technique in class.

2.7.1 Likelihood of Discussing Struggles with Supervisors or in Class

[3] 21 - 25 is the reference category for age

Age and undergraduate degree were predictive of the likelihood of discussing struggles with a supervisor, participants aged 31 years or older were significantly more likely to discuss their struggles with a supervisor as compared to those aged 21 - 25 (B = 0.74; p = 0.008**), and those with an undergraduate degree in an "other" discipline (e.g., journalism, business, computer science, etc.) were significantly less likely to discuss their struggles with a supervisor as compared to those with an undergraduate degree in an applied field, such as social work (B = -1.16; p = 0.018). There were no significant predictors of the likelihood of discussing these same struggles in a classroom setting.

2.7.2 Likelihood of Volunteering to Demonstrate a New Technique in Class

Item 6 asked participants to respond to the following vignette: "*You have just learned a new therapeutic technique in one of your social work classes. During the next class meeting the instructor asks for a volunteer to demonstrate the approach in front of the class. How likely would you be to volunteer?*" Gender, race, and undergraduate major were significant, with Male participants more likely to volunteer as compared to Females (B = 1.0; p = 0.006), Black participants more likely to volunteer than their White counterparts (0.94; p = 0.005), and those with undergraduate degrees in "other" disciplines being less likely to volunteer as compared to those with undergraduate degrees in an applied profession (B = -1.57; p = 0.007). Findings are summarized in table 2 below:

Table 2.2: Likelihood of Discussing Struggles and Volunteering to Demonstrate New Technique in Class

	Discuss struggles with supervisor[4]			Discuss struggles in class			Volunteer to demonstrate new technique in class		
	B	SE	p-value	B	SE	p-value	B	SE	p-value
Empathy	0.0114	0.1203	0.925	0.0410	0.1075	0.704	0.1593	0.1421	0.264
Listening	0.0412	0.1321	0.755	0.1388	0.1176	0.240	-0.1060	0.1555	0.496
Gender (Female is reference)	0.3327	0.3049	0.277	0.0155	0.2748	0.955	1.0165	0.3634	0.006**
Race (White is reference)									
Black	0.1040	0.2818	0.713	0.1474	0.2517	0.559	0.9453	0.3328	0.005**
Hispanic or Latino/a	0.1299	0.3468	0.709	0.2656	0.3099	0.393	-0.2540	0.4098	0.536
Asian	0.3559	0.3467	0.306	0.1325	0.3079	0.668	0.0069	0.4071	0.987
Age (21 - 25 is reference)									
age (cont.)				0.0207	0.0133	0.123	0.0339	0.0176	0.056
26 - 30	-0.0110	0.2633	0.967						
31+	0.7417	0.2738	0.008**						
SW Exps	0.0112	0.0752	0.881	-0.0418	0.0673	0.535	0.0781	0.0890	0.381
Major (Social Work and applied fields is reference)									
Soc Sciences	0.0867	0.2564	0.736	0.2260	0.2297	0.327	-0.4722	0.3037	0.122
Humanities	-0.4241	0.3941	0.283	-0.0889	0.3517	0.801	-0.0595	0.4651	0.898
Other	-1.1867	0.4832	0.015*	0.0582	0.4317	0.893	-1.5707	05708	0.007**
R-squared	0.1182			0.0648			0.1670		

2.8 Discussion

2.8.1 Summary of Findings

Assessing whether the mindsets under study were relevant to the domain of social work education was the initial motivation for this investigation. However, findings did not indicate

[4] In this model "age" was a categorical instead of a continuous variable

that mindsets predicted any of the outcomes assessed. Findings did indicate that race, gender, age, prior social work-related experiences, and undergraduate major were significant predictors for outcomes of interest. The most consistent predictor of learning goal orientations was prior social work-related experiences, which predicted a preference for *learning goals* over *performance goals* (i.e., good grades) across all three goal orientation measures. An increase in prior social work related experience similarly increased the likelihood of preferring *learning goals* over *performance goals*. Age, race, and gender were also found to be significant on one goal orientation item each, with an increase in age significantly increasing the likelihood of preferring *learning goals* over *performance goals*, as well as for black participants as compared to whites, and men as compared to women. Age and undergraduate degree were both predictive of the likelihood asking for help when struggling, with older students being more likely to ask for help, and those with an undergraduate degree in “other” (i.e., less closely related to social work) disciplines being less likely to ask for help. Gender, race, and undergraduate degree were also predictive of whether a person would be willing to demonstrate a newly learned technique in class, with male participants and Black participants more likely to volunteer as compared to their female and White counterparts, respectively; while those with an undergraduate degree in “other” disciplines were found to be less likely to volunteer to demonstrate a newly learned psychotherapy technique in class. Findings in this study support the larger goal of bringing scholarly attention to the characteristics of social work students and the role they play in understanding factors known to be important for educational outcome.

2.9 Implications for Clinical Social Work Education

This study confirms that first year clinical social work students vary in ways which are important for the development of social work competencies and their likelihood of engaging in

important learning experiences. The implications of these findings for social work education center on how to better understand and address impediments to learning. Implications for the development of social work competencies more generally, and for engagement with field education, are worthy of further discussion.

NASW identifies *competency* as a core social work value that reflects both a general orientation towards learning, wherein a social worker is expected "to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions", as well as the ability to "critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work" (NASW 2008: 4). Students who prefer performance goals over learning, who are reluctant to discuss their struggles in class or with a field supervisor, or who are less likely to participate in in-class demonstrations reflect an orientation to learning that is likely to serve as an impediment to their development of social work competencies. As discussed previously, research on the dissemination of clinical competencies indicates that therapy skills are most effectively developed via learning experiences that include opportunities for consultation, practice, modeling, reflection, and feedback. Clinical social work education includes simulated therapy sessions, seeking feedback from instructors, peers, and supervisors, and engaging in classroom demonstrations. Social work educators could benefit from understanding and addressing differences that may lead to impediments to engagement in learning experiences important for the development of social work competencies.

Similarly, the finding that a struggling student may be less likely to ask for help from a field placement supervisor should be concerning to social work educators. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (2008) has described field education as a "signature pedagogy for social work…that teach[es] future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work

in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity" (p. 20). Increasing student engagement is consistent with the NASW core value of competency and the larger educational goal of inculcating a more enduring orientation to learning whose effects could last throughout a career.

Following the establishment of the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), a committee was established by the CSWE to identify the advanced competencies a master's level clinical social worker should know beyond the core competencies by the time they completed their academic training (Singer et al., 2012). A number of efforts by the CSWE have helped to clarify and define the knowledge and skills social work students should have developed as a result of their education at the master's and bachelor's level. However, far less attention has been placed on *how* students are meant to learn these skills, and how student differences impact the learning process. This study demonstrates that a range of factors contribute to the overall learning orientations of social work students, which in turn influences the likelihood of engaging effectively in the development of social work competencies. By understanding obstacles to student engagement, social work educators can work to find strategies for addressing those obstacles. Currently social work education is missing an opportunity to understand factors that contribute to social work students' orientation to learning and the role these differences have in supporting or impeding the development of social work competencies.

In short, this study demonstrates that important differences in social work students' orientations to learning exist, and that if they are to be addressed, further research and attention could be directed towards understanding how student characteristics can influence educational outcomes and the development of social work competencies. Social work educators should

consider differences in student learning orientations that can impede engagement in important learning experiences.

2.10 Future Research

2.10.1 Identity-Based Processes in Social Work

Findings from this study suggest the need for further research in at least three areas. First, it is not clear *why* the patterns in the findings in this study were found. Speculation informed by existing social science research on identity-context interaction may provide insight into the possible role that gender (Bem, 1993; Charles & Bradley, 2009; Ridgeway, 2009), ethnic-racial schema (Oyserman, 2008), identity (Oyserman & Destin, 2010), or culture (Oyserman & Sorensen, 2009) have on motivational processes relevant to the outcomes assessed in this study. Existing research and theories can serve to inform further data collection and hypothesis testing on the variables shown to be significant predictors in this study. A number of approaches have been developed for examining how aspects of self-concept, such as ethnic-racial self-schema (Oyserman, 2008), gender self-concept (Ridgeway, 2009; Risman, 2004; Cech, 2013), and identity more broadly (Burke & Stets, 2022; Miles, 2014) interact with the contexts in which those identities are brought to mind. Many of these approaches have been applied within educational contexts and have served as the basis for interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes and increasing student engagement.

The social work profession also presents a unique opportunity for studying gendered processes within a highly gendered profession. The field of social work is characterized by a significant self-selection bias that heavily leans towards an over representation of woman at the level of both student and practitioner. Social work students are predominantly female, making up approximately 79% of the membership in the National Association of Social Workers (Sakamoto

et al., 2008). Male social workers lie at the intersection of multiple identities via their dominant position in society more broadly, while being a *minority* within the social work profession. The context of social work additionally presents a unique opportunity for research at the intersection of identity, culture, and professions to study gendered processes as they play out at multiple levels of analysis (Armstrong et al., 2006; Ridgeway, 2004). Sociologists have studied ways in which professions maintain gender segregation within cultures characterized by cultural egalitarianism (Charles & Bradley, 2009), as well as the role that gender self-concept has in predicting self-selection into gendered professions (Cech, 2013).

Additionally, studies have suggested that women entering female dominated professions can have lower aspirations than women entering professions in which they are a minority (Murrell et al., 1991), while men who work in female dominated profession and have high masculinity scores on a Gender Role Self Concept (GRSC) measure. Men in these situations have been shown to experience increased "tokenization" and are more likely to engage in activities considered to be masculine, such as masculine task redefinition (Korek et al., 2014). Research such as this provides a useful starting point for testing hypotheses to explain why differences in learning preferences were found between male and female participants in this study.

2.10.2 Evaluating Mindsets

Recent research has demonstrated that mindsets may be more responsive to context than was previously thought, with early mindset research collected data in such a way that treated mindsets as largely independent of context. More recent studies examining the role that parents and teachers have on the mindsets of children found that the kind of feedback given to children and students was predictive of their mindsets (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2016; Haimovitz & Dweck,

2017). While students may have a baseline mindset value of fixed or growth for a given mindset measure, that value will interact with contexts that further prompt a fixed or growth mindset. This finding would be consistent with other theories of identity that account for identity-context interaction, such as Possible Selves Theory (PST) and Identity Control Theory (ICT), both of which are discussed in further detail in the following chapter. Accounting for context in future studies of mindsets within social work education could include in-classroom observational data, or data on the kind of instructor feedback given to students.

Future research could also investigate whether mindset measures are measuring implicit or explicit cognitive processes. Recent research on dual process theory claims that self-report, survey, and interview methods are primarily measuring *explicit* cognitive processes, whereas *implicit* cognitive processing is understood to feature automaticity. Explicit cognition is understood to primarily assess the declarative memory system, as opposed to processes which are automatic, embodied, or procedurally learned. It is worth noting that the concept of "mindsets" is an instantiation of a broader concept known as *implicit theories*, for which there is a significant literature. Like mindsets, implicit theories refer to beliefs about whether an attribute or characteristic of interest is fixed or changeable. Despite the use of the term *implicit* in the title of the construct, however, implicit theory measures rely on self-report survey questions. From the perspective of cognitive processing, implicit theories are not actually implicit, but a measure of explicit cognition. Future research could, at minimum, compare explicit and implicit measures of mindsets to assess whether they are dissociable or if they are accurate measures of the same construct.

2.10.3 Educational Outcomes

Another area of future research could focus on whether the outcomes identified in this study predict the development of clinical competencies over time. Marion Bogo (2013), for example, has adapted the Objective Structure Clinical Examination (OSCE) for assessing social work competencies. The findings from this study could be paired with the OSCE to assess if preferences for learning goals or performance goals impact the competencies assessed in the OSCE. Similarly, less costly and cumbersome measures could also be used to assess if a student's orientation to learning impacts other aspects of clinical practice. For example, the Session Rating Scale (SRS) and Outcome Rating Scale (ORS), are brief measures used to assess the therapeutic alliance and client well-being, respectively. These measures are used to assess clinical outcomes, in the case of the ORS, and the strength of the working alliance, in the case of the SRS (Duncan, 2012). If the development of social work competencies is impacted by a students' orientation to learning (as assessed in this study), we might expect that client outcomes and the working alliance, as measured by the ORS and SRS, could similarly be impacted. Due to their brevity, the ORS and SRS could easily be incorporated into simulated social work practice sessions as a measure of student learning.

2.11 Study Limitations

2.11.1 Sampling

Study limitations include issues related to the sampling procedure. Participants were recruited from a large highly rated public Midwestern university that is not representative of the general population, or even representative of the general social work student population. Specifically, the most recent data indicates that the overall social work student population is primarily White (63%) and female (83%). While class characteristics were not assessed in this study, students at this university are generally above the median income for households in the

United States and known for their relative affluence. Similarly, the demographic characteristics of the population where the university is located is predominantly White (70%). Additionally, participants in the study were not randomly selected, but self-selected into the study with an incentive, likely resulting in sampling bias. Finally, study participants were recruited during the first semester of their MSW program. The data captured in this study is likely to change over the course of their educational experience. The findings in this study are limited insofar as they reflect student learning preferences at a specific point in their educational experience. These findings are limited insofar as they fail to assess how student learning orientations change over time, if student learning orientations change based on their initial learning orientations, or if other variables (e.g., experiences with different faculty) influence how student learning orientations might change over the course of the educational program. Future research on social work student learning orientations could benefit from including data captured at multiple time-pints (e.g., middle and end of their program) to better understand how the experience of completing an MSW could influence a student's learning orientations change over time, if base-line learning orientations are predictive of future learning orientations, and whether base-line learning orientations predict learning outcomes.

2.11.2 Mindsets for Empathy and Listening

Multiple meta-analyses provide evidence supporting the claim that mindsets are important for educational outcomes, raising the question as to why mindsets for *empathy* and *listening* were not predictive of the same outcomes established in the mindset literature. One explanation relates to a limitation to this study regarding the construct validity of the mindset measure used.

While empathy and listening are established core clinical social work skills, the mindset measure in this study was intended to assess student *perceptions* of core abilities relevant to being a social worker, and whether those abilities were believed to be fixed or changeable. However, being an effective social worker involves a range of skills and abilities. A preliminary study assessing the ideal attributes of a clinical social worker could have been an effective approach to identifying which abilities might be an effective measure of social work relevant mindsets. Further evidence for this claim is supported by the findings in the next chapter, where important social worker identities were found to be represented at different levels of abstraction. It was found that a more general identity of *helping skills* subsumed a larger variety of other more specific skills, such as *empathy*, *listening*, *cultural competence*, and *respect*, to name a few.

One explanation for a lack of construct validity is supported by an examination of previous mindset measures, which typically assess beliefs about abilities, traits, or characteristics at a higher level of generality and abstraction. For example, mindset measures have been used to assess attributes such as *intelligence*, *personality, moral character*, whether the *kind of person* someone is can change, or whether *the world* is fixed or changeable (Dweck, 1999). Each of these attributes are at a higher level of abstraction and generality than *empathy* and *listening*. Even the attribute of intelligence, arguably the most specific attribute listed above, captures a greater level of generality insofar as it impacts almost every domain of a person's life. Empathy and listening, in contrast, are abilities that more narrowly relate to effective interpersonal engagement.

Further evidence that the mindsets assessed in this study require additional analysis was the finding that fixed and growth mindsets for *empathy* and *listening* were not evenly distributed. Recall that Dweck (1995) claims that mindset values are expected to be "evenly distributed

between" the categories of fixed and growth (p. 269). In this study, the distribution of mindsets for *empathy* were 77% for *growth* and 23% *fixed*, whereas mindsets for *listening* were even more skewed, with 94% for *growth* and 5.9% for *fixed*. Why mindsets for these abilities were found to be significantly in favor of growth remains a question that requires further investigation. It is possible the empathy and listening represent abilities that are conceptualized within the broader cultural context of the United States as less fixed. Likewise, it is also possible that something about social work students supports a belief that empathy and listening are more amenable to change then other abilities.

Finally, it is also possible that students entering a profession that is premised on *change* could be biased towards beliefs that reflect this bias. That is, social work students could already generally hold a growth oriented mindset, and this might be particularly so for abilities relevant to their profession. It is also possible that study participants responded to the mindset measures with a social desirability bias. Social work students could prefer to *present* themselves as believing that their ability to listen and express empathy are amenable to change because that could reflect how they hope to be perceived, or because that's how they hope to perceive themselves, as they enter a program focused on the development of these kinds of skills.

2.12 Conclusion

This study contributes to the social work education literature by pursuing an exploratory study of the role that fixed and growth mindsets have for a sample of clinical social work students' preferences for learning goals vs performance goals, and their likelihood of taking risks to learn. Findings are notable for several reasons. In terms of research on mindsets, results in this study contradict what would be expected in light of prior research on fixed and growth mindsets. This could have been due to issues related to the construct validity of the mindset measure used

in this study, due to the lack of contextual variables assessed in this study, or because mindsets are not predictive of the outcomes of interest for this population. Despite this, findings in this study suggest that differences in student characteristics are predictive of important learning preferences that could impact the development of clinical social work skills and competencies. Additional research is needed to assess whether these findings are stable over the course of a social work student's education, or if, as a result of their educational experiences, they become more likely to embrace an orientation towards learning. Importantly, the openness to learning is arguably more important for students without a background in a social work related profession, or who doesn't have prior social work-related experiences. Additionally, future research that includes a more nuanced engagement with theories of identity and identity-context interaction could help explain the outcomes identified in this study.

This study provides a first step in better understanding the role that student characteristics play in clinical social work education, filling a gap in the social work education literature. This study found that differences in race, age, gender, prior social work-related experiences, and undergraduate major were significant predictors of learning preferences. This study provides a roadmap for social work education researchers to further examine the underlying mechanisms that can begin to explain these patterns, as well as further examine the possible impact these findings may have on learning behaviors and educational outcomes. Finally, this research could also serve to inform the development of pedagogical approaches to clinical social work education that account for student differences in the pursuit of increased student engagement.

Chapter 3 Identifying Themes in the Possible Selves of Clinical Social Work Students: Healing Involvement, Avoiding Harm

3.1 Introduction

Within the social work education literature, little is known about the characteristics, identities, or worldviews of social work students. Mental health practitioners in general are an under-researched population (Crits-Christoph & Mintz, 1991). As Orlinksy & Rønnestad (2005) state, "very little systematic data are available regarding the basic characteristics of psychotherapists" (p. 5). What research does exist on social work students has focused on assessing aspects of professional identity (Bogo et al., 1993; Germain, 1981; Hyslop, 2018), or assessments of social work competencies (Holden et al., 2007; Holden et al., 2017). Missing from this literature is engagement with research examining the identities of clinical social work students.

The lack of research on social work students is concerning given the significant literature demonstrating the role of identity in mediating a range of behaviors shown to be important for learning, particularly since the development of social work competencies is one of the central ethnical and professional concerns of social work education. The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), for example, states that the social work education is meant to ensure "that students are prepared to practice safely, competently, and ethically with all clients, constituents, and the public" (CSWE, 2022). Likewise, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) code of ethics names competence as one of six core value of the profession, stating that social workers "develop and enhance their professional expertise" and "continually strive to increase

their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession" (NASW, 2017). While the development of social work competencies is a core value of the social work profession, the lack of engagement with research on identity-based processes known to be important for learning represents a significant gap in the social work education literature. This study seeks to fill a gap in the social work education literature by drawing on the theory of *possible selves* to identify themes in the future oriented aspects of clinical social work student identities.

3.2 Possible Selves and Clinical Social Work Education

Possible selves refer to "the future-oriented aspect of self-concept" (Lee & Oyserman 2009, p. 1334), including beliefs about what someone "might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Like the concept of cognitive schema (Mandler, 1984), possible selves are also mental structures capable of influencing expectations, interpretations, emotions, and the likelihood that information relevant to an identity-schema is attended to and remembered (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Possible selves provide a "link between cognition and motivation" by connecting important imagined future versions of the self to present action. As such, possible identities provide an opportunity to examine how future oriented aspects of identity can influence behavioral outcomes via their influence on cognitive processes within the contexts in which those identities are brought to mind (Markus & Nurius 1986, p. 954).

Possible selves are important to study within the context of social work education because they have been shown to influence motivation, behavior, and self-regulatory capacity in support of behaviors that support learning. For example, the thematic content of possible identities have been shown to predict increased motivation to engage in behaviors that support

educational outcomes (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Oyserman et al., 2006; Strahan & Wilson, 2006), improve class attendance (Oyserman et al., 2002), improve present perceptions of success (Wilson & Ross, 2001) and self-assessment (Schmidt et al., 2003). Despite the significant literature on possible identities within educational contexts, there is currently no research which has examined the possible selves of social workers or social work students. Studying the possible selves of clinical social work students begins to address this gap in the social work education.

3.3 Possible Selves and Motivation

Within the possible selves literature, four factors have been shown to be important for linking a possible self to motivation and behavioral outcomes: (a) identified *specific actions*, or elaborations, that support progress towards the realization of an identified possible self; (b) a felt sense of *agency* regarding the possibility of pursuing those actions; (c) actions that focus on *process* over outcome; and (d) *balance* between positive/negative possible selves. A sense of agency "performs a vital regulatory role, linking possible identities to the current self-concept; if a possible self is too remote from the current self-concept then an individual may not experience the requisite sense of agency" (Ryan & Irie, 2014, p. 113). Likewise, a focus on *process* over outcome directs attention to the specific steps needed to achieve a desired goal or possible self. Strahan & Wilson (2006), for example, found that strategies were more effective and motivating when centered on "making concrete action plans, or focusing on the process by which a goal would be attained" (p. 12). A focus on concrete, specific, and process-based elaborations is what "seems to be a key component in explaining why a close possible self is more motivating than a distant one" (Strahan & Wilson, 2006, p. 12). Finally, balance is one factor shown to contribute to the "effectiveness" of a possible self. Effectiveness refers to the likelihood that a possible self

will serve as a source of motivation and support the self-regulatory capacity needed to persist and take actions that support the realization of a possible self. Oyserman et al. (2006) state that, "When PSs [possible selves] are balanced, individuals select strategies that both increase the likelihood of becoming like the positive PSs and decrease the likelihood of becoming like the negative PSs…" (p. 188). Oyserman & Markus (1990) elaborate on the motivational effects of *balance*, stating:

> a given possible self will have maximal motivational effectiveness when it is offset or balanced by a countervailing possible self in the same domain. Thus a feared possible self will be most effective as a motivational resource when it is balanced with a self-relevant positive, expected possible self that provides the outlines of what one might do to avoid the feared state. Likewise, a positive expected self will be a stronger motivational resource, and maximally effective, when it is linked with a representation of what could happen if the desired state is not realized. (p. 113)

In educational contexts, for example, students with balanced possible selves were found to engage in a range of behaviors that supported the realization of Academic Possible Selves (ASPs), including increased self-regulatory capacity (Oyserman et al., 2006).

3.4 Measures

An open-ended possible identities measure developed by Oyserman (2004/2018) served as the basis for measuring social work possible identities in this study. This measure has been used in numerous studies (e.g., Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Oyserman & Saltz, 1993; Oyserman et al., 1995; Oyserman & Harrison, 1998; Oyserman et al., 2002; Oyserman et al., 2003; Oyserman et al., 2004; Oyserman et al., 2006; Oyserman et al., 2007; Fryberg et al., 2008; Lee & Oyserman, 2009; Oyserman et al., 2010; Elmore & Oyserman, 2012). The original measure is

open ended and domain non-specific insofar as it asks respondents to identify possible identities at a general domain non-specific level, asking "what you expect to be like". In contrast, this study is interested in assessing *who* a sample of clinical social work students hope to become, and hope to avoid becoming, *as social workers*. To accomplish this, the measure was modified with the addition of text to indicate that the domain of interest study participants were asked to bring to mind for the measure was their imagined future *social work* related selves. Otherwise, the text and format of the original measure remained identical. As in the original measure, participants were prompted to include up to four social work-related possible identities both for who they *expect to be*, and who they *hope to avoid* becoming. Further, the measure asks participants to indicate "NO" or "YES" as to whether they are taking an action to become (or avoid) the possible identity they listed, as well as provided with an additional prompt to write what that specific action was. A detailed description of the measure is provided in Appendix A.

Analysis of possible identities data in previous research has relied on coding schemes with predetermined thematic categories. For example, the measure developed by Oyserman (2004/2018) has been used to study the possible identities of high school and middle school students, and relied on findings from prior research to construct predetermined thematic categories for coding measures for that population. It is unclear why Oyserman and colleagues relied on preselected categories for their coding scheme, as early studies (e.g., Oyserman & Markus, 1990) were based on large numbers of interviews from which possible identities themes could have been constructed inductively from their data. Examples of the possible identities themes used to analyze data included *jobs*, *positive intrapersonal selves*, and *school or school related extracurricular activities* (p. 115). A more recent iteration of the possible identities measure for high school and middle school students increased the number of thematic categories

to seven and included coding themes such as *Achievement/Academic/School*, *Interpersonal Relationships*, *Physical/Health Related*, for example (Oyserman, 2004/2018).

While the actual codes in the schemes described above were not applicable to the data collected in this study, the overall approach was useful as a template for how to approach coding for themes for possible selves data in this study. As the themes relevant to coding the possible identities of high school and middle students, this study seeks to inductively develop themes by analyzing the possible identities measures completed by the study participants. What was taken from Oyserman's (2004/2018) possible identities measure was her general approach to coding, which involved the development of both more general primary themes, each of which consisted of several sub-themes. For example, within the larger theme of *achievement/academic/school* were sub-themes for *grades*, *making it to high school*, and *attendance/punctuality*, for example. Because there is no prior research on the possible identities of social workers, it was necessary to allow both themes and sub-themes to emerge inductively via qualitative analysis of the data. Following the identification of possible selves themes, an additional analysis of *balance* was conducted to assess if the possible selves themes identified in this study were mutually reinforcing. Balance refers to when both positive and negative possible selves serve as a source of motivation for the same goal. For example, a positive possible self of *graduate from college* is mutually supported by the negative to-be-avoided possible self of becoming a *college dropout*. A simple comparison of the thematic categories for the positive and negative possible selves identified in this study, as well as a frequency count for those categories, served as a basis for assessing *balance*.

3.5 Recruitment and Sample

Participants were recruited from a first-year clinical social work course through a brief presentation for a "learning orientation study". 19 students provided their contact information and completed the possible selves measure as part of a larger study. Participants were given a $10 gift card as compensation for their participation in the study. The age of participants averaged 25.1 years, with a range of 21 to 34 years. The ethnic-racial identity of participants were 58% White (n = 11), 16% Black (n = 3), 16% Asian (n = 3), and 10.5% Hispanic/Latino/a (n = 2). 95% of participants were female (n = 18), and 5% male (n = 1). 63.4% (n = 13) of participants completed an undergraduate degree in a social science discipline, while the remaining 36.6% (n = 6) completed an undergraduate degree in an applied field, such as social work or public health.

3.6 Analysis

3.6.1 A Comment on Researcher Identity

Social work researchers Ide & Beddoe (2023) describe reflexivity in qualitative research as emerging from the longstanding interest in critically examining "the role of a researcher's impact on the research" they conduct (p. 2). Social identities I hold include being mixed-race, cis-gendered male, and being historically and currently economically lower-middle class. Academically I am biased towards holding intellectual commitments to what I would consider to be a number of critical realist traditions, particularly those formulated by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2004), linguist George Lakoff (1987), and anthropologist Roy D'Andrade (2000). The aforementioned scholars hold a commitment to both social constructionism *and* the progressive pursuit of scientific knowledge. Professionally I am a practicing Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and work part time for an anxiety disorders clinic in a University department of

Psychiatry, as well as in private practice. I have a longstanding interest in understanding factors that can support or impede the development of psychotherapy competencies, which was in part the initial motivation for this study. While this study was developed in collaborating with my dissertation advisors, I was primarily responsible for choosing the topic and research design for this study, as well as collecting and analyzing the data. It is common for some qualitative studies to rely on multiple coders, and establish an acceptable degree of intercoder reliability. This approach offers the benefits of greater transparency regarding the coding process, increased communicability of results, and a systematic procedure for coding (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). However, the use of multiple coders is itself controversial, and typically relied on for the analysis of more complex and lengthy textual data, such as captured in in-depth interviews, for example. I chose not rely on multiple coders for the analysis of data in this study because the data itself consisted of items that were typically only a few words in length. This is due to the nature of the measure, which constrained responses to a sentence or two at most. This meant that the data captured in this study was far less complex that what is typically captured in an in-depth interview. For example, a typical response to a question in this study consisted of 1 – 3 words, such as "listening," or "empathy." Further, the larger aim of this study is to identify and develop a *preliminary* set of themes in the possible selves of clinical social work students that can be used to inform future research. I acknowledge that my interpretations of the data, and the thematic categories I derive from my analysis, are limited as a consequence of being conducted primarily by myself and that future research should critically assess and refine the thematic categories I have identified.

3.6.2 Coding the Possible Selves Data

I was the exclusive coder for the analysis of the data collected in this study. Following an approach outlined by Quinn (2005) for the identification of conceptual themes in qualitative data, I first typed each possible selves entry into a paper card so that I could more easily sort the data visually into groups and see patterns in the types of themes present in the data. Each card included the following information, which was taken directly from the possible selves measure: a de-identified number assigned to each study participant (1 - 19), the text for a single possible selves entry, and the action strategy listed for that possible self (if one had been provided). I also included additional information on each card, such as the demographic characteristics of the study participant, but did not end up incorporating this into my final analysis.

My initial goal for coding was to simply tally and sort all of the responses provided into thematic categories, document those categories, and repeat the process until I felt confident that the categories identified could account for all of the data. During the coding process I soon realized that the themes I had identified were in fact best represented as *sub themes* that belonged within a larger thematic category. For example, the most common thematic category for positive possible selves was *helping skills*. This theme in turn consisted of sub-themes for *interpersonal engagement skills* and *cultural engagement skills*. Because these themes and sub-themes were being identified inductively, it wasn't until I had identified several groups that I was able to make connections between the different sub-themes and see how they were best understood as belonging to the same thematic class of entries. *Interpersonal engagement skills* included skills such as empathy, listening, and respect, for example. C*ultural engagement skills* included being culturally aware, culturally competent, and culturally humble, for example, which represented a collection of skills that were categorically distinct. Following the identification of these groupings it became apparent that both sets of skills could be subsumed under the larger thematic

category of *helping skills*, towards which each set of skills were ultimately directed. I referred to these more general categories as *themes*, and the more specific groupings within each theme as a *sub-theme*.

Entries for positive and negative possible selves were analyzed separately, with one series of analyses focused on identifying themes in the positive *desired* possible selves data, and another focused on identifying themes for the negative *to-be-avoided* possible selves in the data. Following Oyserman (2004/2018), when it was unclear which theme or sub-theme a possible selves entry belonged to, it was helpful to examine the strategy (if listed) for that possible self to provide additional context.

This helped provide context and insight into the possible intention motivating the possible self a respondent had listed. For example, one study participant listed "being serious" as a negative possible self they hoped to avoid as a social worker. Initially there wasn't a clear thematic category for this entry. However, after identifying the sub-theme for *burnout*, I was able to compare the strategies listed for other entries in that category with the strategy listed for "being serious." Following this comparison, it became clear that the strategy for avoiding "being serious" was similar in kind to the strategies listed for avoiding burnout more broadly. That is, all of the strategies for these entries were related to self-care, which provided evidence as to the reasoning behind each of the possible selves which were grouped under the same sub-theme. From this I inferred that "being serious" involved similar concerns as those who had wanted to avoid burnout.

The coding process for *negative* to-be-avoided possible selves was fairly straightforward, as the themes present in the data did not, for the most part, involve entries which were significantly ambiguous. After thematic groups of cards were identified, those themes were

documented, and the same sorting process was repeated several times to further clarify thematic groupings inductively and assess whether those themes continued to appear compelling and account for all of the entries within that theme. Each pass resulted in more refined thematic categories, as well as a small number of entries that did not clearly fit into any of the other categories.

The *positive* desired possible selves proved more challenging to sort into thematic categories, partly because a greater number of themes and sub-themes were present in the data for those entries as compared to the *positive* possible selves entries (eight vs five). This simply meant that more passes at sorting and documenting themes were needed to identify and clarify themes for this set of data.

It's worth noting that the original measure that was adapted for use in this study includes coding instructions for preselected thematic categories. Those categories were developed over time through research on the possible selves of high-school and middle-school students. Since there is no existing research on the possible selves of social workers it was necessary to identify thematic categories inductively from the data, and not rely on previously existing coding schemes which were not relevant to my research question or domain.

3.6.3 Assessing for Balance

Oyserman (2004/2018) describes balance as "having both an expectation (next year to-be-expected) and a matching concern (next year to-be-avoided) that fit together or create a more coherent whole" (p. 13). When positive and negative possible selves mutually support the same identity-relevant goal, they are considered to be balanced, and are more likely to result in behaviors that support the realization of a possible self. Coding for balance in this study was consistent with prior research, and involved comparing positive and negative possible selves

themes to see if they mutually supported the same goal. The additional step of comparing the frequency at which a theme occurred in the data was included in the overall assessment of balance. Themes which both occurred at similar frequencies and which mutually supported the same goal were considered to be *balanced*.

3.7 Results

3.7.1 Themes for Positive Possible Selves

Two themes and five sub-themes were identified for positive possible selves which are listed below from the most frequent to the least. The first positive possible selves theme was for (1) *helping skills* (*n* = 32), which was comprised of sub-themes for (a) *interpersonal engagement skills* (*n* = 22) and (b) *cultural engagement skills* (*n* = 10). The second positive selves theme was for *positive work related experiences*, which consisted of the sub-themes (a) *professional growth* (*n* = 9), the third for (b) *advocate for social change* (*n* = 8), and (c) *professionalism* (*n* = 3).

3.8 Theme I: Helping Skills

The most common theme identified in the *desired* possible selves data was *helping skills* (*n* = 32). This category included clinical social work micro-skills or competencies related to a desire for *helping*. *Helping skills* were further divided into two sub-themes: *interpersonal engagement skills* (*n* = 22) and *cultural engagement skills* (*n* = 10).

3.8.1 Interpersonal Engagement Skills

The most frequently listed sub-theme was for *interpersonal engagement skills* (*n* = 22), which consisted of what are commonly referred to as “micro skills”, or skills related to engaging clients, increasing rapport, and establishing a strong working alliance. Entries included skills and capacities such as being “empathic,” “compassionate,” “kind,” and “client centered,” for

example. Strategies identified for pursuing the possible selves listed in this sub-theme typically reflected some form of practice (e.g., “Practicing active listening skills” or “Working on being understanding”), or simply the enactment of that skill (“Mirroring, empathy statements”). Two participants did not indicate a strategy for pursing their possible self. Entries for this sub-theme are provided below in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Interpersonal Engagement Skills (n = 22)

I expect to be…	***Action Strategy***
Empathic, compassionate, good listener (*n* = 11)	Learning and practicing best practices
	Taking courses that teach about different levels of empathy
	Mirroring, empathy statements
	Practicing active listening skills
	Working on being understanding
	Working on empathic responses
	Practicing therapy techniques
	Practice in current relationships
	The IP classes I'm taking will help me attain this goal
	Meeting people where they are at - practicing empathic listening
	No response
Open minded (*n* = 2)	Asking questions
	Remembering the diversity of opinions
Patient (*n* = 1)	Practicing being patient with people and situations
Kind (*n* = 1) [nonjudgmental]	Working towards seeing individuals as a whole
Calm [and] wise (*n* = 1)	Working on peacefulness within myself
Client centered (*n* = 1)	Practicing/studying client centered practice
A trustworthy therapist (*n* = 1)	Practice w/relationships in my life now
Genuine with my clients (*n* = 1)	Being myself
More understanding and giving proper responses to clients (*n* = 1)	Practicing therapy skills in classes
Neutral (*n* = 1)	*No response*
Non-judgmental (*n* = 1)	*No response*

3.8.2 Cultural Engagement Skills

The second sub-theme for helping was for *cultural engagement skills*, which included entries related to the ability to practice with cultural humility, competency, and awareness of other identities and cultures. This theme included entries such as “Culturally aware”, “Respectful of my client’s identities”, “Culturally competent”, and “Cultural humility”, for example. Strategies identified for pursuing these possible selves included entries that centered on learning via dialogue and being open minded. One participant did not indicate a strategy for pursuing their possible self. Entries for this sub-theme are provided below in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Cultural Engagement Skills (n = 10)

I expect to be…	***Action Strategy***
Culturally aware (*n* = 1)	Knowing my clients, know their story best
Aware of how my social identities impact my clients (*n* = 1)	Constantly checking in and having dialogue with peers
Aware of social identities different than my own (*n* = 1)	Workshops on other identities + opening discussions
Respectful of my client’s identities (*n* = 1)	Open minded + learning from others
Culturally competent (*n* = 2)	Learning about how to come from a space of cultural humility
	Classes
Culturally humble (*n* = 2)	Remembering where I come from/staying in touch with family
	Learning about my classmates experiences
Critically reflective (*n* = 1)	Reflecting on my identities and how they impact my social work practice
Interacting with underprivileged people and Empowering them (*n* = 1)	*None provided*

3.9 Theme II: Positive Work Related Experiences

The second theme of *positive work related experiences* (*n* = 20) encompassed possible selves entries that generally referred to different aspects of a social workers sense of fulfilment, growth, and engagement in valued activities respondents would prefer to see as part of their work

as a professional social worker. This theme consisted of three sub-themes, including *professional growth* (*n* = 9), *social change advocate* (*n* = 8), and *professionalism* (*n* = 3).

3.9.1 Professional Growth

The second most prevalent theme identified for desired social work possible selves was *professional growth*. Entries coded into this category included factors and characteristics supportive of learning and growth relative to the professional role of being a social worker. Entries for this theme included "aware of my limitations," "reflective and insightful," "competent," and "Able to seek lifelong learning and professional development," for example. Strategies for pursuing these possible selves mostly related to completing course work, trainings, and being open minded. Entries for this theme are provided below in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3: Professional Growth (n = 9)

I expect to be	***Action Strategy***
Aware of my limitations (*n* = 1)	Taking classes on diversity + social justice
Reflective and insightful (*n* = 1)	Going to class, reading, and deepening my understanding
Flexible (*n* = 1)	Having diversity in courses and field work
Flexible (*n* = 1)	Being open to trying things differently
Open to learning (*n* = 1)	Keeping an open mind and always seeking knowledge
Knowing my field of work (*n* = 1)	Going to school
Able to seek lifelong learning and professional development (*n* = 1)	Taking additional seminars or opportunities outside of MSW coursework
Competent (*n* = 1)	Taking classes to develop skills
Uncomfortable (*n* = 1)	Trying new experiences

3.9.2 Social Change Advocate

The third positive possible selves thematic category identified was *social change advocate*. Entries for this category centered on issues related to the ability to be active in, or the desire to bring about, social change. Examples of entries included were "Active in creating social change," "Social justice advocate," and "Advancing social justice + equity for marginalized groups." While there was some overlap between this sub-theme and the previous sub-theme for *cultural engagement skills* regarding their shared focus on facilitating a type of intervention, they were distinct in terms of the type of intervention they each focused on. *Cultural engagement* reflected skills which supported interventions occurring at the individual level, such as through increased awareness of cultural differences and cultural humility, for example. Being a *social change advocate*, in contrast, focused on affecting change at a broader societal level. This interpretation is supported when accounting for the action strategies respondents paired with these possible selves. For example, the actions identified to support the *social change advocate* possible self included "Working on diversity efforts and taking social policy course," and "Working for change in Washington," each of which reflect efforts directed towards a more macro level of intervention. Finally, one of the entries included an action that was related to individual clinical work, the action being "Practicing therapy techniques." However, this entry was still included in the *social change advocate* theme because the possible self-identified was for "Advancing social justice + equity for marginalized groups," which, again, is less related to micro skills, such as empathy and listening. I interpreted this entry as a description of clinical work that, for this student, was a strategy for furthering, as the participant stated, "equity for marginalized groups." Entries for this theme are listed below in Table 3.4:

Table 3.4: Advocate for Social Change (n = 8)

I expect to be	***Action Strategy***
Active in creating social change (*n* = 1)	Learning about oppression and oppressive policies
Creating positive social change (*n* = 1)	Earning an MSW to be better able to create change
Social justice advocate (*n* = 1)	Working on diversity efforts and taking social policy course
Advancing social justice + equity for marginalized groups (*n* = 1)	Practicing therapy techniques
Progressive + radical focus on root of social issues (*n* = 1)	Connecting w/my peers and taking steps to change things for Latino students in my program
Social justice minded (*n* = 1)	Actively participating in noticing social justice issues in my own life
A political advocate (*n* = 1)	Working for change in Washington and w/St Louis Young Democrats
A change advocate (*n* = 1)	*No response*

3.9.3 Professionalism

The third sub-theme for theme identified for *desired* possible selves was for social work *professionalism.* This theme included three entries in total, including “A professional, keeping professional boundaries,” “Able to abide to ethical guidelines and present myself in a professional manner,” and “Ethical.” Each possible self and the strategy identified to support the realization of that possible self are listed below in Table 3.5:

Table 3.5: Professionalism (n = 3)

I expect to be	***Action Strategy***
A professional, keeping professional boundaries (*n* = 1)	Assure I talk to students only if they talk to me first

Able to abide to ethical guidelines and present myself in a professional manner (*n* = 1)	Understanding and learning to apply these guidelines
Ethical (*n* = 1)	Learning and applying NASW code of ethics

3.10 Themes for Negative Possible Selves

Three themes and five sub-themes were identified for the negative possible selves data. The most frequent negative possible selves theme was c*ausing harm* (*n* = 35), which included sub-themes for (a) *harmful action-states* (*n* = 24) and (b) *cultural disengagement* (*n* = 11). The second most frequent theme was for *negative work experiences* (*n* = 18), which consisted of sub-themes for (a) *burnout* (*n* = 8), *unfulfilling work* (*n* = 6), and *lack of professional growth* (*n* = 4).

3.11 Theme I: Causing Harm

The most frequent theme represented in the data consisted of possible selves related to *causing harm* (*n* = 35). The *causing harm* theme was further divided into two sub-themes: (a) *harmful action-states* (*n* = 24), and (b) *cultural disengagement* (*n* = 11).

3.11.1 Harmful Action-States

Multiple attempts at coding were required to develop the category of *harmful action-states*. Entries were initially coded based on whether they were perceived to represent either an *action* or a *mental/intentional* state. For example, *being judgmental*, the most common entry, could be understood as an action -- the verbal or non-verbal expression of judging someone negatively -- or as the intention or state of mind of someone who might think negatively about someone or something. However, while actions and mental states can be treated as analytically distinct, they are not typically separate in practice. In practice we typically infer each from the other. If someone yells (action) at a driver who cuts them off, we can infer that they are angry (mental state), and that the act of yelling was motivated by that anger (intention). That you likely

now have a prototypical image in your head of what this scenario looks like is evidence of the fact that human knowledge structures that allow for this example to make sense, involve associational knowledge often referred to (cultural) schema (D'Andrade, 1991; DiMaggio, 1997), scripts (Schank & Abelson, 1977), prototypes (Rosch, 1975; Rosch & Mervis, 1975), idealized cognitive models (Lakoff, 1987), interactional frames (Fillmore, 1976), or narratives (Bruner, 1990). The point is that both a judgmental state of mind *and* behaving judgmentally include characteristics which are inferred to belong to the same class of human behaviors. Acting harmfully implies a mental state capable of motivating harmful actions, while being judgmental is either the act of engaging in harmful judgments, or a more passive mental state that is primed for negative judgment. Given that harmful actions and mental states are typically inferred as being aspects of one another, the theme of *harmful action-states* was developed to capture the different possible selves that fit this criterion.

Harmful action-states were the most common theme identified as a to-be-avoided possible self, and included entries such as "being judgmental," "being arrogant," "unkind," and "being a poor listener," for example. Items included in this sub theme captured the variety of actions, mental states, and intentional states that would be likely to impact the quality of the interpersonal relationship between the social worker and their client. Strategies to avoid these negative possible selves generally focused on awareness of privilege, different kinds of openness, and being empathic. Two respondents provided no strategy to support the possible self they had listed. Entries for this sub-theme are provided below in Table 3.6:

Table 3.6: Harmful Action-States (n = 24)

I want to avoid...	***Action Strategy***
Being judgmental (*n* = 8)	Practicing acceptance
	Awareness of who I am before I enter a space
	Forgiving people's microaggressions and using them as a learning experience
	Checking my own biases and privilege
	Reflecting on my thought processes or assumptions
	Staying empathetic and open minded
	No response given
Being arrogant (*n* = 1)	Staying humble and adopting a learner's stance
Being impatient or rude (*n* = 1)	Practice patience
Being closed minded (*n* = 1)	Increasing my own self-awareness
Laziness (*n* = 1)	Trying to keep working for my clients even when I'm tired or annoyed w/them
Harming others (*n* = 1)	Trying to train as much as possible
Too much advice giving (*n* = 1)	I assure I'm being empathetic
Going into problem solver mode (*n* = 1)	Asking more questions to seek a deeper understanding
Being defensive (*n* = 1)	Asking questions, gathering feedback
Not being empathetic (*n* = 1)	Try to relate to others
Unkind (*n* = 1)	Working on patience and understanding
Being un-empathetic and inattentive towards issues of the population I serve (*n* = 1)	*No response given*
Being a poor listener (*n* = 1)	Practicing active listening with friends and family

Thinking that I could “change” people ($n = 1$)	Connecting w/my spirituality
Rushing the process ($n = 1$)	Sitting in silence
Being too focused on paperwork and not clients ($n = 1$)	*No response given* (wrote “Don’t have clients”)
Feeling unhelpful ($n = 1$)	Learning skills to help

3.11.2 Cultural Disengagement

The next most common sub theme for *causing harm* was *cultural disengagement*. This sub theme included items related to harm that might be caused as a result of making assumptions, holding biases, lacking awareness about different cultural groups or identities, or making attempts to save others. Entries for this theme included “Perpetuating oppression,” “Being oppressive,” and “Being ignorant about different identities,” for example, and captured a theme of generally lacking in cultural competence or humility. Strategies to avoid this negative possible self focused primarily on awareness, learning, and education. Entries for this theme are provided in Table 3.7 below:

Table 3.7: Cultural Disengagement (n = 11)

I want to avoid...	***Action Strategy***
The savior complex (*n* = 1)	Educating myself about the proper ways to empower and practice
Perpetuating oppression (*n* = 1)	Being aware of my own privileges
Grouping [people] (*n* = 1)	Understanding everyone is an individual
Perpetuating social justice issues by not doing anything/being silent (*n* = 1)	Attend meetings to discuss social justice issues
Assumptions (*n* = 1)	Learning about different types of people / SW504 racism and all the isms
Being oppressive (*n* = 2)	Learning about diversity and oppression
	Training in anti-oppressive social work practices
Ignorant of identity and cultural issues (*n* = 1)	Learning, reading, asking questions
Being culturally insensitive and prejudiced against certain populations (*n* = 1)	Learn the diversity of issues and understand the history of the lived experience of the people I meet
Giving biased/unsafe responses to my clients (*n* = 1)	Being aware of and careful of the way that I speak or behave when I am with all diverse people
Being ignorant about different identities (*n* = 1)	Staying up on current events, reading and discussing other narratives

3.12 Theme II: Negative Work-Related Experiences (n = 18)

The second theme identified in the to-be-avoided possible selves data consisted of *negative work-related experiences*. This was further divided into three sub themes for (a) *burnout*, (b) *unfulfilling work*, and (c) *lack of professional growth*.

3.12.1 Burnout

The sub-theme of *burnout* consisted of seven entries for "Burnout" and a single response for "being serious". "Being serious" was included in this sub-theme after examining the strategy it was paired with. The strategies directed at addressing burnout were mostly centered on self-care. Similarly, the strategy listed for addressing being serious was "enjoying my days and being goofy," which was thematically close to the goal of self-care in that both strategies seek to states of distress or distressing emotions. One respondent did not include a strategy for their possible self. Entries for the sub-theme of *burnout* are provided below in Table 3.8:

Table 3.8: Burnout (n = 8)

I want to avoid...	***Action Strategy***
Burnout (*n* = 7)	Self-care (3)
	Self-care practices, remind myself of why I am here (1)
	Building a support network, self-care (1)
	No strategy listed (2)
Being serious (*n* = 1)	Enjoying my days and being goofy

3.12.2 Unfulfilling Work

The next most common sub-theme under the theme of *negative work-related experiences* was *unfulfilling work*, which consisted of entries similar to the sub-theme of burnout, but were better understood to be more specific than *burnout*. Further, while burnout can be caused by having an unfulfilling job, it can also be caused by a range of other factors (life stressors, high case load, etc.). Entries focused on a variety of challenges that might occur in one's profession, including "Only focusing on micro," "being poor," and "Seeing this work as a task." One

respondent did not provide a strategy for avoiding this negative possible self. Entries for this sub theme appear below in Table 3.9:

Table 3.9: Unfulfilling Work (n = 6)

I want to avoid...	***Action Strategy***
Only focusing on micro (*n* = 1)	Minor in social policy
Being single minded and only concerned with clinical work (*n* = 1)	Conducting research, learning of best practices, taking classes in other programs
Letting personal life affect professional life (*n* = 1)	*No strategy listed*
Being poor (*n* = 1)	Trying to maintain my human resources skills
Becoming isolated working alone (*n* = 1)	Ally myself with colleagues, learn from them
Seeing this work as a task (*n* = 1)	Finding my passion with social work

3.12.3 Lack of Professional Growth

The final sub theme for *negative work-related experiences* was for *lack of professional growth*, and included "Not learning new therapy modalities" and "being stagnant in my development." The entry for "stagnation" included in the sub theme for *unfulfilling work* was not included here.

Table 3.10: Lack of Professional Growth (n = 4)

I want to avoid...	***Action Strategy***
Not learning new therapy modalities (*n* = 1)	Mini courses and reading current research
Being stagnant in my development (*n* = 1)	In grad school for social work
Stagnation (*n* = 1)	Trying not to feel like [an] expert in things I know a lot about
Feeling stuck in one job (*n* = 1)	Gaining skills in more than one area

3.13 Assessing Balance

Recall that *balance* refers to when positive and negative possible selves in the same domain support the same goal (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). As Oyserman & Markus (1990) state:

> a given possible self will have maximal motivational effectiveness when it is offset or balanced by a countervailing possible self in the same domain. Thus a *feared* possible self will be most effective as a motivational resource when it is balanced with a self-relevant positive, expected possible self that provides the outlines of what one might do to avoid the feared state. (p. 113).

For example, a *positive* possible self focused on "graduating from college" and a negative possible self focused on "avoiding unemployment" could be understood as supporting the same goal, and therefore be considered *balanced*. Possible selves that are balanced are important because they have been shown to increase motivation towards the realization of a possible self.

Additional analysis was conducted to assess whether any of the possible selves themes in this study could be considered to have balance by comparing the positive and negative possible selves themes identified in the analysis. Given that there were only a small number of themes identified, assessing for balance was fairly straightforward. Comparing thematic categories for positive and negative possible selves indicated that all but two of the possible selves identified were balanced. Likewise, comparing frequency counts for the positive and negative possible selves that mutually supported the same goal provided additional support for balance, with almost identical numbers for each of the thematic pairs identified.

The most common possible self of *helping skills* (n = 32) was supported by the most common negative possible self of *causing harm* (n = 35), both of which appeared with similar frequency. Further examination of the sub-themes confirmed the same pattern, with

interpersonal engagement skills (*n* = 22) being balanced with *harmful actions/states* (*n* = 24), and *cultural engagement skills* (*n* = 10) being balanced by *cultural disengagement* (*n* = 11). Balance was also found between themes for *positive/fulfilling work related experiences* (*n* = 20) and *negative/unfulfilling work related experiences* (18) both in terms of mutually reinforcing thematic content and frequency count between positive and negative possible selves. These findings are summarized in table 3.11 below:

Table 3.11: Balanced Possible Selves Pairings

Coding	Positive Possible Selves	#	Negative Possible Selves	#	Balance
Theme	***Helping skills***	**32**	***Causing Harm***	**35**	***Balanced***
Sub-theme	*Interpersonal engagement skills*	22	*Harmful actions/states*	24	*Balanced*
Sub-theme	*Cultural engagement skills*	10	*Cultural disengagement*	11	*Balanced*
Theme	***Positive work related experiences***	**20**	***Negative work related experiences***	**18**	***Balanced***
Sub-theme	*Professional growth*	9	*Burnout*	8	*Balanced*
Sub-theme	*Advocate for social change*	8	*Unfulfilling work*	6	*Balanced*
Sub-theme	*Professionalism*	3	*Lack of professional growth*	4	*Balanced*

3.14 Discussion

This study contributes to the social work education literature by completing a thematic analysis if the possible selves of first year clinical social work students. Social work students are an under-researched population, and theories of identity are known to be important to a range of behavioral outcomes that contribute to learning. By identifying the prominent social work related future selves of social workers, this study provides initial insight into aspects of the identity-based processes shown to be important for learning. As the first study examining the possible selves of social work students, themes were constructed inductively for the purpose of

identifying salient future oriented identities for this population. Findings indicate that clinical social work students have prominent positive social work related identities for *helping skills* (*n* = 32), which consisted of sub-themes for *interpersonal engagement skills* (*n* = 22) and *cultural engagement skills* (*n* = 10). The second most prominent positive possible selves theme was for *positive professional experiences* (*n* = 20), which consisted of sub-themes for *professional growth* (*n* = 9), *social change advocate* (*n* = 8), and *professionalism* (*n* = 3).

The most common negative possible selves theme identified was c*ausing harm* (*n* = 35), which consisted of sub-themes for *harmful action-states* (*n* = 24) and *cultural disengagement* (*n* = 11). The second to-be-avoided possible selves them was for *negative work experiences* (*n* = 18), which consisted of sub-themes for (a) *burnout* (*n* = 8), *unfulfilling work* (*n* = 6), and *lack of professional growth* (*n* = 4).

The most prevalent positive and negative possible selves themes identified in this study were found to be *balanced*, suggesting that they could serve as an effective source of motivation for behaviors that support the realization of those possible selves. As such, we might expect that the most prominent possible selves identified in this study would serve as an effective identity-based source of motivation for the development of clinical social work competencies. Importantly, the finding of balance is a useful starting point for future research to examine whether the possible selves identified in this study can serve as a source of motivation for increased student engagement and behaviors that support the development of clinical competencies.

3.15 Future Research

3.15.1 Increasing Social Work Student Engagement

Identity based processes highlight the role that identity and context can have in supporting motivation for engaging in behaviors that supporting learning outcomes. Specifically, identities which are congruent with the contexts in which they are brought to mind are more likely to result in motivation for pursuing behaviors consistent with the goals of that context. Within educational contexts, this means that identity congruence is likely to result in students who are more engaged and motivated to learn.

Findings in this study indicate that *helping skills* and avoiding *causing harm* are salient and prominent features of social work student identity. Possible Selves Theory (PST) has identified factors shown to increase student engagement, several of which were beyond the scope of this study. Specifically, examining the effect that cuing and linking important social worker identities to important learning contexts (e.g., classroom, field placement, supervision) and cultivating specific action-strategies that support the realization of important social work possible selves would add to the identification of possible selves themes and the finding of *balance* established in this study. Collectively, these factors support the effectiveness of possible selves as a source of motivation for learning and the development of social work competencies within different learning contexts.

3.15.2 Implications for Social Work Mindset Measures

The finding that *helping skills* and avoiding *causing harm* were the most prominent themes identified in this study has implications for findings from the previous chapter. Recall that measures of mindsets for *empathy* and *listening* may have lacked construct validity. One explanation for this is that those abilities may not effectively evoke in the minds of study respondents a *general* association with social worker aptitude and ability. Prior mindset research,

for example, typically assesses mindsets at a more general and abstract level than *empathy* and *listening*, which are more specific abilities than are typically assessed in the mindset literature.

Findings in this study support the view that *empathy* and *listening* are evocative of more specific aptitudes than what may be effective for measuring mindsets, which are typically assessed using language that is more abstract and general. In this study, *empathy* and *listening* were common responses given as positive possible selves, but were found to be specific instantiations from a larger collection of thematically related responses that included entries for being "open minded," "kind", and "patient", for example. Collectively, these responses were coded into the more general sub-theme for *interpersonal engagement skills*, which was further categorized into the more general theme of *helping skills*. These findings lend support for a view of *empathy* and *listening* as being framed at a level of specificity that may not be useful for the assessment of mindsets. It may be that a more abstract and general social work related aptitude would prove to be a better measure of mindsets for the domain of social work, and this study provides some evidence that supports this view.

3.15.3 Possible Selves and Identity Control Theory

At the center of both Possible Selves Theory (PST) and Identity Control Theory (ICT) is the role that identity and context interaction has within social processes. Within both theoretical frameworks, identity is understood to influence motivation and behavior as a consequence of: (a) an identity which is currently active or brought to mind; and (b) whether the currently active identity is congruent or incongruent with the context in which it is brought to mind. Possible Selves Theory (PST) hypothesizes that, and has evidence for, identity-context incongruence resulting in reduced behaviors congruent with the goals of that context. PST theorizes that the reason for this is in part because, when a context incongruent identity is active, that context will

be experienced as subjectively “not for me”. Within PST, identity-context incongruence results in disengagement with that context.

In contrast, within Identity Control Theory (ICT), the result of identity-context incongruence results in a felt sense of motivation to *correct* for the incongruence. In fact, the overall driver of social processes within ICT is the desire to confirm an identity which is currently active. In the words of Burke & Stets (2022):

> The control of identity-relevant meanings in the situation to make perceptions of who persons are in a situation match the meanings that are contained in the identity standards of their activated identities is central to the identity process. Individuals compare in a rapid and quick manner self-in-situation meanings with identity standard meanings, and when the difference or error is close to zero, the person’s identity is verified. (p. 119)

Identities which are already confirmed, or recognized within a particular context, result in behaviors that reflect the relatively free expression of that identity. Situations in which there is identity-context incongruence, in contrast, result in sense of frustration and motivation to engage in perceptual, cognitive and behavior strategies aimed at correcting for the incongruence. This highlights a key difference between PST and ICT regarding how each theory understands the role that identity-context incongruence has within a social process. Within the possible selves framework, identity-context incongruence results in a *decrease* in motivation to pursue behaviors consistent with that context. Within an ICT framework, however, identity-context incongruence is the trigger for an experience of frustration that results in a desire to pursue actions directed towards the verification of an identity. People are understood to be motivated to try and *reduce* the incongruence between identity and context through efforts directed towards changing the meanings experienced within a context. Within PST, context can overcome identity-based

motivations, whereas within ICT, identity based motivations are the source of actions directed towards overcoming contextual meanings. There is no reason why either theory should be considered more valid than the other *a priori*, but instead represent an opportunity for examining under what social conditions the outcomes they predict may be more likely to occur. As conceptual frameworks, both theories mutually extend one another to account for a broader range of identity-based processes.

One example of a fruitful integration of ICT and PST is in their application to the possible selves identified in this study. From an ICT perspective, possible selves can be understood as a source of motivation for identity confirmation within the context of social work education. The analysis of possible selves in this chapter established that *helping skills* and avoiding *causing harm* are prominent aspects of social work students' identities. If the prominent identities of *helping skills* and avoiding *causing harm* are a source of motivation for identity confirmation for social work students, it would follow that social work students would engage in strategies to confirm those identities. Recall that social work students who had fewer social work related experience were less likely to ask for help from a supervisor or volunteer to demonstrate a newly learned technique in class. From the perspective of ICT this finding makes sense. If a student with less experience were to ask for help or attempt to demonstrate a new technique in class, they could perceive this as an experience in ideal social aspects of their worker self-concept were being disconfirmed. That is, by not exposing their perceived lesser ability, they are protecting their desired identities of *helping skills* and avoiding *causing harm*, the two most prominent possible selves identified in this study. By avoiding what might be perceived as a lesser performance, students with less social work experiences are able to protect their positive possible self of *helping* from scrutiny, and further realize the to-be-avoided possible self of

causing harm. This brief example demonstrates the fruitful potential of cross-disciplinary work between sociological and social psychology theories of identity.

3.15.4 Longitudinal Data: Assessing in Possible Selves Change Over Time

Given the exploratory nature of this study, a number of areas for future research are worth discussing. First, future research on the possible selves of social work students could be extended to include additional time points to better understand if educational milestones (e.g., graduation, licensure, etc.) can change possible selves over time. It is an open empirical question as to whether the prominent ideal future selves of social workers change over the course of a social work career. The question of whether possible selves might change to reflect a greater breadth of social work identities and characteristics over time has implications for social work education, which could address discrepancies by directing attention to competencies that students may not be prioritizing or valuing to the same degree that social work programs would prefer.

3.15.5 Possible Selves and Imagined Futures

Additional research could integrate the possible selves and imagined futures approaches, helping each approach extend their scope. The possible selves approach could benefit from the greater macro lens afforded by the imagined futures approach, while the imagined futures approach could benefit from the inclusion of a relatively simple possible selves measure to gain greater insight into the content of individual identities.

As illustrated by the use of Identity Control Theory (ICT) to extend the analysis of possible selves conducted in this study, there are fruitful opportunities for engagement between the social psychological theory of possible selves and a number of sociological theories. For example, sociologists have noted a lack of attention given to research on imagination,

aspirations, and other future oriented constructs within sociological research (Mische, 2009; 2014; Frye, 2014). Responding to this gap in the literature, Mische (2009) developed a theory of "imagined futures," a concept that refers to the various institutional and cultural factors that contribute to a "projected future (p. 695), and area of research which has historically been "neglected in sociological theory and research" (p. 695). Subsequent empirical work has built upon the imagined futures approach, with Mische (2014) suggesting that a fruitful site for studying the "future" should include social events organized around future oriented deliberation, such that during events that involve political discourse "in which the explicit purpose of talk is to locate problems, visualize alternative pathways, and consider their consequences and desirability" (p. 447). These sites of discourse, she argues, are a fruitful site for identifying language that captures the future oriented imaginations of social actors.

Frye (2014) has extended the imagined futures approach through a study of the educational aspirations of Malawi women. Frye (2014) situates her study as an alternative to a rational choice perspective of decision making, where choices are understood to be the result of deliberative calculations "of likelihoods and potential benefits" (p. 1568). In Frye's analysis, Malawi women are shown to construct future aspirations through the cultural lens of "bright futures" characterized by the desire for educational and career successes, despite that "these women faced even lower probabilities for success than the national estimate of 7%" (p. 1568). Frye reconciles this seeming contradiction in the stated aspirations of her study participants and their actual likelihood of success by conceptualizing their stated hopes as "assertions of personal identity", which do not have to correspond to an actual realized specific goal or outcome (p. 1568). Frye argues that future aspirations can be understood as assertions of identity motivated by a cultural model in which a "bright future", a narrative promoted and reinforced by "schools,

development organizations, government agencies, and media programs" (p. 1568). Frye's innovative contribution to the literature on imagined futures brought a pragmatic notion of identity into cultural analysis in the development of a view of rationality recognizes assertions of identity-based aspirations as "rational choices" (p. 1571). Despite these advances, there remain a number of gaps in the imagine futures literature.

For example, the imagined futures literature discussed above lacks an explicitly articulated accounting of the individual level cognitive processes that, in their own descriptions, act as important features of their overall framework. For example, Mische (2009) frequently refers to processes that can only be characterized as an explicit description of individual level processes, using terms such as "thinking," "deliberation," "cognitive structures" and "cognitive dimensions," (p. 699) "decisions" (p. 702), and "future imagining" (p. 702). Despite this, Mische (2014) also appears to reject psychological levels of explanation, as when she states that "deliberations are collective, dialogic phenomena—they rarely happen inside peoples' heads as a solitary reflective endeavor (and even when they are done alone, they maintain characteristics of dialogue)" (p. 448). The lack of engagement with the existing theories of individual level (cognitive) processes represents a gap in the imagined futures literature. Possible Selves Theory (PST) and Identity Control Theory (ICT), as demonstrated in the analysis presented in this chapter, present an opportunity to account for the individual level processes that have largely been overlooked in the imagined futures literature. Unlike the notion of imagined futures, possible selves are premised on a social theory of cognition in which aspects of identity are understood to influence "feelings and actions" as a result of aspects of identity becoming active "in working memory" (Oyserman & Destin, 2011, p. 120). Possible Selves Theory (PST) provides an already developed approach to studying the future oriented aspects of identity, which

directly addresses the missing focus on individual level processes in the imagined futures literature. As illustrated above, ICT further extends PST as an established sociological approach to understanding identity and context based processes through the lens of identity confirmation.

3.16 Conclusion

Findings in this study suggest that the desired and to-be-avoided future imagined selves of the clinical social work students assessed for this study center on a small number of thematic categories: hoping to *help*, and avoid *harm*; and hoping to experience *fulfilling* work, and avoid *unfulfilling* work. Importantly, the positive *desired* future selves and negative *to be avoided* possible selves identified in this study were found to be "balanced" (Oyserman et al., 2006), suggesting their potential effectiveness as a source of motivation.

Future social work education research focused on possible selves could begin to examine the potential role that social work student identity could have for supporting or impeding the development of social work competencies, and serve as the basis for developing pedagogical strategies aimed at the effective use of identity-based motivation for preferred learning behaviors and outcomes. For example, one of the central goals of social work education is to effectively support students in the development of social work competencies. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter of this dissertation, social work students vary in terms of their overall orientation to learning, with some students indicating preferences that could impede the development of social work competencies. Because possible selves "provide a link between the self-concept and motivation" and "serve as incentives for future behavior," it is incumbent upon social work educators, and social work education researchers, to assess and account for the degree to which social work student identities could be contributing positively or negatively to student learning.

A number of suggestions for addressing identity-based barriers to the development of clinical social work competencies can be inferred from the existing possible selves literature, and can serve as a basis for future social work education research. This study served to identify the specific *content* of possible selves, a necessary initial step for further research, yet stopped short of assessing other factors identified in previous possible selves research. Specifically, future social work education research could benefit from including assessments of a number of factors shown to impact motivation and behavior in previous possible selves research, including: (a) assessments of student perceptions of the temporal distance of a possible self-related goal (Strahan & Wilson, 2003; Strahan & Wilson, 2005); (b) whether the focus of a possible self-related goal is on the *process* or *outcome* of obtaining that goal (Pham and Taylor, 1999; Strahan & Wilson, 2006; Taylor and Schneider, 1989); and (c) that possible selves have been shown to be more effective when they include specific concrete actions (i.e., elaborations) aimed at the realization of a possible self (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al., 2004). Strategies for incorporating each of these factors into social work education research and social work education are discussed below.

Social work educators and social work education researchers can incorporate measures related to the temporal distance of a possible selves related goal. Research suggests that perceiving a possible self-related goal (e.g., graduating from college) as more temporally proximal increases motivation to work hard towards the realization of that goal (Strahan & Wilson, 2006). For example, in a study by Strahan & Wilson (2006), college students who reported feeling their graduation "was in the near future were more motivated to currently work hard at their studies than participants who felt that graduation was in the distant future" (p. 11). Social work education researchers could build off of the findings in this study and introduce

measures of temporal proximity for the possible selves related goals for social work students. In this study, the possible selves themes were largely described at a higher level of abstraction. Future research could ask social work students to describe in greater detail the types of goals they hope to pursue *as social workers*, and the relevance of those goals to their desire to develop *helping skills*. Additionally, social work educators could frame competency relevant behaviors and assignments in more temporally proximal terms. For example, social work professors can explicitly link course curriculum (e.g., assignments, in class exercises, etc.) to temporally proximal aspects of social work student experiences. For example, in class exercises can be introduced on the first day of class as a means for linking conceptual content with the practical application of those concepts to a temporally proximal experience.

A third factor not assessed in this study is whether student understandings of their possible selves emphasized *process* or *outcome*. Research suggests that those who focus on process—or *how* they hope to realize a future imagined identity relevant goal—are more likely to achieve success as compared to those who focus more on the specific desired outcome of that goal. This factor is similar to the notion of *elaborations* discussed above, but goes beyond the more brief report of actions currently being taken to realize a possible self. Assessments of *process* and *outcome* ask study participants to provide open-ended descriptions of their "plans to achieve success by identifying specific action plans" (Strahan & Wilson, 2006, p. 12). Studies have found a correlation between a focus on *process* and the factor of temporal proximity discussed above. For example, a study by Strahan & Wilson (2006) found "that participants who were induced to feel that graduation was close spontaneously listed more concrete action plans describing the process of achieving goals than did participants who were induced to feel that graduation was in the distant future" (p. 12). Social work education researchers could extend

beyond the findings in this study and implement open-ended measures to assess more detailed descriptions of the plans social work students have for achieving their social work possible selves-related goals. This type of data would go beyond the brief assessment of reported actions assessed in this study, and provide insights into the types of plans social work students have for obtaining identity-relevant goals, whether those plans are focused more on process or outcome, and whether those plans are effective strategies or not. Social work educators, in contrast, could bring greater attention to *process* related strategies for accomplishing social work identity-related goals. In my own experience, social work curriculum rarely discusses evidence based approaches to learning, or the strategies which are known to most reliably result in the development of clinical competencies. There is a range of existing research that has examined which pedagogical strategies are effective for developing clinical competencies, including implementation and dissemination research (McHugh & Barlow, 2012), and research on the development of clinical expertise (Rousmaniere, 2017; Mahon, 2022). A summary of findings from these literatures could serve as the basis for explicitly identifying process focused strategies for the development of identity-congruent learning goals.

The three factors discussed above represent directions for both future social work education research and recommendations for how to incorporate the implications of possible selves research into social work education. Ideally, social work education research and social work education can further engage with possible selves theory to develop strategies that increase student engagement and support the development of clinical social work competencies.

Appendix A: Possible Social Work Selves Measure[5]

Name:
Date:

Social Work Possible Selves Questionnaire

Who will you be as a professional social worker when you complete your MSW? Each of us has some image or picture of what we will be like and what we want to avoid being like in the future. Think about yourself as a social worker and imagine what you'll be like, and what you'll be doing.

In the lines below, write what you expect you will be like as social worker and what you expect to be doing.

In the space next to each expected goal, mark NO (X) if you are not currently working on that goal or doing something about that expectation and mark YES (X) if you are currently doing something to get to that expectation or goal.

For each expected goal that you marked YES, use the space to the right to write what you are doing this year to attain that goal. Use the first space for the first expected goal, the second space for the second expected goal and so on.

As a social worker, I expect to be	**Am I am doing something to be that way**		**If yes, What I am doing now to be that way**
	NO	**YES**	
(P1)________________________			(s1)________________________
(P2)________________________			(s2)________________________
(P3)________________________			(s3)________________________
(P4)________________________			(s4)________________________

---

[5] The measure used in this study was printed on a single 8" x 14" sheet of paper.

In addition to expectations and goals, we all have images or pictures of what we *don't* want to be like; what we don't want to do or want to avoid being. First, think a minute about ways you would **not** like to be as a social worker -- *things you are concerned about or want to avoid in your future career as a social worker.*

- Write those concerns or selves to-be-avoided in the lines below.
- In the space next to each concern or to-be-avoided self, mark NO (X) if you are not currently working on avoiding that concern or to-be-avoided self and mark YES (X) if you are currently doing something so this will not happen in the future.
- For each concern or to-be-avoided self that you marked YES, use the space at the end of each line to write what you are doing this year to reduce the chances that this will describe you in the future. Use the first space for the first concern, the second space for the second concern and so on.

As a social worker, I want to avoid	**Am I doing something to avoid this**		**If yes, What I am doing now to avoid being that way**
	NO	**YES**	
(P5)______________________________			(s5)______________________________
(P6)______________________________			(s6)______________________________
(P7)______________________________			(s7)______________________________
(P8)______________________________			(s8)______________________________

Chapter 4 Towards a Dual Process Model of Identity as a Framework for Identifying Implicit and Explicit Barriers to Effective Clinical Social Work Practice

4.1 Introduction

Identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2022) provides an account of the ways in which identities can interact with the contexts in which they are brought to mind; interact with other identities within the same person; interact with different aspects of the same identity; as well as providing a framework for examining how aspects of identity can become influential over the course of a social process. These intra-, inter-, and extra-identity processes have yet to be fully addressed across most sociological frameworks attempting to account for the problem of identity-multiplicity, making identity theory a particularly useful framework for understanding these complex features of social explanation. How individuals select from their larger collection of identities, how the content of those identities is responsive to the contexts in which it has been activated (consciously or unconsciously), and how these processes influence behaviors of interest is a central concern for those seeking to explain "social action" (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014, p. 181). As Biddle states in his review of role theory, "one of the most important characteristics of social behavior...[is]...the fact that human beings behave in ways that are different and predictable depending on their respective social identities and the situation" (1986, p. 69).

Identity theory is not without its limitations, however. Specifically, within the identity theory framework, the content and meaning of a particular identity is understood to consist of a bundle of meanings, associations, behavioral scripts, beliefs, expectations, and habits. Missing from this account of what constitutes an identity, is a clear distinction between which aspects of

an identity are *implicit*, or characteristically automatic or habitual, and which are *explicit*, or reflective, deliberate, or conscious. Treating an identity as a bundle of undifferentiated content means that important differences in that content are likely to be conflated, confused, or obscured. An additional consequence of this failure to analytically distinguish between implicit and explicit cognitive processes is seen at the level of measurement, with empirical tests conducted within the identity theory literature almost exclusively relying on forms of measurement known to primarily capture *explicit* consciousness, leaving the potentially independent role that *implicit* cognitive processes have under-examined. This means that both theoretically and at the level of measurement, identity theory could be improved by distinguishing between which aspects of identity are operating at an implicit (automatic) or explicit (deliberate) level.

Sociological engagement with dual process theories of cognition provides a solution to this gap within the identity theory literature. Specifically, Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT) has been centrally concerned with developing an analytic framework aimed at distinguishing between explicit and implicit cognitive processes. Following the publication of Steven Vaisey's (2009) article titled "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action", the SDPT literature has grown significantly, leading to the development of a nuanced and systematic framework for understanding the functioning and characteristics of implicit and explicit cognitive processes, and the linking of these processes to distinct human memory systems. Importantly, dual process theory has focused on the insight that implicit and explicit cognitive processes can often diverge and produce contradictory or conflicting outputs, a point which has been illustrated in the proliferation of research on implicit bias, for example (Greenwald et al., 2009).

From the perspective of SDPT, identity content can also be understood to consist of content that is both *explicit* and *implicit*, allowing for the analysis of identity-based processes capable of more clearly understanding the ways in which identity content relies on each type of cognitive processing, under what social conditions each is more or less likely to be activated, and to what degree, represent an important gap in the sociological literature. By not distinguishing between identity content that relies on *automatic* implicit cognitive processes, on the one hand, and *explicit*, or deliberate identity content, on the other, identity theory seems to treat the content and meanings that comprise an identity as a relatively undifferentiated bundle. Failing to explicitly account for differences between explicit, reflective, and deliberate aspects of an identity, and the more automatic, embodied, and implicit aspects of an identity means that identity theory is likely to conflate, confuse, or obfuscate the respective role each has in shaping identity-based processes. At the level of measurement, the lack of attention given to distinguishing between implicit and explicit cognitive processes is reflected in the almost exclusive reliance on survey measures within identity theory research, which are typically designed to access explicit deliberate cognitive processes.

SDPT is also not without its limitations, however. To date, the SDPT literature has almost entirely consisted of theory development, with only a handful of existing empirical tests. The small number of empirical tests that have been conducted have also been criticized for incorrectly applying dual process theory, and relying on incorrect measurement strategies, and adapting psychologically reductive assumptions ill-suited for the study of more complex features of social explanation.

What is needed is a dual process approach to identity that draws on the strengths and addresses the limitations of identity theory and SDPT frameworks. Drawing on insights from the

sociological literature on dual process theory, identities can be understood as consisting of content that reflects the operation of implicit or explicit cognitive processing. Distinguishing between implicit and explicit aspects of identity can provide greater insight into a range of identity relevant processes, including how and under what social conditions implicit or explicit aspects of an identity are activated; the particular type of cognitive processing in operation; how to better distinguish between at the level of measurement; and when and how implicit and explicit aspects of an identity interact or become predominant. Similarly, identity theory provides an account of more complex aspects of social processes which are typically overlooked in the SDPT literature. SDPT has yet to directly engage with the identity theory literature, or attempt to address the problem of multiple identities, making identity theory's account of identity-based processes and identity multiplicity particularly relevant. Likewise, identity theory could benefit from the detailed and explicit account of implicit and explicit cognitive processes outlined within the SDPT literature. An integrative framework, or a Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI), that draws on the strengths, and addresses the limitations of each approach, will serve to address a gap in the literature and further the mutual enhancement of each.

Additionally, this Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) has important implications for social work education. Specifically, clinical social work practice involves a range of both implicit and explicit aspects in the effective delivery of social work interventions. Social work practitioners must rely on a range of often implicit, automatic, nonverbal forms of expression in order to effectively demonstrate empathy, attuned listening, and positive regard for their clients, all of which are the foundation of effective clinical practice. Likewise, implicit barriers to effective clinical practice can occur as a result of the automatic unconscious activation of negative affect or emotion resulting from countertransference (Abergil & Tishby, 2022), the

clinicians attachment style (Castonguay et al., 2010; Cologon et al., 2017), or as a result of identity incongruent experiences within the context of clinical practice. One particularly fruitful pedagogical tool for accessing both implicit and explicit cognitive processes in real time is through the use of Video Recorded Practice (VRP), or clinical sessions which have been documented on video for the purpose of observation. The ability to observe and re-watch the performance of a skill has proven to be an effective pedagogical tool for the development of competencies across a number of domains and activities (Ericsson, 2006). Psychotherapy educators have begun to adapt these "deliberate practice" techniques for the purpose of developing psychotherapy expertise (Rousmaniere, 2017). The use of VRP provides a particularly useful tool for observing and identifying an important social event that includes the enactment and expression of both implicit and explicit features of a clinical encounter between a social worker and a client *as it occurs*. VRP allows for the observation and assessment of implicit and explicit barriers to effective clinical practice, and the assessment of those barriers through the lens of the Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) developed in this chapter. This provides an illustration of the benefits of the DPMI for social work educators and social work education researchers. I then conclude with a discussion of the ways in which the identities of social work students, their clients, and social work faculty could be implicated in the implementation and use of VRP into social work curriculum, discuss the limitations of the findings in this chapter, and make recommendations for future research.

4.2 Chapter Outline

This chapter is organized into the following sections: First, I begin my analysis by providing a basic review of identity theory and the *identity verification* process, which is the central driving concept within the identity theory framework. I conclude my review of identity

theory by discussing the lack of distinction made between implicit and explicit aspects of an identity at both the level of theory and measurement.

I then provide a critical review of the Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT), highlighting the important analytic framework sociological dual process theorists have developed for more clearly interpreting and explaining how implicit and explicit cognitive processes are involved in the learning, use, and processing of social knowledge. I then discuss in more detail two empirical studies meant to serve as sociological tests of dual process theory, using these examples to highlight a number of important problems with applying dual process theory for the study of more complex social phenomena. Specifically, I argue that SDPT relies on psychologically reductive measures ill-suited for many of the problems of interest within sociology. I then outline a Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) which attempts to draw on the strengths and address the limitations identified in the SDPT and Identity Theory frameworks. I illustrate the benefits of the DPMI for identifying and addressing implicit barriers to the development of clinical social work competencies and effective clinical practice via an analysis of the use of Video Recorded Practice (VRP) sessions within the context of clinical social work education.

Finally, I discuss what identity verification and identity-based processes mean for social work practice, focusing on the ways in which social work students, social work faculty, and psychotherapy clients' identities are implicated in the use and implementation of VRP into social work curriculum. I then discuss limitations to the analysis conducted in this chapter, highlighting areas for future research, issues which have not been addressed, problematic assumptions within the frameworks discussed.

4.3 Sociological Dual Process Theory

In this section I review the theoretical and empirical contributions of the Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT) literature. I argue that, in its current form, the primary strength of the SPDT literature is as an analytic framework for the *interpretation* of existing theoretical problems or for the interpretation of data. The strengths of this analytic framework center on the articulation of a more analytically precise description of the role of cognitive processing within existing sociological theories and for the interpretation of data. As an empirical project, however, current sociological tests of dual process theory rely on measures which are psychologically reductive and ill-suited for studying more complex aspects of social explanation, including many of the identity-based processes which are the focus of this chapter and dissertation.

4.3.1 Theoretical Accounts of Sociological Dual Process Theory

Sociologists have recently engaged with dual process theory as a framework for better understanding the role that cognitive processes have within existing sociological frameworks. Following the publication of Steven Vaisey's 2009 article, "Motivation and Justification: A Dual Process Model of Culture in Action", interest in dual process theory has increased significantly, with the vast majority of scholarship focusing on the development of theory via the application of dual process theory to extend and/or critique existing sociological frameworks. As a theoretical framework, dual process theory has provided sociologists with a far more nuanced and detailed account of cognitive processes, which have been applied in the critical analysis of culture and cultural processes (Lizardo et al., 2016; Lizardo, 2019), interview methodology (Vaisey, 2014), morality (Vaisey, 2009), religion (Moore, 2017), decision making (Vila-Henninger, 2015), and the measurement of implicit cognitive processes (Shepherd, 2019), to name a few.

This burgeoning literature seeks to address what Strandell (2019) describes as a state of the discipline in which "sociological theory and research remain largely ignorant of dual-process models of cognition and their implications for how we understand the workings of culture" (p. 193). This literature has served in the development of a theoretical framework which has gone beyond prior sociological approaches to understanding cognition in a number of important ways, including the provision of a more granular description of implicit and explicit cognitive processes, their relationship to distinct memory states and memory systems, and their dissociability. Dual process theory has, in my view, served as the basis for the most comprehensive theory of cognitive processes within the sociological literature to date.

SDPT is centrally concerned with outlining the distinct characteristics of *implicit* (automatic/fast) and *explicit* (reflective/slow) cognitive processing; mapping the operation of those processes to the characteristics and functioning of research on specific human memory systems and memory processes (e.g., working memory, autobiographical memory, procedural memory, etc.); and applying those distinctions to existing sociological topics of study.

The most comprehensive sociological review of the dual process literature was completed by Lizardo et al. (2016) in their development of a dual process theory of cultural processes, and is worth discussion in greater detail here. Lizardo et al. (2016) start by distinguishing between what they refer to as the Dual Process Framework (DPF), which encompasses the broad range of processes and mechanisms that distinguish *implicit* and *explicit* cognitive processes; and Dual Process Models (DPMs), which are the specific relevant elements of DPF that serve as the basis for developing models to be tested in specific empirical studies. DPMs specify which elements of the more general DPF are relevant to a specific empirical case. As Lizardo et al. state, "the general DPF must be kept distinct from substantive claims pertaining to any one particular DPM

as applied to a given set of lower-level phenomena (e.g., trust, reasoning, stereotypes, attitudes, morality), because these last may be subject to controversy, revision, and updating without this impinging on the overall validity of the general DPF" (2016, p. 290).

The framework Lizardo et al. (2016) develop includes the identification of four analytically distinct cultural domains, which refer to the cultural processes related to *learning*, *remembering*, *thinking*, and *acting*. In turn, each domain represents a different phase of enculturation processing. For example, the cultural domain of *learning* involves the phase of cultural *acquisition*; *remembering* involves the *storage* phase of culture; thinking refers to the phase of *processing* cultural knowledge; and acting refers to the phase of cultural *use*. Additionally, each domain of enculturation encompasses instances of both *explicit* and *implicit* cognitive processing, each of which rely on characteristically distinct memory systems and processes, many of which are rarely explicitly discussed with this level of specificity within the sociological literature. Understanding different types of memory systems are crucial to the understanding of cognitive processes because they denote characteristically distinct types of information encoding, storage, and processing. Lizardo et al. (2016) go as far as stating that dual process models of cultural analysis "are best thought of as distinct memory states, rather than as models of the cognitive processes that operate on those states" (Lizardo et al., 2016, pp. 295 - 296). Importantly, Lizardo (2017) notes in his discussion of personal culture in its declarative and nondeclarative forms, "The analytic advantage of a cognitively grounded conception of the enculturation process comes from its capacity to link distinct pathways and mechanisms of cultural exposure and transmission to correlatively distinct ways culture comes to be stored in long-term memory" (p. 91).

4.4 Memory Systems and Sociological Dual Process Theory

4.4.1 Declarative Memory

Declarative memory "consists of consciously accessible memories of facts, symbols, and events" (Lizardo et al., 2016, p. 296). As such, declarative memory involves the storage and recall of information which can be verbalized in discourse, and is often described as consisting of semantic, propositional, abstract language-based information. The use of declarative memory is exemplified by discursive justifications and explanations used in verbal reasoning, for example. This is what is typically captured during interviews. Declarative knowledge is stored in semantic memory systems, which are relied on "for such tasks as reasoning, evaluation, judgment, and categorization" (Lizardo 2017, p. 92). These *explicit* cognitive processes include tasks related to the recall of verbal, factual, reflective, and controlled processing of information. Declarative memory also includes the recall of categories of things, events, symbols, and what is generally understood as, what Lizardo et al. (2016) call knowledge of "*that*" (e.g., "That's a big car"). By virtue of being accessible to the conscious mind, knowledge stored in declarative memory can be thought about and described verbally, and is often the form in which *explicit* cognitive processing occurs. Lizardo et al. (2016) further note that declarative memory is considered to be "'representational,' because it offers ways to model the external world" with language (p. 296).

Additionally, declarative memory is further divided into three types: *episodic memory*, *semantic memory*, and *autobiographical memory*. Citing the work of a number of memory scholars, Lizardo et al. (2016, p. 296) describes *episodic memory* as referring to memory of the details and content of specific, time-bound events (Tulving, 1983); *semantic memory* as memory that includes information related to impersonal, propositional facts and conventional meanings of words (Squire, 1992); and *autobiographical memory* as referring to the use of both episodic and

semantic memory to generate a personal life narrative (Conway & Playdell-Pearce, 2000). Semantic memory involves the long-term storage of personal facts, such as the factual description of someone's family composition, personal preferences, definitions or concepts learned in school, and self-evaluations. Episodic memory involves memory of details related to "first-hand accounts" (p. 296) of specific events, such as remembering "When I forgot my passport because I didn't sleep the night before" or "When I used too much cayenne pepper that time I made curry when we were on vacation". Autobiographical memory, in contrast, involves a more general verbal description of personal life narratives, which typically include some elements of episodic memory that serve in the construction of a larger life story characterized by a narrative structure.

Finally, working memory is a type of short term memory that refers to a limited amount of information that can be held in mind in a given moment. Actively thinking often involves the capacity to both hold a limited amount of information in working memory and make it available for manipulation, abstraction, and hypothetical thinking. Citing the work of Markowitsch (2000), sociologist Vila-Henninger (2015) describes working memory in the following way:

> Working memory is a form of short term information storage that involves attention and consciousness and is "under the control of a fronto-parietal network" (Markowitsch, 2000, p. 269). This memory is retained consciously (or "online") and lasts up to several minutes (Markowitsch, 2000, p. 266). This information can be consciously manipulated, encoded at a surface level, and could be in the process of being prepared for long term storage (Markowitsch, 2000, p. 263). By definition, this storage system is limited in its capacity and much of the information that it holds is not converted into long term memory. (pp. 243 – 244)

Tasks related to the use of working memory include making calculations, or holding one object, concept, or image in mind in order to contrast it with another. Long term memory, in contrast, refers to the storage of information that can be recalled when needed, but is not typically active and being attended to in working memory.

4.4.2 Nondeclarative Memory

In contrast to declarative memory, *nondeclarative* memory involves the learning, storage, and use of information that is encoded as practical, automatic, and embodied information, and is not typically able to be expressed verbally. Lizardo et al., (2016) state that nondeclarative memory "consists of relatively less accessible procedural knowledge, habits, and dispositions" (p. 296). For example, learning to ride a bicycle is something that is learned through repetition, and involves the coordination of bodily processes that occur outside of conscious control or awareness. We do not have conscious control or awareness of the necessary coordination of muscle groups, regulation of blood flow, or the processing and integration of auditory, spatial, and visual information that is necessary to ride a bicycle. Similarly, driving a car, playing a sport, and other learned skills that primarily rely on bodily processes that occur outside of conscious awareness are "stored for later use in a nondeclarative memory system" (p. 92).

Nondeclarative memory involves automatic, non-verbal, embodied types of processing of knowledge, and refers to dispositional and habitual memory, or what Lizardo et al., (2016) describe as knowledge of "*how*" (e.g., "I know how to ride a bike"). Nondeclarative memory operates via implicit automatic cognitive processes that, as sociologists Boutyline & Sotor (2021) state, do "not require controlled attention or working memory resources" (p. 12).

Importantly, elements of cultural and social knowledge rely on different memory systems that correspond to the experiential conditions in which they were learned and whether they were primarily implicit or explicit. Nondeclarative memory includes the storage of both *procedural* memory and *associative* memory, both of which form the basis for learned skills, habits, and dispositions that operate outside of conscious awareness. Nondeclarative memory, unlike declarative memory, as Lizardo et al state, is "'inaccessible' because it is impossible to directly recall it in a discursive way" (p. 296). While it is possible to provide verbal narrative description for *how* you learned to ride a bicycle, it is not possible to verbally describe the bodily processes involved in performing that activity, which operate outside of conscious awareness or control via the use of automatic procedural memory.

The distinction between *declarative* and *nondeclarative* memory is one of the more important contributions of the SDPT literature because it equips the social scientist with a framework for understanding how different measures and methods capture different types of cognitive processes that reflect the operation of different memory systems. For example, self-report survey or interview methods are understood to document "some form of declarative memory" (p. 296). Survey measures typically access and record some form of explicit declarative memory insofar as they ask respondents to recall some fact about themselves or the world, and declarative memory is specifically related to the storage and recall of "facts, episodes, and personal narratives" (p. 296). In contrast, nondeclarative memory and implicit cognitive processes are often measured indirectly, such as via the use of time-based measures or other measures that assess automatic cognitive processes. The distinctions discussed above are provided below in a modified table provided by Lizardo et al (2016, p. 291):

Table 4.1: Dual Process Models of Cultural Learning, Storage, Thinking and Acting

Cultural Domain	Enculturation Phase	Implicit/Automatic Cognitive Processes	Explicit/Deliberate Cognitive Processes
Learning	Acquisition	Practical/embodied	Conceptual/symbolic
Remembering	Storage of culture	Slow learning, nondeclarative	Fast learning, declarative
Thinking	Processing of culture	Rapid, effortless, associative, parallel processing	Slow, effortful, rule based, sequential processing
Acting	Use of culture	Impulsive, automatic, habitual	Reflective, controlled

4.5 Strengths of Sociological Dual Process Theory

The analytic categories that comprise the framework outlined by Lizardo et al. (2016) are crucial for the analysis of social and cultural knowledge because they provide clear analytic distinctions regarding the operation of implicit and explicit cognitive processes, as well as grounding those processes in research on human memory systems and their respective characteristics. As such, the critical application of dual process theory within the sociological literature is often directed towards the tendency for sociologists to conflate a variety of analytically distinct features of social and cultural processes by using vague language that obscures which aspects of a social process they are seeking to understand or explain. Lizardo (2017) extends this argument to an analysis of personal culture at the *declarative* and *nondeclarative* level, arguing that it is common for sociologists of culture "to use the term 'culture' in unqualified, undifferentiated, generic, and ultimately analytically unproductive ways, thus obscuring the relation between different cultural elements" (p. 93). Absent these distinctions, scholars trying to engage in a nuanced debate about the operation of cultural and social processes can find themselves "in a situation in which analysts are not even clear on what

they actually disagree on, and are speaking past one another as each emphasizes their preferred set of relations without articulating this clearly" (p. 94). The importance of these distinctions for the interpretation and analysis of sociological data, and for the development of models for empirical tests, is described at length by Lizardo et al. (2016) in the quote below:

> culture consists of both nonrepresentational skills, habits and associations, and (more or less) representational episodic and semantic information. Thus, rather than looking at "culture" as a single set of elements or collapsing "culture" into a single dimension (e.g., values, beliefs, or habits), particular DPMs of cultural storage identify the precise formats people use for the pragmatic tasks of thinking and action in problem-solving contexts (Gross, 2009). This reconsideration may pose severe challenges to some existing theories of culture and action (especially those that directly link semantic knowledge to habits and associations), but the promised payoff is greater clarity in understanding what people are doing with what type of culture and where. (pp. 296 – 297)

Distinguishing between the operation of different types of memory systems when developing theoretical models or interpreting data is important because *implicit* and *explicit* cognitive processes can exert distinct effects over the course of a social process. Implicit nondeclarative procedural memory centers on associative, embodied, mostly non-verbal, and habitual processes, all of which feature a greater degree of automaticity. Declarative memory systems function via verbal, reflective, and linear processes which are constrained by the limits of working memory. That each cognitive system can produce distinct outputs in response to the same stimuli is one of the primary insights highlighted by sociological dual process scholars. As Lizardo et al. (2016) state, "A key insight of recent work on memory systems is that different forms of knowledge are differentially encoded such that they are dissociable" (p. 91). The implications of dissociability

between implicit and explicit cognitive processes means that “one [cultural] knowledge structure may be activated without implying the necessary activation of the other form” (p. 91). This means that the keen researcher interested in more clearly identifying the operation of distinct causal pathways and mechanisms related to individual level cognitive processes ought to make both analytic and methodological efforts to distinguish between which type of cognitive process they claim to be studying and how their methods and measures accomplish this goal. Relying on underspecified theories of cognition means that distinct processes, process domains, and the mechanisms involved in their operation will remain underspecified and imprecise, leading to the use of analytically confusing or incorrect descriptions of the cognitive dimension of social explanation.

4.6 Limitations to Sociological Dual Process Theory

In this section I discuss a number of limitations within the SDPT literature. The first significant limitation is that, in contrast to the developed theoretical literature discussed above, there are only a handful of sociological empirical tests of dual process theory. As Moore (2017) states, “sociologists making use of dual-process theories in their work often fail to provide empirical evidence from their own data specifically confirming their dual-process claims” (p. 196). Further, of the tests that do exist, sociologists tend to adopt “theoretical assumptions from psychology” and fail “to verify their veracity in sociological settings using sociological data” (p. 196). Sociological tests of dual process theory to date have relied almost entirely on the research findings, methods, and measures developed within, and for the “normal science” (Kuhn, 1969/2012) aims of the discipline of cognitive psychology. While the line between social psychological and sociological approaches to studying social and cognitive processes are often shared (House, 1977), there are virtually no shared norms between sociological approaches to

studying cognitive processes and the approaches to studying cognitive processes within the discipline of cognitive psychology. A basic review of some of the topics of interest and the methods for assessing those topics within each discipline makes this immediately apparent. One notable difference between the research aims of each discipline is that sociologists are generally interested in incorporating greater attention to social complexity into their empirical and theoretical accounts of social explanation, whereas cognitive psychologists are typically interested in reducing social complexity in order to isolate the operation of specific cognitive processes. As such, it would be expected that the theoretical and methodological norms developed within the discipline of cognitive psychology are psychologically reductive insofar as they are explicitly interested in *reducing* the influence of contextual factors in order to effectively pursue their research aims, making the direct adoption of their frameworks ill-suited for the study of more complex social processes important to a range of sociological frameworks.

Due to the mismatch between the theoretical and empirical aims prioritized within each discipline, sociologists have struggled to translate the findings of dual process theory for the purposes of empirical testing. The vast majority of the SDPT literature does not include specific suggestions for how to empirically test the important theoretical insights they develop (e.g., Boutyline & Sotor, 2021; Lizardo et al., 2016; Lizardo, 2017, 2019; Vaisey, 2014; Villa-Henninger, 2015, 2020, to name a few). As such, the complicated task of following the recommendation of Lizardo et al., (2016) and developing Dual Process Models (DPMs) for the purposes of testing specific dual process informed questions remains largely under-specified. The few examples of attempts to conduct empirical tests of dual process theory within the sociological literature demonstrate that pursuing such an endeavor is far more complicated than it might appear from the suggestions made within the theoretical literature, with existing tests

relying on measures that are either incorrectly applied for the purposes stated, or which are psychologically reductive and ill-suited for the analysis of more complex understandings of social explanation.

By reviewing two prominent examples of empirical tests of dual process theory within the sociological literature (Vaisey, 2009; Moore, 2019), I argue that they are limited at the level of measurement in two important ways. First, Vaisey's (2009) empirical test of a dual process theory of "culture in action" relies on self-report survey and interview measures as the basis for making claims about actual behaviors. As others have noted, self-report and interview data typically access explicit declarative cognitive processes and are not a direct measure of what people actually do. Vaisey's use of self-report measures fails to assess what he theoretically claims they are meant to be capturing, highlighting the difficulties involved with translating theoretical understandings of dual process theory into specific tests. Second, Vaisey incorrectly makes the analytic choice to treat survey and interview data as a direct measure of behavioral outcomes. Surveys and interviews are primarily measures of explicit discursive recall or explanation and are not direct measures of actual behavior.

The second empirical test of dual process theory I examine is Moore's (2019) study of religious identity. I argue that his study is similarly limited due to the reliance on measures which are psychologically reductive and ill-suited for studying more complex aspects of social processes. I demonstrate that current sociological tests of dual process theory are significantly less developed than their counterparts within the theoretical dual process literature, and as such poorly situated for the examination of more complex features of social explanation.

4.6.1 Vaisey's Empirical Test of "Culture in Action"

The first problem with the use of measures for empirically testing dual process theory is directed towards Stephen Vaisey's (2009) use of forced-choice surveys and brief interviews to test what he describes as a dual process theory of "culture in action". Vaisey's aim is to provide an empirical test that addresses the question, "What role do cultural meanings play in people's *behavior* [emphasis added]?" (p. 1675). Vaisey sets up this question by first articulating a theoretical critique of Ann Swidler's (2001) "repertoire" theory of culture, specifically focusing on her reliance on interview data. Vaisey argues that Swidler incorrectly adopts a view of culture's motivational force as needing to be "grounded in articulable, rulelike cognitive structures" (p. 1680). However, by relying on interview data, Swidler is primarily capturing a measure of explicit "discursive consciousness" (p. 1687). Because interview data primarily captures explicit conscious processes, Vaisey argues that Swidler fails to account for "the possibility that deeply internalized moral attractions and repulsions" can also serve as an important source of culturally derived motivation and behavior (p. 1687). Interviews primarily access discursive justifications that operate via explicit declarative cognitive and memory processes, which do not always capture the more durable, automatic, habitual, and nondeclarative aspects of implicit cognition.

Informed by this theoretical formulation, Vaisey continues in his criticism of Swidler's use of methods, stating that: "methods matter and that they matter in a very specific way. The unstructured or semi-structured interview puts us in direct contact with discursive consciousness but gives us little leverage on unconscious cognitive processes. Discursive consciousness is incredibly good at offering reasons that may not be at all related to the real motives behind a person's behavior" (p. 1688). And this is the point at which Vaisey makes an incorrect theoretical inference in the choice of measures used in the empirical test he conducts to address

the limitations he identifies in his critique of Swidler. Vaisey decides to use "Carefully constructed and implemented, forced-choice surveys" to better assess "the culture-action link" (p. 1688). However, Vaisey's choice to use fixed-choice surveys to measure implicit motivational cognitive processes and behavioral outcomes is problematic for several reasons. First, forced-choice surveys are, like Swidler's interviews, self-report measures that primarily access discursive consciousness. As Lizardo et al. (2016) state:

> although Vaisey (2009) advocates a DPM of culture in *action*, the DPM that cultural sociologists generally rely on when they refer to 'automatic cognition' and 'deliberate cognition'...is, in fact, not a DPM of how and why actors do things but instead a DPM of how and why actors deploy a given cognitive process in the way they do. As such, we conceptualize this family of DPMs—the one most recognized within sociology—as a DPM of culture in thinking. (p. 297)

By relying on survey data Vaisey also relies on a measure that primarily captures explicit declarative cognitive processes. Like interviews and other self-report data, surveys also capture the use of cultural knowledge for the purposes of processing information and therefore reflect a model of culture for *thinking*. The important point here is that sociologists like Vaisey "can gain analytic purchase by distinguishing between processes of thinking and doing" (Lizardo et al., 2016, p. 297).

Additionally, critics have highlighted a number of problems with Vaisey's (2009) use of forced choice surveys as a measure of implicit cognitive processes. Forced choice surveys are not, even within a dual process framework, considered to be a measure of implicit cognitive processing. However, as Moore (2017) notes, when respondents complete a survey, forced choice or otherwise, "we do not have any way of knowing whether or not the person who

answered a standard survey question did so quickly and intuitively or carefully considered each possible response. This means that survey questions are not necessarily evidence for fast [i.e., implicit] processing even if there are legitimate reasons to believe that fast processing might be more likely in a closed survey question than in an open-ended interview" (pp. 200 - 201). Lizardo et al. (2016) likewise understood Vaisey to incorrectly characterize forced choice survey data as a measure of *implicit* memory processing, noting that such measures primarily access explicit declarative/semantic memory.

A second problem with Vaisey's choice of measures is that he makes an inferential choice to treat self-report data as if it was measuring actual behavioral outcomes. This is explicitly stated in "Proposition 2" of his empirical test. He states that "*respondents' forced choice of a cultural script will be predictive of their future morally relevant behavior, even when other factors are held constant*" (p. 1690). By claiming to provide an assessment of "future morally relevant behavior," Vaisey seeks to develop what he describes as a test of "culture in action," wherein the forced choice surveys are meant to serve as a measure of actual behavioral outcomes. However, as Lizardo et al (2016) note, Vaisey appears to be conflating the use of culture in *thinking* with the use of culture in *acting* (Lizardo et al 2016, p. 297).

The tendency for sociologists to make inferences about actual behavioral outcomes from self-report measures speaks to a larger problem within the sociological literature. Jerolmack & Khan (2014), for example, argue that Vaisey, and sociologists more generally, "routinely proceed to draw conclusions about people's behaviors based on what they tell us" (p. 179). In their view, "self-reports of attitudes and behaviors are of limited value in explaining what people actually do because they are overly psychological and abstracted from lived experience" (p. 181). They directly refer to Vaisey's article as one example of this problem, stating that

"account-based approaches to 'culture in action' compel researchers to take self-reports at face value and commit the attitudinal fallacy" (p. 186). The larger problem is that sociologists like Vaisey rely on interview and survey data as the basis for making claims about behavioral outcomes, despite not collecting observational data investigating the actual behavior of their subjects. The use of self-report data to make claims about behavior requires that scholars make an important omission regarding how most social processes unfold and ignore the fact that all behavior is situated insofar as it occurs within and in response to the context in which it unfolds. As Jerolmack & Khan note, "what we say and what we do are strongly influenced by situational factors" (p. 186). There is a long sociological tradition that relies on methods that seek to capture the situated nature of social action, such as ethnographic methods or other approaches from the interactionist tradition. Jerolmack & Khan argue that methods such as these enable "researchers to systematically observe social action and build sociological explanations that can potentially account for discrepancies between saying and doing" (pp. 186 - 187). Jerolmack & Khan conclude by stating that: "surveys do not observe activity; they collect accounts of activity. Ironically, Vaisey critiques interview research for ignoring action, even though the only action his method allows him to observe is the checking off of boxes—the attitudes and behaviors that he is studying are both gathered through the same longitudinal survey" (p. 193). One proposed solution to this specific shortcoming is for those researchers claiming to study "social action" to incorporate some type of observational data and stop relying exclusively on surveys that only "collect accounts of activity" (p. 193). Finally, Lizardo et al. (2016) add to this criticism of Vaisey, noting that the choice to interpret self-report data as if it measures actual behavioral outcomes is "an analytic move" that is not reflected in the "data themselves" (p. 299).

To be clear, I am not dismissing the usefulness of survey or self-report methods in social science research, but hope to highlight one of the limitations of using self-reports of behavior for the development of theories directed towards explaining social action. This reflects a long-standing tension within the social sciences between the use of more qualitative observational methods and the problem of measurement error that can occur with self-report based methods for measuring behavioral outcomes (Brenner & DeLamater, 2017; Dang et al., 2020). The point here is that there are strategies for addressing an over reliance on self-report measures of behavior, such as including and comparing observational data with self-report data (Zuber et al. 2020), explicitly stating the limitations of the type of data collected in a given study (Ragin, 2014), or providing evidence from past research that self-reports of behavior are reliable predictors of actual behavior (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014; Lizardo et al., 2016). Vaisey's study highlights the importance of giving greater attention to these issues, particularly when the theory being developed is meant to explain social action.

4.6.2 Psychologically Reductive Measures

In this section I review a second sociological empirical test of dual process theory completed by Moore (2017) titled "Fast or Slow: Sociological Implications of Measuring Dual-Process Cognition". In analyzing Moore's article I argue that an additional problem facing sociological tests of dual process theory is their reliance on measures that reflect the "normal science" (Kuhn, 1969/2012) aims of research conducted within the field of cognitive psychology, many of which are ill-suited for the analysis of more complex social processes. Dual process theory research conducted within the discipline of cognitive psychology is directed towards topics that no sociologist is currently pursuing, and is often designed to maximally *reduce* social complexity and context in order to examine highly specific aspects of cognitive processing. The

measures relied on to address the questions of interest with the cognitive psychology literature are often psychologically reductive *by design*. That is, meant to focus on very narrow and decontextualized aspects of cognitive processing. These measures are often ill-suited for studying a range of topics of interest to sociologists.

For example, a prominent and highly influential psychological measure which is within the sociological dual process literature (e.g., see Miles, 2019; Moore, 2017; Srivastava & Banaji, 2011) is the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT is an established time-based measure that now "exceeds 3000 peer-reviewed articles" (Greenwald et al., 2022). I discuss the IAT in greater detail here to illustrate how it is ill-suited for the analysis of more complex social processes, and also because it is the primary inspiration for the time-based measure used in Moore's test of dual process theory.

The IAT seeks to measure unconscious automatic associations, or biases, that may not be captured by an explicit measure. The IAT works by asking respondents to complete multiple sets of a categorization task in which they must accurately sort pairings of positive and negative words with two targets of interest. The IAT then calculates the difference in response times for each target group's pairings with the positive and negative terms, with any calculated discrepancy between the response times for each group representing an "implicit bias" for one group over the other. The idea is that the speed at which concepts are associated with each target image is too fast for explicit deliberate cognitive processing to be involved in the decision making process. As IAT researchers Greenwald et al. (2009) state, "The IAT assesses strengths of associations between concepts by observing response latencies in computer-administered categorization tasks" (p. 18). The strength of the IAT is in its ability to allow for the testing of one of the central topics of interest within the dual process literature: that *explicit* and *implicit*

cognitive processes are dissociable and therefore can produce different and contradictory outputs in response to the same stimuli. Time-based measures such as the IAT have been a compelling strategy for demonstrating dissociability due to their ability to provide a clear and easily quantifiable indirect measure of the operation of implicit cognitive processes. As cognitive psychologists Forscher et al. (2019) state, the IAT is a dual process measure that is "attractive on theoretical and practical grounds" in that it provides "a parsimonious approach for explaining dissociations between intentions and behavior and between mental phenomena more broadly" (p. 523).

Following the example of the IAT, Moore (2017) describes his measurement approach as an assessment "of response latency in formal data collected in conjunction with an ethnographic study of atheists and evangelicals in the Bible Belt" (p. 196). Moore's time-based measure, however, is far less sophisticated than the IAT, which has been subject to multiple validation studies and years of testing and refinement. In contrast, the time-based measure Moore relies on was not used in any prior studies or subjected to any validation measures.

Moore's measure involved a survey administered to a sample of "atheists" and "evangelicals". The survey "consisted of four sets of closed questions: one set each on religion, atheism, spirituality, and Christianity" (p. 204). The specific question was phrased as: "To what extent does the following word describe '*x*;" in which *x* was the term of interest for the particular question (religion, atheism, spirituality, or Christianity)" (p. 204). The surveys were administered via a touch screen computer with participants selecting from a Likert scale set of responses ranging from "not at all" to "extremely" (p. 204). Importantly, and similar to the IAT, Moore's measure "recorded in milliseconds how long it took for the respondent to select a choice after a word pair was displayed on the screen" (p. 204).

There are several problems with this type of measure, however. First, the IAT is currently unable to assess biases beyond comparisons of *two* social identity categories. That is, it is only possible to construct a measure of implicit bias that compares response times between *two* target groups. This means that a range of important social factors cannot be examined effectively using the IAT. For example, the IAT would be unable to assess situations that involve comparisons between three or more groups. So, while the IAT can assess a bias score between black and white targets, it cannot assess a score that would occur between black, white, and Latino targets, for example. The IAT would be unable to assess a bias score between straight, lesbian, and transgender targets. Similarly, the IAT is unable to study biases related to the intersection of multiple identities. It is also unable to assess the interaction between a particular bias and the context in which that bias might become active and influential, or the influence of meso- and macro-level factors on biases. Again, the purpose of the IAT specific to the research norms and aims within the field of cognitive and social psychology, and is therefore designed to maximally reduce contextual variables in order to isolate the specific cognitive processes of interest. More complex features of social processes, such as those that might involve the navigation of multiple identities, identity context interaction, or other contextual factors of interest to sociologists are not effectively captured by the IAT. These limitations are corroborated by the scholars who developed the IAT. For example, in a recent review of best practices for using the IAT published by the scholars who developed the measure, it is stated that: "At present, no method exists for using an IAT to assess associations for an intersection of two demographic categories that may be different from associations with the categories individually" (Greenwald et al., 2022, p. 1173). Greenwald et al. continue, stating that, "It is apparent that some other approach is needed if an IAT procedure is to be successfully adapted to assessing associations with category

intersections" (p. 1173). The IAT is currently unable to assess biases beyond comparisons of two target stimuli or identities, and is therefore ill-suited for studying intersections of multiple identities, or the dynamics of changing contextual cues, all of which are aspects of social processes important to sociological explanation. This presents a problem for sociologists attempting to adopt measures like the IAT for empirical tests of dual process theory.

These same limitations for the IAT extend to the time-based measure used in Moore's study, and it is worth mentioning that, unlike Moore's measure, the IAT has been developed via a sophisticated literature entirely focused on testing and validating the measure itself (Greenwald et al., 2005; Greenwald et al., 2009; Nosek & Smyth, 2007), including several "best practices" reviews to assess how to most effectively administer the measure (Nosek et al., 2005; Greenwald et al., 2022), a meta-analysis examining which measurement procedures are most reliable (Forscher et al., 2019), a study of test-retest reliability and predictive validity of the IAT administered to children (Rae & Olson, 2017), empirical tests of the effectiveness of attempts to intentionally "fake" responses (Steiger et al., 2011), and a study that develops a process model of the IAT measure (Klauer et al., 2007), to name a few. In contrast to Moore's measure which was developed for a single study, and lacks any critical tests or assessment, the IAT is a highly developed scientific measure that has been subjected to considerable critical scientific literature focused on improving its predictive and construct validity and reliability. The point of this discussion is not to reject the IAT or similar measures, but to be critical of the types of questions and research aims for which they were designed and assess if those aims are relevant across distinct disciplinary aims. In my view, the relatively simplistic nature of the IAT is also its strength from the perspective of reducing complexity and isolating specific processes. Scientifically speaking, this is useful and necessary for measuring the operation of cognitive

processes at a high level of granularity and specificity. However, this same strength is also what makes the IAT, and measures inspired by it, ill-suited for the study of more complex social processes in which context, multiplicity, and a more dynamic understanding of social interaction are of interest.

4.7 Identity Theory

In this section I provide an overview of the identity theory framework, discussing in more detail two central features of the framework: *identity verification* and *identity salience*. I will start with an in depth description of identity verification, and later discuss identity salience to illustrate the dominant approach to measurement used for empirical tests of the Identity Theory framework.

4.7.1 Identity Verification

Identity verification refers to the idea that people are motivated by a desire to have their identities recognized, engaged with, and expressed within the contexts in which those identities are active. To have an active identity verified means that the content of an identity, known as an *identity standard*, is able to be expressed, recognized as valid and engaged with by others within the context in which that identity is active. The identity standard will consist of both general characteristics and meanings, as well as the meanings and content specific to the individual. In this sense, the meaning of an identity is not typically represented by a universal set of meanings shared by *all* members of that nominal identity category because individuals make choices, engage in behaviors, and strategize in ways which are expressive of the idiosyncrasies of their life experiences, even if they pursue goals within the constraints of structures and systems in which they have been socialized. Burke & Stets (2022) describe the identity standard in greater detail below:

> Each identity contains a set of meanings, which may be viewed as defining the character of the identity held by an individual. This set of meanings is the identity standard, which is held in memory and is specific to the individual holding the identity. The meanings describe who one is as a person, in a role, as a member of a group, or as a member of a

category. Thus, individuals have person identities, role identities, group identities, and categorical identities. The meanings for these different bases of identities are drawn from cultural meanings that apply to the person, role, group, or social category. (p. 105)

When an individual enters a particular context, they will typically have an identity active, or soon activated. The content of that identity (the identity standard) is then compared to how the individual perceives they are being perceived within that situation, or what is known as a *reflected appraisal*. The perception of how one is being perceived is then compared with the identity standard in order to assess if that identity is congruent or incongruent with the situation.

Importantly, the degree of congruence between an identity standard and the perceived meanings present in the situation motivate different types of responsive strategies. For example, if there is identity-context *congruence*, identity verification has been achieved and the individual will engage in the situation in ways that reflect the expression of the active identity. This would include behaviors that reflect the interests, beliefs, and values of that identity. This process is described by Stets & Burke (2022) as follows: "Individuals compare in a rapid and quick manner self-in-situation meanings with identity standard meanings, and when the difference or error is close to zero, the person's identity is verified" (p. 119). Following the outcome of identity verification, Stets & Burke continue, "the identity process continues with its normal operations" (p. 119). Those who experience "identity nonverification" will pursue strategies directed towards bringing the meanings present in the situation more in-line with the meanings present in the identity standard (Burke & Stets 2022, p. 119). If situational constraints allow, the individual will pursue strategies aimed at verifying their active identity by enacting attempts at making the situation better fit the meanings present in the identity standard of their currently active identity. Importantly, identity nonverification can occur in either a positive or negative direction, with

positive nonverification occurring when “input meanings have exceeded identity standard meanings,” and negative nonverification occurring when “input meanings fall short of identity standard meanings” (Burke & Stets 2022, p. 119). In summary, Burke & Stets (2022) state that identity verification is centrally concerned with “The control of identity-relevant meanings in the situation to make perceptions of who persons are in a situation match the meanings that are contained in the identity standards of their activated identities is central to the identity process” (p. 119).

This formulation of identity-based processes is not unique to identity theory, and it is worth noting that general features of the identity theory framework are shared across a number of other social science frameworks and traditions. Identity theory, for example, is developed out of the symbolic interactionist and pragmatist traditions, which has inspired similarly formulated psychological theories of identity, such as Identity Based Motivation (IBM) (Oyserman & Destin, 2010), possible identities (Oyserman & James, 2011), and situated cognition (Oyserman & Yan, 2019; Oyserman & Lee, 2009), which all share in the view that identities are dynamically constructed in response to the subjectively felt sense of congruence between an identity and the meanings present in the context in which that identity is brought to mind.

Importantly, what is captured analytically in these different identity theories is an understanding that knowledge about the self consists of a larger collection of relatively discrete sets of content; that this content can be activated, or brought to mind, in response to contextual cues; that the content of an identity activated within a situation can be congruent or incongruent with that situation; and that the degree of congruence or incongruence will predict affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses to the situation. Additionally, the interaction between situation and identity content is dynamic and adjusting moment to moment over the course of a

social process. Because individuals possess multiple identities, and because situations are not static, how identities and situations will mutually influence each other and dynamic and changing ways.

4.7.2 Identity Salience

The construct of *identity salience* is worth discussing in further detail as it is understood as to explain one of the central concerns within the identity theory framework—*how individuals select one identity over another*. An early definition provided by Stryker (1968) described identity salience "as the probability...of a given identity being invoked in a variety of situations" (p. 560). Stryker noted that the probability of identity being activated isn't stable across all situations, but also influenced by the likelihood of that identity being activated within a particular context. In this sense, identity salience is understood to "interact with situations to affect the threshold of invocation of an identity" (p. 560). When a context invokes more than one identity within the same individual, it is often necessary for an individual to select from the potential identity options that feel most relevant to that situation. If different identities are activated concurrently, they may or may not be compatible within one another. If the activated identities are compatible, they can mutually support the same behavioral output. If they are not compatible, identities with higher levels of salience are more likely to be felt as context relevant, and therefore most likely to be chosen. As Stryker states, in situations such as these, "the hierarchy of salience becomes potentially an important predictor of behavior" (p. 560). Serpe (1980) concurs with this hierarchical definition, noting that identity salience is "the relative salience of a given identity in relation to another" (p. 44). Because identities can be contrasted with one another, measuring levels of salience for different identities allows for the creation of a hierarchy of identity salience, with salience values for different identities occupying a relative

position to other identities an individual possesses. Serpe (1980) describes this salience hierarchy as consisting of "the different probabilities that any given identity will be invoked in a given situation, or across a number of situations" (p. 45). The location of a particular identity within the salience hierarchy reflects the likelihood of an identity serving "as the basis for role performance" (Serpe, 1980, p. 45). In short, identity salience is central to identity-based explanations of social behavior due to their role in influencing "the likelihood that a given identity will be invoked or called into play in a variety of situations" (Stryker, 2007, p. 1092).

The concept of identity salience came to serve as an important mechanism that helped to explain what Stryker (2007) described as a core empirical question for Identity Theory: *how individuals select one identity over another, and the behavioral consequences that result from that choice*. As Stryker states, identity theory is centrally concerned with understanding "why one person takes his or her children to the zoo on a free weekend afternoon, while another person chooses to spend that time on the golf course with friends" (Stryker, 2007, p. 1088). Identity salience serves the function of helping to explain "Identity theory's fundamental proposition...that the choice between or among behaviors expressive of particular roles will reflect the relative locations of the identities in the identity hierarchies" (Stryker, 2007, p. 1092). Identity salience has been central to explaining why one identity is selected over another within a particular context by addressing how different identities reflect the probability, relative to other identities, of "being situationally invoked" (Brenner et al., 2023, p. 61).

What matters for the purpose of this chapter is that Identity Theory has a developed theoretical and empirical framework that can account for the dynamics of complex social processes. Identity theories discussed here assume that different individuals hold different meanings and content for the same social identity, and that meaning of a given nominal identity

category can’t be known *a priori*. Because the content of an identity varies, it will also vary in terms of the degree of congruence or incongruence with the contexts in which it is brought to mind. Finally, social processes are understood to be dynamic insofar as they reflect interactive processes within which context and identity content interact in ways that can change their respective meaning and influence over the course of a social process.

4.8 Limits to the Identity Theory Framework

The purpose of this section is to highlight how the most commonly used measurement strategies for testing empirical questions within the Identity Theory framework fail to distinguish between implicit and explicit aspects of identity. As discussed above in the review of SDPT, a limitation to most self-report measures is that they primarily access explicit deliberate declarative cognitive processes, and therefore fail to adequately access implicit automatic nondeclarative cognitive processes. Failing to distinguish between implicit and explicit aspects of identity means that their respective role within a social process or explanation will likely remain obscured, conflated, or overlooked entirely. Additionally, as noted by Jerolmack & Khan (2014), self-report measures are frequently used to make claims from *what people say* about *what people do*. While the Identity Theory framework provides an *analytic* model of social action that accounts for greater complexity regarding the interaction between identity and context, it has unfortunately converged on the use of measures that fail to distinguish between explicit and implicit aspects of identity and their respective role in the identity-based processes being investigated.

Below I focus my review on the ways in which the construct of *identity salience* has been assessed within the Identity Theory literature. I chose to focus on identity salience for several reasons. First, identity salience is one of the earlier constructs developed within the Identity

Theory literature (Stryker, 1968); has maintained a relatively consistent definition since its initial formulation; and continues to remain a central construct within the Identity Theory framework and empirical literature for being a "a key predictor of situational behavior" (Brenner et al., 2023, p. 61). Finally, measures of identity salience are representative of the same types of self-report measures used to assess other Identity Theory constructs, including *moral identity* (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Stets & Carter, 2006, 2012; Walker & Hennig, 2004), *identity standards* and *reflected appraisals* (Burke & Stets, 2007; Asencio & Burke, 2011), *identity prominence* (Rose & Karkowski, 2023), and emotional responses to identity verification and nonverification (Kwang & Swam, 2010; Stets & Asencio, 2008; Stets, 2011; Stets & Burke, 2014; Stets & Carter, 2012), all of which are assessed using some type of self-report survey measures.

4.8.1 Measuring Identity Salience

Measures of identity salience typically rely on variations on self-report surveys or, less frequently, interview methods. Survey measures of identity salience typically ask respondents to choose the most relevant identity between all possible pairs of identities from a larger list (Serpe, 1987, 1991); used imaginal exercises that ask respondents to rank identities in terms of which would most likely be invoked in a social interaction (Stryker & Serpe, 1994); or asked respondents to indicate the likelihood they would tell someone about an identity or not (Brenner et al., 2014, 2018; Bulgar-Medina, 2018; Markowski & Serpe, 2018, 2021; Merolla et al., 2012; Nuttbrock & Freudiger, 1991; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Yarrison, 2017). Such measures typically include a bipolar response scale that ranges anywhere from 4-points in earlier research, to 11-points in more recent research, with possible response options ranging from "certainly would not tell" to "certain would tell," for example. In an early identity theory study, Serpe (1980) relied on a measure of identity salience that was decomposed into a measure of *affective commitment* and

a measure of *interactional commitment*. Interactional commitment was meant to assess the degree to which an identity was responsible for important social connections in that person's life and was assessed using a single item that asked respondents about the number of individuals they have met and become friends with as a result of a given identity. Affective commitment, in contrast, referred to the affective significance of a given identity, and was measured indirectly via a self-report of how study participants perceived an identity was valued by others (i.e., their reflected appraisal). The theoretical assumption here was that the more value someone perceived others placed on an identity, the greater affective commitment they would have to that identity.

In a chapter titled "Assessing and Improving Measures of Identity Salience" (Brenner et al., 2023), the authors affirm the general treatment of identity-based processes as primarily involving explicit conscious cognitive processes, as well as the choice to rely on measurement strategies that mirror this theoretical commitment. The authors provide a vignette in which they describe what they believe to be the role that identity salience plays in the process of selecting one identity over another. The vignette also illustrates the analytic assumption that underlies the primary measurement strategy within Identity Theory research--that cognitive processes are primarily explicit, deliberate and declarative. That such measures are standard across the literature is affirmed by their claim that the vignette is presented for the purpose of illustrating the typical "questions asked on surveys and used in recent research" (p. 60). The vignette is presented as a response to the question of how likely you would be to tell a friend about your identity as a religious person. In response to this question, Brenner et al. (2023) state that identity salience might serve a role in the following series of mostly explicit cognitive processing required to answer the aforementioned question:

> Several things may come to mind as you go about answering this question. You might recall similar events from the recent past, such as the last time you met a friend of a close friend and what you talked about with that person, or you might recall the circumstances of your introduction to other new acquaintances. You might also consider other types of information, such as how important your identity as a religious or irreligious person is to you and to how you see yourself. Perhaps you would think about all the people you know through that identity, including the friend making the introduction, and the strength of the connection you feel to them. You may also use your assessment of the survey interviewer who asked you this question in your answer. You might observe what they look like, what they are wearing, or what they sound like, and factor this information or some other verbal or non-verbal information into your answer. In short, answering this ostensibly simple question may be quite a complex process indeed. (p. 59)

What is striking is that the series of cognitive processes described above are almost entirely presented as explicit, deliberate, and declarative. There is no attempt to distinguish between which elements of identity salience are operating at the explicit or implicit level of processing, or even an acknowledgement that some aspects of an identity can operate in automatic, embodied, or nondeclarative ways. Even if there are implicit aspects of identity operating within the vignette described above, their operation is theoretically and empirically obscured by the lack of attention given to the possible role they may have within the example they describe. From a measurement perspective, this vignette reflects the theoretical assumption that identity content can be understood via the exclusive use of explicit self-report measures. However, by relying on measures that primarily access explicit cognitive processing, the distinct role that implicit cognitive processes may have within a social process of interest will remain obscured.

Intensive interviews, standardized survey interviews, and cognitive interviews are also used occasionally to assess identity salience. Cognitive interviewing is distinct from more structured survey interview protocols in that it includes probing and follow up questions designed to bring to the surface the tacit reasoning underlying more surface level statements. In this sense, approaches such as this may be accessing a type of implicit identity content, although within the current formulations of sociological dual process theory, interviews have been primarily relegated to capturing explicit cognitive processes. For example, in an article titled "Is interviewing compatible with a dual-process model of culture?", author Steven Vaisey (2014) argues that interviews are, at best, a type of translation in which explicit verbal representations are poorly converted into implicit representations (p. 154). In this view, the most useful role for interviews is to support the development of better survey questions, or, as Vaisey states, to help "figure out what sorts of questions we should be asking in the first place" (p. 154). This can in turn support the development of more refined interview questions, which can in turn support the development of better survey questions. However, a deeper philosophical divide is also represented in Vaisey's argument regarding the role he sees for interviews in sociological research. Citing the work of Mahoney & Goertz (2006), Vaisey notes that "Qualitative researchers...generally seek to explain outcomes in the context of individual cases, starting from their cases and working backward toward several causes. Quantitative researchers, by contrast, generally seek to estimate the average effect of a particular cause on an outcome for a population of cases" (p. 155). Vaisey states he is concerned with questions directed towards the development of knowledge related to identifying *general* patterns in data. He states this explicitly: "my primary goal is to identify the most important cultural differences between people or groups and to relate them to systematic differences in some kind of pattern of behavior,

ideally estimating the effect of the former on the latter. My goal is never to explain a particular outcome...but rather to figure out how one sort of cultural bias *generally* affects some particular outcome" (p. 155). He goes on to state that, "Given my research questions, the main values of interviewing are to find novel patterns in discourse that could generate new measures and to get a closer look at the cognitive mechanisms (for example, schemas) that underlie the patterns detected in surveys to make sure my interpretations of the data are not implausible" (p. 156). Vaisey makes an important distinction, but one that is specific to *his research aims*. This does not, however, discredit Jerolmack & Khan's (2014) claim that actual observations of situated behavior are also important to the development of better social scientific explanation.

4.8.2 Summary

In reviewing how identity salience and other constructs are assessed within the Identity Theory literature, I have made the following findings: (1) the primary approach to measurement within the Identity Theory literature has been through the use of surveys or interviews; (2) the use of these measures rarely attempts to distinguish in any systematic way, at either the theoretical or measurement level, between implicit and explicit aspects of the construct being assessed; and (3) similar to the criticisms directed towards the empirical tests of dual process theory discussed above, Identity Theory tends to treat self-report measures of behavior as capturing actual behavioral outcomes. As such, the measurement approaches commonly used within the Identity Theory framework, intentionally or not, tend to conflate and therefore obscure implicit and explicit features of identity content, making it difficult to examine the distinct contribution of each type of cognitive processing, or the interaction between them.

This review of empirical tests of Identity Theory demonstrates that the dominant measurement approaches typically fail to distinguish between implicit and explicit cognitive

processes at both the level of theory and measurement. Further, the measures discussed – be it survey, structured interviews, open ended interviews, or cognitive interviews – primarily capture explicit deliberate cognitive processes. The lack of theoretical attention and measurement strategies directed towards assessing implicit cognitive processes means that the distinct contribution and interaction between implicit and explicit cognitive processes remains largely unaccounted for.

4.9 An Integrative Solution

This is a useful point to summarize the findings identified in the previous sections of this chapter, propose an integrative solution that draws on the strengths and addresses the limitations discussed above, and provide a case example to illustrate the potential applicability of these recommendations for clinical social work education.

The strengths of Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT) include what I consider to be the most developed analytic framework for understanding implicit and explicit cognitive processes within the sociological literature to date (for prior formulations see Cerulo, 2014; DiMaggio, 1995; Zerubavel, 1997). This framework includes a developed articulation of the characteristics that distinguish explicit and implicit cognitive processes; specificity regarding analytically distinct *domains* of cognitive processing (i.e., learning, use, processing, storage), and the importance of clearly identifying which domain is the focus of a given theoretical or empirical project; and the importance of developing Dual Process Models (DPMs) that specify which elements of the larger Dual Process Framework (DPF) are relevant to a specific case. Collectively, these contributions represent a significant theoretical advancement regarding the role of cognitive processes for a discipline which has historically resisted engagement with and incorporation of more critical understandings of cognition and cognitive processes into social analysis. The analytic framework outlined within the SDPT literature allows for the critical interpretation of data, the development of models for empirical testing, and the generation of novel insights about existing sociological frameworks.

Limitations within the SDPT literature center on the use of psychologically reductive measures ill-suited for the study of more complex social processes. Specifically, SDPT has relied on psychologically reductive measures ill-suited for the study of more complex social features of situated social action. In Moore's (2017) study, for example, the use of a measure inspired by the

Implicit Association Test (IAT) was used to assess time discrepancies in responses associations with religious words, and in the case of Vaisey (2009), the use of self-report survey measures were incorrectly relied on as measures of implicit cognitive processes and actual behavioral outcomes, mistaking *what people say* for *what people do* (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014).

Strengths of the Identity Theory framework include a developed model of situated social action that accounts for the interactive and dynamic relationship between identity and context; processes related to the interaction of multiple identities within the same individual and across situations and organizational contexts; an account of how identity content activated at different levels of abstraction can influence behavior; and a significant empirical literature testing and supporting the overall framework.

Limitations to the Identity Theory framework center on the lack of attention given to distinguishing between implicit and explicit aspects of identity, and the almost exclusive reliance on self-report survey and interview measures that primarily access explicit declarative cognitive processes and conflate self-reports of behavior for actual behavior.

4.9.1 Outline of a Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI)

The previous discussion suggests that any proposal aimed at addressing the limitations identified above would need to include the following: (1) the incorporation of *observational* data on situated behaviors in which implicit and explicit aspects of identities being studied could be observed, and therefore provide access to observable instances of implicit and explicit identity based processes within the contexts in which they were occurring; (2) the use of explicit self-report measures of identity that serve a *confirmatory* or *complementary* function relative to the aims of the project (Small, 2011); and (3) assessment of implicit cognitive processes derived from observations of *actual behaviors* that occur within the situations being studied, and not an

exclusive reliance on measures captured in artificial contexts (e.g., computer administered IAT style measures, etc.). Incorporating observational data addresses what Jerolmack & Khan (2014) have referred to as the "attitudinal fallacy" wherein researchers rely exclusively on self-report data as a measure of behavior. Further, incorporating observational data allows "researchers to systematically observe social action and build sociological explanations that can potentially account for discrepancies between saying and doing" (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014, pp. 186 - 187).

The framework I am proposing to address these limitations is what I call a Dual Process Model of Identity (DMPI), as it seeks to incorporate the strengths of both SDPT and the identity theory frameworks, with some additional features. The DMPI follows Lizardo et al.'s (2016) recommendation to separate the more general Dual Process Framework (DPF) "from substantive claims pertaining to any one particular DPM as applied to a given set of lower-level phenomena (e.g., trust, reasoning, stereotypes, attitudes, morality), because these last may be subject to controversy, revision, and updating without this impinging on the overall validity of the general DPF" (p. 290). As such, I illustrate the usefulness of the DPMI as a framework for understanding how implicit barriers to effective clinical practice can be identified and addressed through the use of Video Recorded Practice (VRP), which involve clinical social work practitioners documenting simulated or actual practice sessions in which they seek to demonstrate specific social work competencies. VRP can serve as a site of observation for the identification of implicit and explicit cognitive processes as they occur within the context of situated action.

Clinical social work education typically focuses on teaching clinical competencies at the level of *explicit* cognitive processes, with course work emphasizing "conceptual material and critical analysis" (Bogo et al., 2014, p. 81). Similarly, assessment of clinical social work competencies has primarily been conducted through the use of explicit self-report measures (e.g.,

Holden et al., 2007; Holden et al., 2017), which primarily provides insight into declarative deliberate aspects of social work student identities. The lack of attention given to the expression of embodied implicit cognitive processes within the SDPT literature represents a missed opportunity given the existing sociological literature which has focused on the sociology of implicit embodied cognitive processes (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2003).

Giving increased attention to implicit aspects of clinical competencies is important because they involve aspects of performance which often occur outside of the conscious awareness of the clinician. For example, a social worker who explicitly intends to demonstrate *empathy* may not in effect be enacting a performance that results in an experience of empathy for the client. Observing a video recording of the performance of clinical skills allows for those observing to identify, and bring explicit attention to, any implicit barriers to effective clinical practice they might have otherwise remained unaware of. The clinician might learn that their facial expression is somewhat flat instead of warm; that their tone of voice is sharp instead of inviting; that their speech patterns are scattered instead of calm; or that their body language appears closed off instead of inviting. It might also be true that in their desire to *be empathic* that the clinician wasn't able to pay attention to important aspects of a client's responses, which could now be observed from watching a video recording of a simulated or actual clinical interaction.

Importantly, the DMPI I propose acknowledges that identity content can be active at an *implicit* and/or *explicit* level of cognitive processing. This opens up the possibility of identity dissociability, or the notion that the content of more than one identity can be active at the same time *at different levels of cognitive processing*. Prior to this formulation, identity theory treated identity content, both theoretically and at the level of measurement, as primarily occurring at the

level of explicit deliberate cognitive processing. Acknowledging that identities can be active at both *implicit* and *explicit* levels of cognition allows for the recognition that implicit and explicit identity content can be understood as occurring in four different combinations based on whether the active content is congruent or not. That is, active identity content at an implicit level can be *congruent* or *incongruent* with active identity content at an explicit level of cognitive processing. The recognition that multiple identities can be active at different levels of cognitive processing means that different barriers to effective clinical social work practice can more clearly be studied, identified, and explained. For example, a social work student might have an active identity at the explicit level of cognitive processing that is centered on the desire to *help*, while also having active implicit identity content related to being *afraid*. The deliberate conscious desire to *help* would be incongruent with the implicit nondeclarative experience of *fear*.

The different pairings of congruence between explicit and implicit identity content have implications for clinical social work education and research. Clinical social work educators are primarily concerned with *addressing* barriers to effective clinical practice by bringing awareness to their existence and providing corrective feedback aimed at bringing implicit and explicit cognitive processes into congruence with the aim of *helping*. The benefits of the DPMI I have outlined for social work educators is to more clearly identify whether learning should be directed towards issues related to implicit or explicit cognitive processes, or both. For the social work education research, the DPMI I am proposing provides a framework for studying the prevalence and type of implicit and explicit barriers to effective clinical practice, as well as a framework for identifying the types of clinical interactions that tend to activate these responses in clinicians. A summary of the different categories of implicit and explicit congruence pairings is provided below:

Table 4.2: Implicit and Explicit Identity Congruence in Clinical Interactions

Implicit Identity Content	Explicit Identity Content	Congruence	Adherence/Fidelity to Competency
Helpful	*Helpful*	*Congruent*	*Yes*
Unhelpful	*Helpful*	*Incongruent*	*Partial*
Helpful	*Unhelpful*	*Incongruent*	*Partial*
Unhelpful	*Unhelpful*	*Congruent*	*No*

Below I discuss how this framework can be applied to help identify, explain, and address implicit barriers to effective clinical social work practice, review list of examples of the kinds of barriers that can commonly occur in clinical practice, and the role that observing Video Recorded Practice (VRP) sessions has in this process.

4.10 Identifying Implicit Barriers to Effective Clinical Practice

The DPMI I have proposed provides a framework for identifying and understanding *implicit barriers* to the development and delivery of clinical social work competencies through the analysis of Video Recorded Practice (VRP) sessions. The use of VRP is a common pedagogical tool for the development of clinical social work competencies within clinical social work courses, training institutions, and is a requirement for gaining advanced certification across a range of psychotherapy modalities. Observing one's own performance, receiving corrective feedback, and incorporating that feedback into further practice is a process shown to be central to the deliberate practice model of learning and the development of expertise across a number of practice domains (Ericsson, 2003; Ericsson, 2004; Ericsson, 2008; Foster, 2010; Mcnamara et al., 2014). The deliberate practice model of training has recently been adapted for the development of general psychotherapy competencies (Miller et al., 2020; Rousmaniere, 2017),

competencies for specific treatment modalities (Behary et al., 2023; Boritz et al., 2022; Ernst et al., 2022; Katz et al., 2023) and for multicultural psychotherapy (Harris et al., 2023).

Psychotherapy researcher Rousmaniere (2017) describes the benefits of watching video recordings of his own psychotherapy sessions as one of the most important contributors to his clinical development. As a student, Rousmaniere recalls when he first watched a video recording of a therapist demonstrating a particular psychotherapy intervention. The video provided a number of important insights as it allowed for his professor to "guide us step by step through her clinical decision-making process and let us examine the client's reaction to each of her interventions" (17). Further, this also allowed for himself and fellow students to "discuss her successes and mistakes based on the client's actual reactions, rather than notes compiled from biased memory. Furthermore, the video enabled us to participate in the emotional experience of the therapy from both the therapist's and client's perspective" (p. 17). Rousmaniere notes the important role that watching Video Record Practice (VRP) had for his own development, stating that: "Learning therapy without watching clinical videos is like learning to play sports without watching competitions, or to play music or dance without watching performances. Learning therapy from master clinicians' case reports is like learning how to paint by hearing a master painter describe their paintings without being able to actually see the paintings directly" (p. 17). Being able to watch a clinician competently demonstrate a clinical competency is effective because it provides access to the *implicit* aspects of clinical practice which are not effectively communicated via explicit descriptions alone. As Rousmaniere states, "we learned more from watching...than we ever could from reading a psychotherapy textbook or case transcript" (p. 18). A significant part of what Rousmaniere was able to learn was a result of being able to identify implicit barriers to effective clinical practice. In response to observing his own practice sessions,

he states that, “I hadn’t realized how much of my own words and actions I was unaware of and remembered incorrectly. For example, in one video I noticed that I talked over the client for most of the session. In another video I changed the subject when the client started crying. In another session I was simply trying too hard to make the client change and was ignoring her ambivalence” (p. 47). Additionally, because implicit cognitive processes occur automatically and include elements which operate outside of conscious control or conscious awareness, observing our own performance provides access to behaviors that would otherwise be overlooked. Rousmaniere describes this as much when he states that, while watching VRP sessions of other clinicians, he was able to “carefully study their body language, including their posture, eye contact, and vocal patterns...that often communicate feelings more honestly than words” (p. 47). Rousmaniere went on to investigate how it was that expert clinicians developed their clinical expertise. While interviewing three master clinicians about their learning process, it was discovered that they all reported observing video recordings of their own psychotherapy sessions was crucial to this process.

An additional benefit of observing VRP as a tool for developing clinical competencies is that they address the problem of memory bias. It is well known that recalling an event will typically be riddled with significant inaccuracies based on the limitations and biases of our attentional systems and biases. It is unlikely that most people can accurately recall what they had for breakfast two days ago, what they felt like while making breakfast, what they were wearing, what they said (if anything), and what they were thinking. What can be recalled will be reconstructed in the present from the fragments of memory that can be accessed but will be riddled with a variety of inaccuracies. Therapy sessions are arguably more difficult to recall then what was had for breakfast in part because clinicians cognitive labor is divided between multiple

tasks, including (a) paying attention to what their client is saying, (b) remaining aware of the formulation of the client's presenting problem, (c) attending to the intervention the clinician has in mind for that session, and (d) how to deliver that intervention in ways which are responsive to the needs and characteristics of a specific client. In short, it is important to bring attention to *implicit* cognitive processes that support or impair effective clinical practice for a variety of reasons, including our general lack of ability to remember important aspects of our performance, and because implicit barriers to clinical treatment involve expressions which operate outside of conscious awareness or control.

I define an *implicit barrier* to clinical social work practice as any observable behavior resulting from the activation of (a) cognitive processes occurring outside of conscious awareness or conscious control; (b) which result in observable behaviors or expressions, such as via body language, mannerisms, tone of voice, eye contact, changes in speech patterns or style, expressions of affect or emotion; and (c) that those behaviors and/or expressions are known to be incongruent with the aim of effectively or competently performing a clinical social work skill or intervention. This list is not exhaustive, and each barrier is likely going to be expressed in idiosyncratic ways depending on the person, the client, and the context.

Below I discuss three examples of implicit barriers to effective clinical treatment, including *countertransference* (Abergil & Tishby, 2022; Racker, 1982; Segal, 1993), the activation of maladaptive *attachment style* content (Castonguay et al., 2010; Wallin, 2007), *non-verification* of the social worker helping identity identified in the previous chapter of this dissertation (Stets & Burke, 2014), and the activation of *implicit biases* (Greenwald et al., 2009). This is not an exhaustive list, as there are certainly more implicit barriers to effective clinical practice. This list serves as a starting point for understanding specific instances of barriers that

can serve as the basis for identifying the more general features of these types of barriers. By bringing explicit awareness to these barriers, students would also be primed to identify when they occur during the observation of a VRP session.

4.10.1 Countertransference

The psychoanalytic concept of *countertransference* centers on the ways in which a clinical practitioner can experience automatic implicit reactions to the presenting problems of a patient in ways that can interfere with effective treatment. While aspects of countertransference can arise at the level of explicit cognitive processes, Segal (1993) notes that "the major part of the countertransference...is always unconscious" (p. 19). Further, the effect of countertransference on the clinician is to present difficulties with maintaining "a clear and objective view of the patient" (Segal, 1993, p. 13). Transference is understood to occur when a client *projects*, or transfers, certain expectations and feelings from past relationships onto their clinician. Countertransference refers to the clinician's implicit reaction to their client's projections, which can include feelings of frustration, annoyance, irritation, boredom, pity, or other emotions related to past maladaptive strategies which are no longer helping the client to function in ways which support their wellbeing. Within the psychodynamic and psychoanalytic therapy traditions, countertransference is one of the primary targets of clinical treatment, as it allows for the clinician to bring awareness to the maladaptive beliefs and expectations of the client by way of the clinician being aware of their own reactions to the client's behaviors and skillfully discussing those reactions with the client. By attending to their own reactions, the clinician can call attention to the otherwise unconscious behaviors of the client, identify the conditions in which the client learned those behaviors, and help bring to conscious awareness how those behaviors are no longer supportive of the client's current life aims. Identifying

instances of countertransference are important for effective clinical practice because they are, by definition, unconscious. Further, a clinician's lack of explicit awareness about their countertransferential reactions has been shown to negatively impact treatment outcomes (Abergil & Tishby, 2022).

4.10.2 Activation of Maladaptive Attachment Style Content

Attachment styles represent implicit enduring and highly affective relational models which become activated within the context of interpersonal relationships. Research on attachment styles has demonstrated that individuals develop a largely implicit, automatic, unconscious working model of interpersonal relations that shapes emotional responses, expectations, interpersonal preferences, beliefs about whether needs can be met by the self or others, and serve as the basis for a core *relational self*. Importantly, research has found that a clinician's attachment style can serve as a barrier to effective clinical practice. Castonguay et al. (2010), for example, have noted that "therapists with more anxious attachment styles (characterized by low self-esteem, as well as high levels of emotional expressiveness, worry, and impulsiveness in their relationships) have been shown to be vulnerable to less empathic exchange" (p. 40). The ability to effectively express empathy is a well studied core clinical competency relevant to the effective delivery of social work and psychotherapy interventions (Elliot et al., 2019). In their review of research on empathy for psychotherapy interventions, for example, Elliot et al. (2019) note that it was "especially nonverbal" expressions which were important to the effective expression of empathy (p. 274).

Attachment styles are learned primarily via implicit learning pathways prior to the development of language. As Wallin (2007) states, "*preverbal experience* makes up the core of the developing self" (p. 1). Critically, attachment style is learned at a time when the attachment

relationship is biologically necessary for the survival of a developing infant, making attachment styles a particularly powerful and enduring form of implicit automatic cognitive processing. Adult attachment styles represent a useful illustration of the dissociability of implicit and explicit cognitive processes, as adults with maladaptive attachment styles are often explicitly aware that they engage in a pattern of self-destructive romantic relationships, even if what drives those patterns operates largely outside of their conscious control (Levine & Heller, 2010). This is seen in examples of dating relationships in which individuals are consciously aware that they engage in self-destructive patterns of romantic attraction, but also continue to repeat these patterns for reasons largely outside of their conscious awareness or control.

Activation of maladaptive attachment style content during a clinical session can result in a number of barriers to effective clinical treatment. For example, attachment styles have been shown to be the basis for the capacity to reflect on one's experience. Infants whose caregivers are present, attuned, and responsive to their attachment needs learn they can rely on their caregivers as a "secure base," which supports the infant's capacity to both "see" and internalize their own experiences as they are reflected back to them by their caregiver. In contrast, infants whose caregivers are dismissive, inconsistent, or rejecting will learn that they do not have a "safe base" they can turn to for emotional regulation, and learn to see their own internal experiences as a source of misery and despair. Adults who lack the ability to reflect on their own internal experiences are more likely to lack awareness about how they are feeling and why, making the implicit activation of negative affect more likely to serve as an unconscious implicit barrier to effective clinical treatment. Likewise, attachment styles can be expressed in the development of "rules" that govern "what individuals allow themselves to notice, feel, recall, and do" within the context of close relationships (p. 36). Interpersonal dynamics between the client and clinician

that violate implicit attachment "rules" can lead to the activation of maladaptive attachment style related content on the part of the clinician. Given that maintaining a good working alliance is important for treatment outcomes, interpersonal experiences that result in the implicit activation of negative affect or emotion in the clinician can negatively impact effective treatment. Clients who express high levels of dependence on the clinician, or who are aloof or distant, can activate the clinician's own implicit attachment related anxieties or frustrations which could be directed towards the client. It is common for those with an *avoidant* attachment style, for example, to need emotional and interpersonal distance from others who appear as needy or anxious about their attachment. In contrast, those with an *anxious* attachment style often desire higher levels of interpersonal closeness, which can result in increased anxiety in the absence of reassurance or a lack of reciprocation.

4.10.3 Summary

The Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) proposed here represents a synthetic account of the SDPT and identity theory frameworks aimed at drawing on their respective strengths and providing recommendations for addressing the limitations identified in this chapter. Applying the DPMI to Video Recorded Practice (VRP) sessions in order to identify and address implicit barriers to effective clinical social work practice demonstrates the benefits of this framework. Specifically, by incorporating dual process theory cognition into the identity theory framework, identity content is understood to exist at both implicit and explicit levels of cognitive processing. Due to their dissociability, implicit and explicit aspects of identity can be congruent or incongruent with the aim of *helping*, which is a core explicit aspect of social worker identity. Social work educators can draw on this framework to better identify and address implicit barriers to effective clinical practice as they are observed in VRP sessions. Social work education

researchers can continue this research by further developing a general typology of implicit barriers to effective clinical practice that both explores the micro-dynamics of countertransference, maladaptive attachment styles, and the non-verification of important aspects of social work student identities, and develops a broader understanding of the general features of implicit barriers to effective clinical practice. The use of traditional explicit self-report measures, such as those already used within the SDPT and identity theory literature, can be incorporated into the DPMI I am proposing in a confirmatory or complementary capacity to provide nuance to the actual behaviors and interactive processes collected via the observation of VRP sessions.

4.11 What Does This Mean for the Practice of Social Work?

In the following section I discuss a number of limitations to the review of identity theory and dual process theory presented in this chapter so far. Additionally, I expand upon and explore what identity-based processes mean for clinical social work practice and clinical social work education, specifically discussing how the identities of different actors within the social work practice space pose different challenges to the implementation of Video Recorded Practice (VRP) into social work curriculum. The drive for identity verification can crate different issues depending on the actor in question, with students, their clients, and faculty having to navigate different roles within the institution of social work education and practice, as well as contend with the complexities of interactions between the identities of one another.

4.11.1 Social Work Student Identity and Cultivating an Interest in Learning

I think that incorporating video recorded practice into clinical social work programs is important for several reasons related to the identities of social work students. In my view, one of the primary benefits of students experiencing video recording practice for the purpose of their own development is to increase the likelihood that those students develop and internalize an orientation to learning that lasts beyond their time in their social work degree programs. That is, the experience of being observed, having to attend to the quality of one's performance, and improve upon that performance, can result in the internalization of a more enduring growth oriented *habitus* characterized by an implicit and explicit investment in continued learning. The use of video recorded practice could, in theory, help those social workers who might be less likely to pursue their own development within their academic programs and throughout their careers. This is what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2000) refers to as *illusio*, or the development of a capacity for recognition, investment, and interest in a set of practices and goals within a

social domain. I would argue that social work students, and social workers more generally, would benefit from developing an *illusio*, or intrinsic investment in their own learning and development. Because there are a variety of social work identities that can serve as the basis for becoming a social worker, and because the field of social work doesn't require a significant investment in growth or learning, social work programs that can increase the likelihood of instilling such an interest in students could have a lasting impact on the profession. Further, it is clients who ultimately benefit most from seeing competent practitioners, making the use of video recorded practice one important strategy for encouraging a social work identity that is invested in learning, growth, and the development of clinical expertise. Social work students, and the identities they currently inhabit, represent a starting point in a process whereby their social work identities can be shaped, for better or worse. Whether incorporating VRP serves as an effective tool for the development of a long lasting intrinsic interest in learning is a question worth pursuing in future research. Regardless, social work programs would still benefit from incorporating VRP as a pedagogical tool for the development of social work competencies.

A central concern of this dissertation has been on how the characteristics of social work students can influence the development of clinical social work competencies, including those related to identity and identity based processes. One issue that arises when considering social work student identities in the context of video recorded practice is the question of what motivates different social work students to pursue their own learning, and how that interest is constituted in as part of their social worker identities. That is, social work students can be motivated to pursue their own learning and development for a variety of different reasons which can be understood through the lens of identity theory and identity based processes. The content of a social work student's identity will in turn serve as the basis for identity verification, as well as the

modification of that content in response to their experiences within social work education programs. In many ways, social work education is an experience aimed at influencing and shaping social work students identities in ways that align with the values and aims of the social work profession. How those aims and values are congruent or incongruent with social work student identities is a topic worth exploring in further detail, and in particular how social work student identities could impact the cultivation of a more enduring interest in learning, and the role that implementation and use of video recorded practice has in that process.

From the perspective of identity theory, social work students will vary in terms of the degree to which they possess salient aspects of their identity that include a more enduring intrinsic interest in their own development. Additionally, possessing an enduring interest in growth and development also requires contexts in which learning opportunities are available, and critical engagement in one's own development is encouraged. While implementing Video Recorded Practice (VRP) into clinical social work curriculum would introduce a *context* that encourages the development of clinical social work competencies, the question of how to inculcate a social worker identity that includes a more enduring intrinsic interest in *learning* and *growth* at the individual level is an important question worth discussing further.

Social work student identities can be oriented around a number of different aims. In my own experience, I have observed social work students who are motivated to pursue their own development for a variety of reasons, including to *follow rules*, to *learn and grow*, or because social work is seen primarily as an *occupation*. Motivation to learn can be based on professional obligations and “rules” dictated by state agencies regarding licensure, such as having to complete certain continuing education credits in order to maintain a professional license, strictly observing regulations regarding documentation, and making sure to adhere to and follow the various rules

and regulations related to clinical social work practice, for example. This type of reasoning appears to be motivated by either a stricter moral stance towards rule following itself, or because following rules is perceived to decrease the likelihood of any negative consequences that might occur as a result of being caught for violating those rules. While following rules might appear as a self-evident requirement of the social work profession, it is not, and many of the wide range of rules and obligations related to social work practice are either loosely followed, not followed, or selectively followed, in part due to the rules themselves being open to interpretation. Individual practitioners and organizations engage in a variety of loose interpretations and selective adherence to different rules. One clinical social worker I know personally was so invested in researching and following the correct rules that when they were applying for jobs, multiple organizations who interviewed them were presented with information indicating that some detail related to their billing practices had been incorrect, leading them to have to examine and in some instances revise their policies. To be clear, this social worker was going above and beyond what their own organization, clinical supervisor, and colleagues were doing in terms of adherence to existing social work professional guidelines and rules. In my own experience, I have never worked for a practice organization in which, at the organizational or individual level, every existing social work policy was followed correctly, in part because there is significant flexibility in terms of how many practice guidelines can be followed. The point here is that the desire to comprehend and adhere to rules can be one source of identity based motivation that serves as the basis for identity verification processes and the behaviors described above. A social worker identity primarily oriented around a desire to “follow rules”, for example, could manifest in a more strict relationship to learning in which identity verification is experienced when requirements of the profession are met, or in the context of social work education, when

assignments are completed correctly and on time. Identity verification for a social worker whose identity was rooted in a desire for rule following could result in a desire for strictly adhering to documentation, billing, and clear practice policies and guidelines being communicated to and enforced with clients, for example. A potential cost of this type of identity based motivation is that violations of rules could be sources of conflict between the social worker and clients, supervisors, or organizations who do not share the same level of motivation for following rules. This is exactly what I observed in a number of interactions with the social worker mentioned above. Their frequent expressions of concern for a number of different rules being violated at their practice organization led the clinical director at the organization where they practiced to suggest that their place of work might not be the best fit for them. The point here is that "following rules" can be a salient aspect of a social work student's identity, which in turn can result in behaviors and conflicts related to the nonverification of that aspect of their professional identity. Importantly, a student with an identity oriented around "following rules" could experience a distinct motivational profile that could support or impede their participation in VRP sessions. For social work educators and social work education researchers, the ways in which different identity profiles interact with important social work learning experiences remains an open question, particularly with respect to identities that have yet to be studied.

Another source of identity based motivation that also appears to be related to a particular type of social worker identity is having an intrinsic interest in learning and growth. This type of motivation could be connected to a general desire to learn, understand, explore, and master a topic of intrinsic intellectual interest. This type of motivation could also be derived from an interest in self-understanding, which can further improve experiential awareness of issues related to clinical practice. Social workers are frequently motivated by a desire to both help others, but

also to *help themselves* as a result of their social work professions. Becoming a clinical social worker provides direct experience with a deeper psychological understanding of human suffering, and human suffering is ubiquitous. Social work students may find that becoming a clinical social worker also allows them to develop skills and knowledge that supports their personal growth addressing their own struggles. Both an intellectual and personal interest in learning represents a kind of social worker identity that would be more likely to embrace VRP as a tool for the development of clinical expertise, and therefore be more likely to serve as an activity that would verify the identities of social work students with an already existing identity invested in growth and learning. The use of VRP for students motivated by learning and growth would, in my view, be more likely to strengthen these interests by providing an effective technology and pedagogical tool that supports their own growth and development as clinical practitioners. It is important to note that an intrinsic interest in learning and growth also requires opportunities to learn and grow, all of which can be supported by various tools which the student is unlikely to be aware of.

Professional and occupational interests could be a third source of identity based motivation a social worker has towards the development of social work competencies. A social worker with this type of identity content would be expected to prioritize the occupational aspects of their social worker identity, and could be seen to be primarily motivated by the desire to provide for themselves (and others) via their occupation. Social work would be a career choice that provides them with a salary. While there is certainly overlap between the need to practice competently *enough* in order to remain employed, or maintain clients, this type of identity would first and foremost be motivated by the monetary compensation they receive for their work, which in turn could be motivated for a variety of other reasons (security, fear of not having a job,

valuing money and resources, to monetarily support other interests, etc.). Like the social worker who seeks to follow rules discussed above, this type of social worker may also engage in required learning activities in order to maintain their professional license, but the motivation would be different. Instead of doing so for fear of breaking a rule, this type of social worker would follow rules only to the degree that it was perceived to allow them to continue to practice and earn a living. Rules would only be followed if they were perceived as potentially getting in the way of their ability to continue to earn a living as a social worker. I would expect that social workers and social work students with a prominent identity based in seeing social work as a "job" would be least likely to develop a more intrinsic interest in learning as a result of the use of Video Recorded Practice (VRP) sessions. Absent some kind of reward or career related benefit that would result from engaging in VRP or developing an intrinsic interest in continued learning, VRP would likely be perceived as offering few benefits to the social worker who is primarily motivated by their salary. If the goal of the social work educator is to try and instill a more enduring intrinsic interest in learning and growth into social work students, considering these different sources of identity based motivation when implementing VRP into social work curriculum could be an important consideration.

My hope for the use of VRP assignments would be that students develop a more enduring intrinsic interest in their own learning, gain increased comfort and proficiency in the use of VRP as a tool for receiving feedback and developing social work competencies, and be more likely to pursue their own growth and development over the course of their careers. Whether the content of a social work student's identity would change and incorporate a more robust orientation towards learning and growth as a result of VRP is an empirical question which could be further studied.

4.11.2 Video Recorded Practice as a Site of Socialization for Student Self-Monitoring

An important impact that VRP would most immediately have on the practice of clinical social work students is the cultivation of increased self-awareness and the capacity for self-observation directed towards self-improvement. The social event that is VRP requires the practitioner to change their stance, interest, and investment in their own performance by way of seeing themselves with the awareness of being seen by others, an experience described by sociologist James Cooley as the *looking glass self* (Cooley, 1922). Cooley (1922) brought attention to the idea that social life includes some awareness of how we might appear to others in a social situation, how we imagining others would react to or judge us for a particular behavior, and the sense of self we develop as a result of this awareness. The experience of being observed heightens our awareness of how we see ourselves as we are seen through the perception of others. The increased attention given to a clinical performance is likely to impact the performance in at least two ways. First, by knowing that I will at some point be observing my own performance, and that my performance will be observed by others, I will experience a heightened concern for, and attentiveness to, the quality of the performance itself. This heightened attentiveness a performance would occur as a result of my perceptions of what constitutes a *good performance*, which would likely be the result of my own biases and ideas about what makes for a good performance, as well as what I'd have learned constitutes effective clinical practice. Observation creates a social event in which the practitioner responsible for performing a competent intervention is now aware that they are expected to meet this performance standard. In this sense, being observed compels a clinician to perform better, and to develop an interest in their performance directed towards their own improvement, and to refine and develop what they perceive to be a standard for competent performance. Sociologically, if

the practice of being observed and observing oneself is rewarded, praised, and attributed with social and cultural capital, it would serve as the basis for the development of a *habitus* oriented towards being invested in the development and performance of clinical expertise. For the individual student, it is likely that being observed primes the practitioner to consider, and therefore be accountable to, the fidelity of the treatment they hope to deliver, and for which they are being assessed.

In my own clinical development, I have been observed in at least four different ways, all of which has led to experiences that strengthen my views around the usefulness of VRP. The first experience I had being observed was when I completed a brief video recorded practice session for a course assignment. The video was not observed by the professor, and did not result in direct feedback on my performance, but the fact that I knew I was documenting my performance itself brought into my awareness how I was performing in the session, as well as the overall purpose of the performance. This changed my stance towards my performance to one of greater critical self-awareness and attention to what I was doing, a stance that was more vigilant and attentive then is typical of a session in which I am not being observed or documented.

I have also been directly observed over multiple psychotherapy sessions by a supervisor and several other social workers who were behind a one way mirror. This experience was conducted during a post-graduate training fellowship I completed in the University of Michigan's Department of Psychiatry, where I currently work in a part time staff position. The observational approach the supervisor used involved watching actual therapy sessions behind a one way mirror, and sending periodic text messages to me via a pager. The overall effect of being observed in this way mostly resulted in a sense of nervousness and feeling somewhat lost during the session. I felt like I was under the direction of someone else, and found it strange and

disruptive to have my pager buzz loudly, have to look down to read the message, look back at the client, and then repeat the message to the client who had just observed me read the message someone else had sent to me. Instead of attending to my own performance, I developed a kind of passive attentiveness, where I was waiting for the next directive from my supervisor and trying to anticipate what they might *want* me to do next. This type of observation highlights why I believe the deliberate practice approach to VRP a more useful pedagogical tool for the development of clinical competencies, and additionally highlights how different observational strategies can have the trainee attend to different aspects of their practice, some being more helpful than others. Reflecting on the experience now, I would say that I was experiencing a type of identity nonverification insofar as some of the feedback, as well as the intrusive means by which it was being delivered, did not always seem like it was actually helpful to the client or the psychotherapeutic process. I often felt like those psychotherapy sessions were not being guided by me. That my own clinical style, knowledge, and intentions were being overridden by someone else's, forcing me to direct my attention towards anticipating what *they* might say next. The experience of being observed in that way resulted in what I believe is consistent with an experience of identity nonverification. I felt fairly *bad* about the experience overall in part because the experience of being observed was interpreted by myself as being mostly incongruent with my desire to *help* the client I was working with. Additionally, missing from that approach to observation was my ability to see myself performing, making the overall approach not what I consider to be the most effective strategy for the development of clinical competencies.

A more recent, and more helpful, type of clinical observation I experienced involved the use of transcriptions of actual psychotherapy sessions with a client. In support of my own development as a clinician, and to receive help with a challenging case, I paid a psychotherapist

with advanced training to provide consultation and feedback on how to work with a particularly challenging client. I was meeting with a client virtually, and the software we were using had a function that allowed for the real time creation of a transcription of our session via the closed caption function. This allowed for the real time documentation of the text of the session, which in turn allowed me to present excerpts of the session to the consultant and receive feedback and ideas about what I could improve or change for future sessions. In doing this I became aware that I would in some way be assessed by this consultant, and became oriented towards this awareness in a number of ways. I gave increasing attention to this client in a number of ways. I engaged in more planning activities, thinking about what I was going to do with this client in our upcoming sessions, attending to the type of intervention I hoped to use, and more critically considering how this intervention might be useful for this particular client. All of this labor that occurs outside of the actual session serves to cultivate a new *illusio* (Bourdieu, 2000), or an intrinsic interest and investment in a set of practices oriented towards the development of competencies meant to support effective clinical practice. Absent the development of a more enduring interest in this, social workers will be less likely to invest in activities that support their continual development. In this example, I specifically sought out and paid for a more experienced clinician to go over transcript excerpts and discuss strategies for more effectively working with this client and their particular presenting problems. This approach similarly directed my attention to my own clinical performance in ways which were informed by the treatment aims discussed in our supervisory sessions. This in turn provided a framework for future discussion of follow up sessions, as there was a coherent intervention and treatment rationale I was attempting to implement in order to address specific aspects of the presenting problems for this client. This strategy benefited from being grounded in my own clinical interests, and also due to the consultant being in a position of

offering a service to me whose aim was my own clinical development. Just as a VRP session primes the student to be attentive to their own performance, a paid consultant is similarly likely to provide greater attention to the supervision they provide.

4.11.3 Identity-Based Processes and the Implementing Video Recorded Practice (VRP)

There are a number of issues related to the benefits of video recorded practice being implemented into clinical social work curriculum which have yet to be explored. I believe that the impact of implementing VRP on social work students, their clients, and the social work faculty overseeing VRP assignments would be overwhelmingly positive in terms of the aims of clinical social work education. While social work students might initially experience nervousness and discomfort with having to watch themselves perform clinical skills, and be observed by others, these feelings would likely diminish rapidly just as it does with repeated attempts of any activity that is initially uncomfortable. Likewise, other students would also have to participate in these types of assignments, which would both normalize the activity as a common occurrence that *everyone* participates in, and also as a shared struggle and reference point for discussion. Ultimately, the desire to not be embarrassed would likely give way to the verification of the aspects of social worker identity social work programs should be highlighting—that of developing *helping skills*. By becoming socialized into the use of VRP, students would now have a learning context in which their identity based desire to develop and practice helping skills would be verified in the form of their own development and learning.

It is also worth noting that many of the objections to the use of video recorded practice are often the result of a clinician's discomfort with being observed more so than it is with the client's discomfort with being observed. I have found this to be the case when giving presentations to other clinicians on the use of Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT). FIT is a tool

for collecting feedback from clients about how they have experienced a psychotherapy session, and whether they felt heard and respected, were able to discuss topics of interest to them, and if the intervention approach was a good fit for them. When presenting the feedback questionnaire to other clinicians, the reluctance to collect this type of feedback almost always centers on expectations and assumptions about how the clinician thinks the client will respond to the measure. Clinical practitioners typically state that they fear the client won't be honest, or that it will be awkward to introduce the measure, or that it might lead to an uncomfortable conversation. One fully licensed therapist and supervisor of mine once said that she couldn't use this tool because she wasn't able to handle negative feedback. The reluctance to use this tool, despite the evidence demonstrating how important collecting client feedback is for psychotherapy outcomes (Duncan, 2012; Lambert et al., 2019), is, in my view, primarily the result of the psychotherapist's discomfort, and typically isn't due to a client's resistance or discomfort. Of course, there are cases in which a client refuses to be observed, and this is why clients have to consent to being observed. In my experience, clients are open to having sessions documented in some way, or having sessions observed for the purposes of supervision, particularly when they know that the purpose of recording and observing a session is to improve the treatment they are receiving.

Identity verification and nonverification will also raise issues with clinical social work faculty at the individual level. Anyone who is a psychotherapist knows that there are various schools of thinking represented across the field of mental health treatment and research which represent a range of theoretical, practical, and metatheoretical tensions and disagreements (Craciun, 2016, 2017; Wampold & Imel, 2015). These various disagreements are often deeply integrated into the identities of mental health practitioners and researchers, just as academics can

become highly invested in certain theoretical traditions and perspectives. Clinical social work faculty are members of particular theoretical "camps" that represent a perspective that is invested in specific assumptions about which psychotherapy modalities and theories are perceived as legitimate. These investments in turn will inform what priorities a faculty member might have regarding where resources should be allocated in terms of changes in course curriculum, as well as influence their relative openness and flexibility to certain perspectives over others. For example, psychoanalytically trained faculty would be more likely to hold certain investments in the training model they see as legitimate given their own clinical training and theoretical commitments. Psychoanalytic training typically requires that the trainee experiences several years of psychoanalysis themselves, a requirement that is unique to that psychotherapy modality. Within that school of psychotherapy, this practice is seen as legitimate, and is an "entry condition" (Bourdieu, 1984) to becoming a legitimate member of that particular field. The practice of becoming invested in the norms of a particular psychotherapy field will vary from faculty member to faculty member, even if certain schools will, at the level of the institution, likely gravitate towards hiring faculty who adhere to certain theoretical commitments over others that reflect the interests of the department at large. The point here is that implementing video recorded practice into a social work program will come up against the problem of identity verification and nonverification at the level of individual faculty members, who may or may not perceive this strategy for the development of clinical social work competencies as a preferred strategy for developing clinical skills. In fact, opening up the possibility of changing existing pedagogical practices could inspire others to introduce their own ideas about what they think should be changed about the teaching practices in their program. At the individual level, faculty members will likely seek to have their own academic and professional identities verified. This

could mean that faculty who experience video recorded practice as incongruent with their professional identities, could engage less enthusiastically in these assignments, or diminish their role in the classes they teach. Given the flexibility that faculty typically have in overseeing the design of their own courses, this outcome would be difficult to counteract. Addressing this issue would likely need to occur at the meso- and macro-level of a school of social work, as opposed to the individual level being discussed here.

4.11.4 Video Recorded Practice and Identity Verification in Groups

There are a number of meso-level considerations related to identity-based processes and the implementation of VRP as a tool for the development of clinical social work competencies that have yet to be explored in this chapter. Meso-level factors are often referred to as cultural, and typically refer to interactions that occur between individuals within smaller group settings, such as within a family, community, or workplace. Within the context of clinical social work education, this can include interactions between students, faculty and students, and amongst faculty, each of which represent sites for different interactions between identities. Each of the types of interactions identified above have so far remained unexamined, and represent limitations to this current study.

Of particular relevance to the implementation of VRP practice are issues that can arise as a result of interactions that occur between the identities of students within the classroom, as well as between the identities of faculty and students, also within the classroom. Specifically, implementing VRP assumes that the professional identities of faculty perceive VRP as (a) a legitimate and preferred approach to the development of social work competencies, and (b) consistent with the professional aims of the faculty member. Academic identities of faculty can vary significantly in terms of the specific content that is most salient for that identity. While

there are macro forces that can orient social work faculty identities in specific directions, such as towards applying for grants, conducting research, and publishing, there is some room for variation within departments of social work, which likely depends on both macro-structural factors, such as the size of the department, their rank amongst other social work programs, and the resources they have available, as well as the particular interests of the more dominant and influential faculty and administrators in a particular institution.

Some issues which could arise related to the identities of faculty would likely occur as a result of the particular “stakes” currently seen as legitimate for that faculty member’s career. Absent an institutional level interruption of the existing and recognized stakes that faculty pursue in order to experience verification of their professional identities, it is likely that some faculty would resist any attempts to redirect their time and energy towards the development and implementation of a pedagogical tool that requires significant resources, time, and training to effectively implement. This topic currently remains unexplored and reflects a limitation within the existing identity theory literature, and the dual process literature, which have prioritized understanding individual level factors important to social processes.

Additional meso-level factors that haven’t been considered so far in this chapter include how the various identities of students could interact with the identities of other students. Specifically, the issue of how to effectively navigate conversations about, and develop curriculum focused on, issues related to privilege and oppression is a currently unresolved tension within schools of social work. Twice I have been the instructor for a course titled “Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work”, with varying results. In speaking to other faculty who have also taught this course, it was clear that this course presented a number of different challenges to almost all of the instructors I spoke with. The challenges which can arise between

students, and between students and faculty, between faculty and the social work department, and between faculty and other faculty, can all be analyzed through the lens of identity theory, and the identity verification process more specifically. Specifically, one of the difficulties that was common across many of the sections of this course related to conflicts that arose as a result of all students wanting to have their identities verified within a context in which the identities standards between students could vary significantly. These differences could be understood as differences in beliefs, politics, or morality, all of which would present a particular challenge for identity theory. That is, how do issues of identity difference play out in the classroom, and what role does status and power have in the possibilities students experience in terms of their capacity to assert relevant aspects of their identities within these contexts? Further, how does the identity content (i.e., political beliefs) of faculty members, and their own need for identity verification, play into how their facilitation of conflicts that arise in the classroom?

The conflicts that could arise as a result of different moral and political identities that exist amongst students and faculty, and which are expressed during classroom activities, present a challenge which has not been explored so far in this chapter. It is currently unknown how different student identities which are conflicting are explained by the concept of identity verification and nonverification. What is known more generally within the identity theory literature is that negative emotions are typically experienced when important identities are nonverified, which could help to explain how conflicts between student identities, and between student and faculty identities, can rapidly escalate in terms of the affect and emotion involved in the positions being expressed. These issues would require further research and to be addressed in terms of how they could impact the use of video recorded practice within schools of social work.

4.12 Limitations

Recall that within the identity theory framework, identity verification is seen as a primary driver of social processes. In the context of social work practice, there is strong evidence for social worker identities being thematically concerned with the explicit aim of helping, a finding that is supported at the institutional level in the NASW code of ethics, in the practical role-level mandates required of the profession, and also in the self-reported possible social worker identities analyzed in the previous chapter. At the level of social work education, it is also likely that the development of helping skills is a primary identity-congruent aim for both social work students and social work faculty, as the educational aims are a logical consequence of the practical aims and mandates of the profession. However, the apparent parsimony in the explicit aims of social work practice and social work education is just as easily complicated by the fact that these aims are expressed at a high level of abstraction, represented as identity ideals which are subject to a range of obstacles to their realization and confirmation. As discussed above, there are a number of both implicit and explicit barriers to effective clinical practice, which in turn serve as obstacles to the development of clinical social work competencies. Importantly, absent from the discussion above is a more substantive discussion of the different ways in which the identities of the various actors within the social work education domain—students, clients, and faculty, for example—must also have to contend with different forces related to their own desires for identity verification.

Acknowledging the identities of actors beyond that of the student, which has so far been the primary "unit" of analysis in this and the previous chapters, highlights that fact that other actors could be analyzed in the same ways, and in terms of their interactions with one another. Identity theory typically treats identities as a perspective around which a given study is organized, an approach adopted in this dissertation. Specifically, identities reflect a particular

perspective, and a significant limitation of this dissertation is to have only studied and analyzed the identities of one of the actor-groups that comprise the domain of clinical social work education—that of the student. By doing so, this dissertation lacks substantive engagement with problems related to the identities of other actors that comprise the world of clinical social work practice, such as clients and faculty, for example. Additionally, lack of attention given to other social work actors has the consequence of presenting social work students as somewhat linear, as opposed to interactional. Identity interactions, however, look different depending on whose identities are considered as the perspective given primacy in the analysis of a social process.

The presumption in this chapter, and in this dissertation more generally, has been to treat the identities of social work students as the driver of social processes. Expanding the analysis to include an assessment of the ways in which identity interactions can occur between students and clients, students and other students, and students and instructors, provides for a more sociologically rich approach to this topic. As such, it is worth exploring in greater detail how the identities of clinical social work students, clients and faculty overseeing the use of VRP might be implicated in the implementation and use of VRP as a tool for the development of clinical social work competencies.

An additional limitation to assessing individual level identity content is the lack of accounting for power differentials that can occur as a result of differences in status, resource availability, and the role held within an institution. Student social workers can hold a form of clinical legitimacy in their role as practitioners with certain clients simply a result of their role within a practice organization. Other clients may be dismissive of a student social worker and reject the legitimacy of their role as someone capable of helping them. Both responses could be understood as an interaction between two incongruent identities seeking identity verification.

Likewise, interactions between social work students and faculty, clients, supervisors, and other students, all represent sites for the expression of different power dynamics which could result from a variety of sources, such as belonging to a marginalized identity or occupying a position of power within an institution. The limitations identified above represent opportunities for future research, as well as recognition of what remains unknown and unaddressed within this chapter.

Another consideration which hasn't been discussed in this chapter relates to an assumption within the identity theory framework, and which has so far remained uncritically accepted. Specifically, identity theory is predicated on the belief that individuals are primarily motivated to behave in ways that seek the confirmation of an active identity. At a meta-theoretical level, identity theory assumes that seeking to have one's identity verified is the primary driver of social processes. I will argue that there are a number of problems with this assumption by discussing identity confirmation as it relates to clinical social work students in the context of clinical social work education, and which can be illustrated by an examination of common experiences that occur in the context of clinical social work education.

From an identity theory perspective, social work students would be viewed as being motivated by the desire to have their identities verified. In the previous chapter it was found that social work students have an explicit social work identity centered on the theme of helping skills, which consisted of interpersonal engagement skills and culturally competent practice skills. Collectively, these skills reflect a salient identity for clinical social work students at the individual level. That these identities are likely salient and important is further supported by the fact that helping is an explicit aim of the social work profession, or what sociologists refer to as the obligations and "job description" that pertains to the role of being a social worker. If identity theory is correct, social work students with an identity centered on helping skills should be

motivated to verify that identity, especially within contexts in which that identity is active. Clinical social work education, as well as clinical social work practice, represent contexts in which being a social worker would plausibly cue a social worker identity.

However, the assumption that social work students will pursue behaviors that confirm this aspect of their identity is contradicted by findings in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, which found that social work students vary in their preferences for engaging in behaviors that support the development of an identity centered on helping skills. That is, it is clear that asking for help when struggling, or volunteering to demonstrate a newly learned technique, are behaviors that support the development of helping skills. Because students vary in the likelihood of engaging in these identity verifying behaviors, the question is why some students would pursue these identity verifying behavior while others would not?

This question raises a number of important issues which have yet to be fully addressed in either the identity theory or dual process theory literature. I can imagine a number of explanations for this contradictory finding. One explanation for why students might be reluctant to engage in learning behaviors that would otherwise verify important aspects of social work identity is because they also experience emotions that compel them to behave otherwise. That is, it was found that students with fewer social work related experiences were the ones who were less likely to engage in learning behaviors that subject students to the possibility of embarrassment or criticism from others. Asking for help when struggling and volunteering to perform a newly learned technique in front of class both involve opening oneself up to criticism from others. The desire to appear as competent, while thinking that one would not succeed in this goal, might lead students to avoid negative feelings based on an expectation that making mistakes or performing poorly will subject you to negative judgment or criticism.

A common example helps to illustrate this point. When a student experiences fear or embarrassment and chooses to avoid engaging in a learning behavior that would support the realization of an explicit identity centered on learning and practicing helping skills, how does identity theory explain this? This raises another question which remains unanswered so far within this chapter, and which is not fully accounted for in any of the frameworks discussed in this chapter. Specifically, to what degree and in what ways does the content of an identity consist of affect or emotion? Further, when an emotional reaction contradicts an active identity, is that emotional response also an identity, or something else? This problem was raised in conversation with a colleague of mine who argued that identities are entirely explicit. In his view, identities were only what someone held in their mind and were able to report or consciously think and report in a given moment. He seemed to be arguing that implicit, automatic, emotional responses occurring outside of conscious awareness were, by definition, not part of identity or self-concept. This presented a problem that I realized I hadn't fully explored, and which remains unanswered in the discussion of implicit barriers to clinical practice discussed above. I initially formulated that discussion around cognitive processes related to identity content, with implicit barriers consisting of some aspect of an identity. However, I eventually changed the language in that analysis to refer to implicit barriers in a more general sense that was not tied directly to the concept of identity. That is, the activation of *any* implicit automatic response that had the effect of being a barrier to clinical practice was what I shifted to focus on. This meant that the problem of needing to define if an identity can be conceptualized to consist of content that operates in part or entirely at the level of implicit automatic cognitive processes. My colleague seemed to believe this was not the case. Regardless, that question remains unanswered thus far in this chapter. In thinking about this question I was able to arrive at two answers to this problem. The first answer

is relatively straightforward, and maps directly onto the argument dual process theories have made regarding their analysis of cultural processes. This argument is compelling for several reasons. First, culture is a concept that is in many ways similar to, and overlaps significantly with, the concept of identity. That culture and identity are similar is supported by sociologist Ann Swidler's (2001) description of her own tool-kit theory of culture, which she describes as being linked to the concept of identity in fundamentally important ways. Swidler (2001) states:

> The model I propose might also be called an 'identity' model of how culture works. The fundamental notion is that people develop lines of action based on who they already think they are. This is true in two senses. First...actors' capacities shape the lines of action that they find possible and promising. The second sense in which mine is an identity-based model is that a great deal of culture operates by attaching meaning to the self. The term 'identity' usually implies a more unified self and a more inward-looking psyche than wish to evoke. (p. 87)

The difficulty distinguishing between identity and culture is also seen in Lizardo's (2017) description of what distinguishes "personal culture" and "public culture". Lizardo states that personal culture refers to "culture made manifest at the level of the individual", and that public culture refers to "culture externalized in the form of public symbols, discourses, and institutions" (p. 93). However, such a definition does little to clear up how identity and culture, or identity and personal culture, are analytically distinct concepts. The point here is to simply note that the dual process approach to understanding culture is equally applicable to identity, and therefore can serve as the basis for addressing my colleagues' argument that identities are what aspects of the self that occur entirely within the domain of explicit consciousness. We simply have to replace the term "culture" for "identity" and the framework provides us with an answer. Within the view

of dual process theory, identities would consist of nondeclarative, habitual, "know-how" at the implicit level, and declarative, discursive, "know that" at the explicit level. There is no reason why knowing how to be oneself is not as much of an identity as is knowing "that" about oneself. However, with this definition of identity it still remains unclear if emotional reactions that contradict an active identity are considered to be part of another identity, or simply the result of some other set of processes. Emotional and affective reactions can occur for a variety of reasons, and it seems implausible to me that every emotional reaction is tied to what should be considered an identity. In this sense, it is unlikely that a clear distinguishing line will always be identifiable between the concepts of identity, personal culture, culture, and emotional reactions, as they are both fuzzy categories, and they are also often interrelated and mutually influential.

A second possible answer to my colleague's argument that identities are, by definition, the aspects of self-concept which are held in explicit consciousness, is that he is in part correct. While I don't agree with the strict definition he had presented, I could see a definition of identity that defines what I would refer to as an identity-state. I include the term "state" to indicate that there are multiple ways in which an identity can be active and experienced, with one version of this being an identity-state that primarily refers to what someone reflects on, constructs in the moment, and is aware of regarding their sense of self. In this sense, I would agree that there are explicit identity-states that can be captured at a given moment, and that those states are primarily explicit, conscious, and discursive representations of who someone is at the moment they give language to an identity. What I like about this definition is its flexibility and recognition that identities are, in many ways, dynamically constructed in the moment in which they are invoked, and don't represent monolithic stable meanings across all contexts.

Finally, an additional limitation to the analysis provided in this chapter is the lack of attention given to the effects of having a video camera documenting a psychotherapy session. That is, how does the presence of a video recording device impact the behavior, identities, and state of mind of the clinician and client? While I have discussed the impact that the presence of a video recording device can have on a social work student's awareness of their own performance, I have not discussed how the presence of a video camera could impact the student in other ways. Further, I have not discussed how the presence of a video recording device might impact the behaviors and state of mind of the client. Studying the impact that the presence of a video recording device could have on the behavior and state of mind of those being video recorded presents a particularly difficult methodological challenge for this particular activity. To understand the impact that the presence of a video camera has on those being video recorded requires a comparison of how someone behaviors in each condition (i.e., video vs no video). However, documenting a psychotherapy session will almost always require the consent and knowledge of those being documented, making it difficult to document the different ways in which clients and clinicians behave in each condition. The best alternative would likely be to interview clients and clinicians about how they recall their experience in each condition, but this type of methodology is limited for reasons already discussed above. The impact of having a video recording device documenting a psychotherapy session will likely remain an area of research that cannot be adequately understood.

4.13 Developing a Deliberate Practice Approach to the use of VRP

Up to this point I have discussed issues related to the ways in which identity-based processes are implicated in the adoption of video recorded practice as a pedagogical tool for the development of clinical social work competencies. I will now provide some preliminary ideas for

how a social work educator might practically develop a more systematic approach to the use of VRP, using the deliberate practice framework as the basis for my recommendations.

A core problem for social work programs seeking to develop a more systematic and effective approach to the use of VRP practice as a pedagogical tool for the development of social work competencies is identifying and codifying *what they hope students will learn*. That is, absent a framework for knowing what they hope students will learn from observing their own performance, the use of VRP would remain a relatively unguided and less structured exercise. The deliberate practice framework directly addresses this problem both at the level of *general* psychotherapy competencies, and for the identification of competencies specific to a given psychotherapy modality.

The deliberate practice approach to psychotherapy education includes what is referred to as a Taxonomy of Deliberate Practice Activities (TDPA) that serves as a list of competencies a given deliberate practice approach should focus on. For a given set of learning goals, TDPAs are developed for both student/learners and supervisor/teachers. A TDPA is organized into broad thematic categories, each of which include specific activities and actions meant to capture a specific competency. Finally, for each set of actions the student/learner rates themselves in terms of their own current ability to competently perform that activity. This rating serves as the basis for their own learning and development. The TDPA is used as a self-rating system to assess current abilities in the specific skills identified within each competency domain.

For example, a TDPA for *general* psychotherapy skills includes five competency domains: (1) structure, (2) hope and expectancy, (3) working alliance, (4) client factors, and (5) therapist factors. Within each of these competency domains, the TDPA lists specific actions and activities meant to capture the basic elements that constitute competency in that domain. For

example, activities included within the skill domain of "Hope and Expectancy" include "How do you induct clients into therapy?" and "How do you convey a sense of confidence and belief in you and your treatment approach?" (Chow & Miller, 2020, p. 198). A self-assessment is then completed for each specific action, giving the student/learner a benchmark from which they can assess their development. A sample of a TDPA adapted from Miller et al. (2020, p. 197) for "The Hope and Expectancy Domain of Deliberate Practice Activities" is reproduced in the table below:

Table 4.3: TDPA for the Hope & Expectancy Domain of Deliberate Practice

Theme	**Activities**	**Current Rating (0 – 10)**
Hope & Expectancy	How do you induct clients into therapy?	
	A. How do you inform them about what to expect from one session to the next?	
	B. How do you explain your respective roles (e.g., client, therapist)?	
	How does the explanation you offer for your client's distress engender hope and expectation for change?	
	How do you persuade the client to have a favorable assessment and acceptance of your clinical rationale and related techniques?	

	How do you adapt your treatment rationale to foster client engagement and hope?	
	How do you communicate a hopeful and optimistic stance toward your client and their problem/concerns?	

There are currently fully developed TDPAs for a range of psychotherapy modalities and skill domains, including Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) (Goldman et al., 2021), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DPT) (Boritz et al., 2022), multicultural psychotherapy (Joel et al., 2023), Schema Therapy (Behary et al., 2023), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) (Boswell & Constantino, 2021; Maor et al., 2023), Psychodynamic Psychotherapy (Levenson et al., 2023), Motivational Interviewing (MI) (Knapp et al., 2022), and general psychotherapy competencies (Miller et al., 2020), for example. The deliberate practice model of training provides a starting point for social work programs interested in developing a more systematic, measurable, competency based approach to clinical social work education. Social work schools would simply need to decide which psychotherapy skills and modalities they wanted to emphasize in their programs. It is already true that every psychotherapy modality cannot be covered within a given social work program. The organizational task for social work programs would be to select from the above list of deliberate practice TDPAs, and begin to use the list skills identified as the starting point for the analysis of VRP. The ability to revise and tailor a given TDPA to the needs of a given social work program or specific course makes their integration into existing VRP curricula a relatively straightforward process.

Finally, the deliberate practice approach to engaging in VRP discussed above can be integrated with the DPMI already outlined in this chapter. Built in to the deliberate practice approach to competency development are opportunities for discussing and identifying implicit and explicit barriers to the competent delivery of the skills identified in the TDPA. Importantly, these barriers will be idiosyncratic to the specific student, and therefore require deeper reflection on the part of the student. The TDPA simply provides a clear framework for identifying which skills are important to develop, which in turn allows for the identification of whatever implicit and explicit barriers to the competent delivery of those skills might be occurring for a specific student. The DPMI simply allows for the social work educator or researcher to more clearly identify if a barrier is implicit or explicit, allowing for the use of corrective measures aligned with the type of barrier identified (i.e., explicit or implicit).

4.14 Conclusion

The aims of this chapter have been to review the strengths and limitations of Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT) and identity theory, develop a synthetic framework that draws on the strengths of each approach, and apply that framework to an empirical domain relevant to clinical social work education. The Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) I have proposed incorporates the nuanced analytic framework for understanding implicit and explicit cognitive processes developed within the SDPT literature, as well as the developed account of interactive identity-based processes provided by the identity theory framework. I have addressed the limitations to the use of psychological reductive measures, in the case of SDPT, by including *observational data* of situated actions, and of the use of explicit self-report measures within the identity theory framework, by bringing attention to both the implicit and explicit aspects of identity content.

Further, identity based processes related to the implementation of VRP into social work curriculum highlight a number of benefits and challenges which might occur for students, faculty and clients. I have argued that the benefits outnumber the drawbacks, and include a more effective approach to developing clinical skills, the potential instilling of more enduring intrinsic interest in learning and development at the level of students, the development of more effective teaching skills at the level of faculty, and the benefits to clients that result from increased attention given to their presenting problems.

Finally, I have noted several areas for future research and a number of limitations to this current study, including the lack of data collected on individuals other than students who comprise the domain of social work practice, the interactions which can occur between those actors, and some of the problematic assumptions made within the identity theory framework.

Chapter 5 General Discussion of Findings and Implications for Future Research

Developing social work competencies is a central concern of the social work profession and social work education. Despite this, social work education researchers have yet to pursue studies that focus on a range of factors important to the development of social work competencies. Specifically, multiple theories of identity suggest that the identities of learners are important in predicting learning outcomes, grades, class attendance, motivation to persist in the face of effort, preferences for learning goals vs performance goals, and other motivational processes that have been shown to support or impede educational success.

This dissertation makes three substantive contributions to the social work education literature. In Chapter 2, using multiple linear and logistic regression analysis, I examine the relationship between clinical social work students' mindsets and the following learning orientation outcome variables of interest: (a) the likelihood of asking for help when struggling, (b) preferences for learning goals vs performance goals, and (c) the likelihood of volunteering to demonstrate a newly learned skill in front of class. Research on mindsets suggests that performance goals are more likely to be preferred by those with a fixed mindset and learning goals more likely to be preferred by those with a growth mindset (Grant & Dweck, 2003). The third outcome measure was developed for this study and was predicated on the assumption that those who preferred learning goals over performance goals would also be more likely to volunteer to demonstrate a newly learned clinical skill in one of their classes. Collectively, the three outcome measures reflect important learning preferences relevant to social work education

and the development of clinical social work competencies. Analysis found that mindset scores were not predictive of any of the outcomes assessed in the study, a finding that could be due to issues related to construct validity for the mindset measure. There were no previous mindset measures for psychotherapists or clinical social workers, making the task of developing a mindset measure for this study an inferential process. The two skills which seemed both foundational and generic to being a clinical social worker were *empathy* and *listening*, a choice that was coincidentally confirmed in the thematic analysis of possible identities conducted in Chapter 3. However, the choice of *empathy* and *listening* may have been too specific and evoked in the minds of respondents something other than what the measure was intended to assess--what social work students consider to be a general representation of what makes for a competent and effective social worker. It is possible that a mindset measure that asks participants to respond to questions at a more general level, such as, "The ability *to be a clinical social worker* is something you can't change", would have greater construct validity. Future research could explore and assess variations on this question to identify if *empathy* and *listening* have construct validity as an assessment of social worker ability. It is also possible that mindsets are poor predictors of learning outcomes, a finding that has gained recent support (Macnamara & Burgoyne, 2023).

Despite the lack of findings related to mindset scores, this chapter contributes to the social work education literature by identifying other significant predictors for all of the outcomes assessed in the study. These findings confirm that social work student characteristics are predictive of students' self-reported orientations towards preferences and behaviors important to the development of social work competencies, including race, gender, age, prior social work related experiences, and undergraduate major. Findings from this study suggest that social work

students who have had fewer social work related experiences prior to starting their social work program, may benefit from additional attention focused on increasing their willingness to engage in learning experiences that might initially be perceived as risky, such as volunteering to demonstrate a newly learned skill in class, or asking their supervisors for help when struggling, due to their perceived lack of social work experience. Social work education researchers could study whether these same characteristics have longer term effects on learning and the development of social work competencies, increased rates of dropout, lower grades, or other difficulties within social work programs, or if these differences resolve over the course of their educational experiences. In short, findings from this chapter support the general contention of this dissertation: *that studying social work students represents an important gap in the social work education literature*.

Chapter 3 contributes to the social work education literature by way of a qualitative thematic analysis of the *possible social work identities* of a sample of clinical social work students. This chapter begins to address the current absence of literature on clinical social work student identities, and the identities of mental health practitioners more broadly (Crits-Christoph & Mintz, 1991; Orlinksy & Rønnestad, 2005). Currently, no existing research has been completed on the possible identities of social work students, social workers, or mental health practitioners. This study also contributed to the social work educational literature by advancing future research on the possible identities of clinical social workers. Possible identities measures are typically analyzed using previously developed thematic categories for coding purposes (Oyserman, 2018). However, prior research on possible identities has primarily been used to assess the possible identities of high- and middle-school students, which has led to the development of a standardized coding scheme. This study contributes the first attempt at

identifying themes for the possible identities of clinical social work students, which can now serve as the basis for coding in future research on the possible identities of clinical social work students and clinical practitioners. Chapter 3 also contributes to the social work education literature by identifying two of three factors of the three factors known to predict the likelihood that a possible identity will influence behaviors directed towards the realization of a desired possible identity. The three factors include: (a) *balance* between positive and negative possible identities (Oyserman & Markus, 1990); (b) contextual *cues* that bring to mind domain congruent possible identities (Oyserman et al., 2006); and (c) greater specificity and frequency of *elaborations*, or stated actions, identified to actively support the realization of a possible identity (Oyserman et al., 2006).

This study provides initial data on both the type and frequency of elaborations for clinical social work students, as well as the finding of *balance* for the primary positive and negative themes identified in the study. These included the positive theme of *helping skills*, with sub-themes for *interpersonal engagement skills* and *cultural engagement skills*; and negative themes for *causing harm*, with sub-themes for *harmful action states* and *cultural disengagement*. Balance has been shown to increase the motivational force of a possible identity, as they both support the same goal, which in this case is being *helpful*. Elaborations identified for the theme of *helping skills* included actions such as "listening", "empathy", being "open minded", and "compassionate", for example. This finding lends support to the possibility that the *helping skills* identity could serve as an important source of motivation within the context of clinical social work education. While it may seem self-evident that a social work student is motivated by a desire to help others, the point here is whether that identity can serve as an enduring source of motivation for the development of clinical social work competencies when students experience

difficulties, efforts, and setbacks in their learning. It is not enough to value helping *outside* of the circumstances in which helping is needed, or when the development of a skill requires effort. Possible identities provide one strategy for social work educators and social work education researchers to better understand and more effectively address motivational barriers to effective social work education. In short, possible social work identities can serve to inoculate and support resilience in students against the negative effects of difficult, setbacks, and obstacles experienced during their education, and support their desire to persist, grow, and learn *as social workers*. Additionally, the elaborations identified in this chapter highlight that establishing a strong interpersonal relationship and engaging in culturally competent practice are core features of the ideal social work student identity. Collectively, the themes, sub-themes, and elaborations reported reflect a core social worker future self-rooted in a concern for developing interpersonal engagement skills. Importantly, these actions and themes are also key predictors of clinical outcomes and central to establishing a strong therapeutic alliance (Norcross & Lambert, 2019; Wampold & Imel, 2015).

Chapter 4 makes contributions to the identity theory (Burke & Stets 2022), SDPT, and social work education literature. The first contribution of this chapter consists of a critical review of the strengths and limitations of the identity theory and Sociological Dual Process Theory (SDPT) literature. Strengths of identity theory center on accounting for identity-based processes as they unfold dynamically and interactively over the course of a social process. This includes attention to interactive processes that occur between identities *within* the same individual, an identity and the context in which that identity is active, and dynamically in response to changes that occur over the course of a social process. Theoretically, identity theory describes a well-articulated account of *situated action*. However, at the level of measurement, identity theory

relies almost exclusively on self-report measures, which conflate *what people say* for actual behaviors (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). Further, by relying on self-report measures, identity theory has primarily captured *explicit* measures of identity, leaving *implicit* aspects of identity largely unexamined.

SDPT, in contrast, has what I consider to be the most developed account of cognitive processes within the sociological literature to date. Strengths of the SDPT literature include the articulation of an analytic framework for explaining and understanding the distinct characteristics, operation, and memory states that distinguish implicit and explicit cognitive processes (Lizardo et al., 2016; Lizardo, 2019). A limitation of SDPT includes the use of psychological reductive measures that reflect the "normal science" aims of the discipline of cognitive psychology, which seek to maximally *reduce* the influence of dynamic and interactive features of social processes so as to isolate the operation of specific cognitive processes. Sociologists, in contrast, or typically interested in examining cognitive processes as they operate *within* contexts, and in response to the dynamics of situated action (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). By adopting measures inspired by the Implicit Association Test (IAT), for example, sociologists have replicated the limitations of those measures, which are ill suited for the analysis of more complex social processes, a limitation acknowledged by the founders of the IAT measure itself (Greenwald et al., 2022).

I then proposed an integrative framework to address the limitations and incorporate the strengths of identity theory and SDPT. This Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI) contributed to the identity theory literature by acknowledging that identity content can exist at both an *implicit* and *explicit* level of cognitive processing, each of which is dissociable from the other. Further, such a framework would need to include observational data in order to observe identity-

based and cognitive processes *as they occurred* within the context of situated action. Including observational data allows for the identification of a range of implicit cognitive processes which are not captured in the time-based computer assisted measures such as those used by Moore (2017), or the survey measures used by Vaisey (2009). I referred to this as a Dual Process Model of Identity (DPMI), which argued for the use of self-report measures in a confirmatory or complementary capacity to observational data. This expanded the narrower and reductive ways in which implicit cognitive processes had been measured within the SDPT literature, which had failed to rely on measurement approaches that accounted for *observable* nondeclarative expressions. By prioritizing self-report measures (Vaisey, 2009), or computer assisted time-based measures (Moore, 2017), SDPT researchers had left out an important expression of implicit cognitive processing.

The benefits of the DPMI are then explored as a tool for identifying implicit barriers to effective clinical social work practice. By acknowledging that identity content can be active at both implicit nondeclarative, and explicit declarative, levels of cognitive processing, this opens up the possibility that explicit identity content *and* implicit cognitive processes can occur simultaneously, and that they don't necessarily have to be congruent with one another. This highlights an important contribution of this framework for social work education—that *explicit* identities oriented around developing *helping skills*, such as those identified in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, can be interrupted by the activation of automatic incongruent affect or emotion. That is, the capacity for a social worker to practice effectively is likely to be negatively impacted when they are also experiencing the implicit activation of frustration, anger, fear, or shame, for example. Three implicit barriers to effective clinical practice are identified as a starting point for

future research aimed at studying how the explicit desire to help can interact with implicit barriers to effective clinical practice.

Finally, I explore the implications of identity theory for the implementation of VRP into schools of social work. Specifically, I discuss ways in which the identities of social work students, faculty, and administrators could impact, and be impacted by, the implementation of VRP into social work curriculum and explore how these issues are implicated at different levels of social analysis. I also argue that implementing VRP has benefits that I believe outweigh the possible costs, including the possibility of cultivating an intrinsic *interest* to continue learning and developing *as a social worker*.

VRP is likely to have the effect of inoculating students to the experience of both observing and receiving critical feedback on their performance, which is likely to be an initially uncomfortable experience. Being able to observe oneself and receive feedback on one's performance is one of the most effective means for the development of clinical expertise (Rousmaniere, 2017). Benefits also extend across the different identity orientations students could have towards their social work careers. Students who see being a social worker as a profession, or are motivated by following rules, or who seek lifelong learning and growth, would all benefit from VRP. Those who might initially be averse to intensive learning, would have an opportunity to develop a greater sense of intrinsic motivation to learn and grow due to the effects that can occur as a result of the formal or informal "entry conditions" of a field. That is, sociologically speaking, if VRP is established as a standard required practice within the context of clinical social work education, there is an argument to make that students will correspondingly develop not only a greater sense of intrinsic interest in continued growth and learning, but they will now also have one of the more effective tools in their repertoire of practices capable of

supporting that outcome. Schools who do implement this as standard practice will also likely produce students with a greater level of comfort and skill then students who had not had the same experience. These types of socialization experiences often occur implicitly and become incorporated at the level of *habitus*, in the felt sense a student has for what the legitimate and valued stakes are within their field. Developing a more enduring orientation towards growth and the development of competencies could also potentially last beyond the time in their programs, and prove beneficial across their careers and as a tool which could be incorporated in their places of work.

Future social work education research could benefit from studying the role that student characteristics have in influencing the development of social work competencies, and give particular attention to students who enter social work programs with few social work related experiences. Social work educators, in contrast, could incorporate teaching strategies that directly engage with the barriers to learning that these populations might face. Limitations to this study include the possible lack of construct validity of the mindset measure used for the assessment of social work related abilities, as well as the possibility that mindsets are simply not a valid predictor of learning behaviors within the context of social work education.

Future research on possible identities could develop educational interventions focused on the three factors known to increase the likelihood of students engaging in behaviors that support the realization of a possible identity, including (a) working with students to identify a more rich set of *elaborations* (i.e., actions) that support the realization of a social work possible identity; and (b) identifying strategies to more effectively *cue* the *helping* possible identity as well as the to-be-avoided *causing harm* possible identity. Given that the desired and to be avoided possible identities are already “balanced” (i.e., mutually supportive of the same goal of being helpful),

this predictive factor is already established. Additionally, research focused on the development of clinical social work competencies could incorporate a possible identities measure to assess if they play a role in measurable educational outcomes.

5.1 Sample

The sample of study participants included in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this dissertation consisted of first year clinical social work students at a large Midwestern University. While the response rate and sample size for Chapter 2 was sufficient for quantitative statistical analysis, the sample could have benefited from a larger representation for male participants, ethnic and racial minorities, non-binary, transgender, and other gender minority participants, as well as participants with undergraduate degrees in non-social work related fields. Of note is the disproportionately lower number of male identified students in the social work student population, and profession more broadly, which was reflected in the sample for both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Specifically, the representation of ethnic and racial minority students at the undergraduate level for the year closet to when data for this study was collected was 12.3%, and 15% at the graduate level. Additionally, the class composition of undergraduate students is not representative of the general population, with the annual family income of 69% of in-state students and 84% of out-of-state students being over $100,000. Similarly, within the School of Social Work, the most recent data indicates that the overall social work student population is primarily White (63%) and female (83%). Understanding the processes involved in establishing and maintaining the over representation of female identified students in social work education programs represents another topic for future research, and which could contribute to the already existing literature on gender based self-selection in other contexts (Cech, 2013; Charles & Bradley, 2009).

5.2 Limitations and Future Directions

A number of limitations have been discussed above and will be summarized here. First, this dissertation primarily focuses on *individual* level cognitive and identity-based processes, leaving the role of meso- and macro-level factors in the formation, cueing, and maintenance of identities unexamined. Second, Chapter 2 and 3 of this dissertation rely on self-report measures, which, as was argued in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, do not capture actual behaviors or the use of identities or culture *for action*. My recommendation for future research is to address this problem in at least one of two ways: by (1) including *any* form of observational data, such as was suggested in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. This could include ethnography, participant observation, focus groups, the use of controlled scenarios in a laboratory type setting, or, as I suggested, the use of video recordings; or (2) use self-report measures which have been shown to be reliable predictors of behavior in previous research. In this sense the data collected is a measure of *explicit* deliberate cognitive processes, which can often diverge from how people actually behave. Further, explicit self-report measures also fail to capture identity-based processes as they occur over the course of social process. This means that the range of interactive processes which reflect the dynamic and situated nature of social action remain largely unexamined in the actual empirical studies discussed in this dissertation, even if it was one of the recommendations identified in Chapter 4. The discussion of identity theory was also hindered by uncritically accepting the theoretical commitment that identity verification is a primary driver of social action, which presents an overly simplistic and untested understanding of human motivation that could have obscured other potentially valid explanations of human motivation.

Another issue which has not been discussed in this dissertation, and which reflects an important limitation to the studies presented above, is the incorporation of critical theory. Feminist theory, decolonial theory, and standpoint theory, for example, offer a critical lens for

examining the historical relations of power which have privileged certain modes of knowledge acquisition, categories of thought, and experiences in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Collins (1992), for example, develops a critique of the historically structuralist theoretical paradigm within the discipline of sociology, which has historically marginalized the experiences and perspectives of those with social identities who have existed "outside" of the inner circle of sociological thought. With the development of postructuralist theory, Collins (1992) notes, "sociological interpretations of social reality have been challenged forcefully by people of color, women, gays and lesbians, and other historically marginalized" (p. 73). The social sciences are not, as they are often presented, a value-neutral and purely objective enterprise. Despite the recognition within postructuralist theory that marginalized groups have largely been left out of the "inner circle" of sociology, the field itself continues to reproduce and protect its historically established boundaries. Collins (1992) highlights these larger points by reviewing the contributions of sociologist Dorothy Smith, whose work has introduced the perspective of "women to challenge male-centered knowledge" (p. 74). Importantly, Smith was interested in developing "a sociology *for* women, not a sociology *about* women" (74). Smith's approach to sociology recognizes that the scientific pursuit of knowledge impacts different groups in different ways, making a researcher's choice of *what* to study a political act.

Similarly, in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith develops a decolonial framework for conducting research that accounts for some of the issues highlighted by Collins. Specifically, Smith (1999) argues that research should start with a critical examination of *who* (i.e., which research communities) are involved in deciding *what* topics are going to be studied, and to what end? Smith is part of an indigenous Maori community in New Zealand, and has witnessed and experienced exploitation by Western researchers who

typically pursued their own agendas and interests. Smith sees the decolonization of research practices as beginning to address this by centering the perspectives and interests of the populations being studied. For Smith (1999), a decolonized methodology would start by asking: "Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will the results be disseminated?" (p. 10).

Both Collins (1992) and Smith (1999) highlight the political nature of research, and in doing so recognize that the perspectives, experiences, and interests of certain groups have been historically absent within mainstream social science research, including the research conducted for this dissertation. The implications of these frameworks suggest a number of recommendations for future research. For example, in this dissertation I have uncritically assumed that developing institutionally designated social work competencies is a research priority. In doing so, I have adopted the perspective of the dominant institutions and perspectives within the social work field. A framework that incorporates the suggestions of Collins (1992) and Smith (1999) might start by asking social work students what their learning priorities are and why? It is likely that social work students from different social identity groups would express different learning priorities based on the populations they hope to serve and their own salient identities. Future social work education research informed by the questions and frameworks outlined above would provide a concrete opportunity for social work researchers to address issues related to privilege, oppression, and social justice, all of which are explicitly stated values within the social work profession. In short, there are significant opportunities for incorporating decolonial and standpoint theoretical approaches into future social work education research

which is focused on the ways in which social work student identities shape social work education.

5.3 Concluding Comment

This dissertation provides support to the claim that aspects of clinical social worker identity are worthy of greater attention within the social work education literature. If the development and maintenance of clinical social work competencies is both an ethical and professional mandate of the social work profession, this mandate should reflect a corresponding interest in the individual level factors that support effective clinical practice, the development of clinical competencies, and a general orientation towards growth and learning. These individual level factors should be supported by additional attention given to the development of contexts and practices, such as Video Recorded Practice sessions, which are supported at the level of social work institutions. While this dissertation has focused primarily on the role that identity and identity-based processes have for social work students, these same processes are implicated at all levels of social work education and practice. Social work education researchers interested in competency development could benefit from giving further attention to implicit and explicit identity-based processes, and in particular using VRP as a site for the studying of how these processes can serve to address barriers to effective clinical practice, as well as support an orientation towards learning and growth.

Works Cited

Abell, N., & McDonell, J. R. (1990). Preparing for practice: Motivations, expectations and aspirations of the MSW class of 1990. *Journal of Social Work Education, 26*(1), 57–64.

Abergil, M., & Tishby, O. (2022). Countertransference Awareness and Treatment Outcome. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 69*(5), 667–677.

Altschul, I., Oyserman, D., & Bybee, D. (2008). Racial-ethnic self-schemas and segmented assimilation: Identity and the academic achievement of Hispanic youth. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 71*(3), 302–320.

Armstrong, E.A., Hamilton, L., & Sweeney, B. (2006). Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multi-level, Integrative Approach to Party Rape. *Social Problems, 53*, 483–499.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Freeman.

Barnett, M.D., Hernandez, J., & Melugin, P.R. (2019). Influence of Future Possible Selves on Outcome Expectancies, Intended Behavior, and Academic Performance. *Psychological Reports, 122*(6), 2320–2330.

Behary, W.T., Farrell, J.M., Vaz, A., & Rousmaniere, T. (2023). *Deliberate practice in schema therapy*. *Essentials of deliberate practice series*. American Psychological Association.

Beidas, R. S., & Kendall, P. C. (2010). Training Therapists in Evidence-Based Practice: A Critical Review of Studies From a Systems-Contextual Perspective. *Clinical psychology : a publication of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association*, *17*(1), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2850.2009.01187.x

Bellamy, J.L., Mullen, E.J., Satterfield, J.M., Newhouse, R.P., Ferguson, M., Brownson, R.C., Spring, B. (2013). Implementing Evidence-Based Practice Education in Social Work: A Transdisciplinary Approach. *Research on Social Work Practice, 23*(4), 426–436.

Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: transforming the debate on sexual inequality.* Yale University Press.

Biddle, B.J. (1986). Recent development in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 12*, 67–92.

Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development, 78*, 246–263.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Prentice-Hall.

Bogo, M. (2010). *Achieving competence in social work through field education.* University of Toronto Press.

Bogo, M., Katz, C.E., & Rawlings, M. (2014). *Using simulation in assessment and teaching: OSCE adapted for social work.* Council on Social Work Education, Inc.

Bogo, M., Katz, E., Regehr, C., Logie, C., Mylopoulos, M., & Tufford, L. (2013). Toward understanding meta-competence: An analysis of students' reflections on their simulated interviews. *Social Work Education, 32*(2), 259–273.

Bogo, M., Raphael, D., & Roberts, R. (1993). Interests, Activities, and Self-Identification Among Social Work Students. *Journal of Social Work Education, 29*(3), 279–292.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford University Press.

Boutyline, A. & Soter, L.K. (2021). Cultural Schemas: What They Are, How to Find Them, and What to Do Once You've Caught One. *American Sociological Review, 86*(4), 728–758.

Boritz, T., McMain, S., Vaz, A., & Rousmaniere, T. (2022). *Deliberate practice in dialectical behavior therapy*. American Psychological Association.

Brenner, P.S., & DeLamater, J. (2016). Lies, Damned Lies, and Survey Self-Reports? Identity as a Cause of Measurement Bias. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 79*(4), 333–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272516628298

Brenner, P.S., Serpe, R.T., & Reed, T.L. (2023). Assessing and Improving Measures of Identity Salience. In J.E. Stets, A.V. Reichelmann, & K.J. Kiecolt (Eds.), *Advancing Identity Theory, Measurement, and Research* (pp. 59–77). Springer.

Brenner, P.S., Serpe, R.T., & Stryker, S. (2014). The Causal Ordering of Prominence and Salience in Identity Theory: An Empirical Examination. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 77*(3), 231–252.

Brenner, P.S., Serpe, R.T., & Stryker, S. (2018). Role-specific Self-efficacy as Precedent and Product of the Identity Model. *Sociological Perspectives, 61*(1), 57–80.

Brownson, R.C., Proctor, E.K., Luke, D.A., Baumann, A.A., Staub, M., Brown, M.T., & Johnson, M. (2017). Building capacity for dissemination and implementation research: one university's experience. *Implementation Science, 12*(104), 1–12.

Burke, P.J. (1989). Academic Identity and Race Differences in Educational Aspirations. *Social Science Research, 18*, 136–150.

———. 1991. Identity Processes and Social Stress. *American Sociological Review, 56*, 836–849.

———. 2003. Relationships Among Multiple Identities. In P.J. Burke, T.J. Owens, R.T. Serpe, & P.A. Thoits (Eds.), *Advances in Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 195–216). Kluwer.

Burke, P.J., & Stets, J.E. (2022). *Identity Theory: Revised and Expanded* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Burnette, J.L., Knouse, L.E., Vavra, D.T., O'Boyle, E., & Brooks, M.A. (2020). Growth mindsets and psychological distress: A meta-analysis. *Clinical psychology review*, *77*, 101816. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101816

Burnette, J.L., O'Boyle, E.H., VanEpps, E.M., Pollack, J.M., & Finkel, E.J. (2013). Mind-Sets Matter: A Meta-Analytic Review of Implicit Theories and Self-Regulation. *Psychological Bulletin, 139*(3), 655–701.

Butler, A. C. (1990). A reevaluation of social work students' career interests. *Journal of Social Work Education, 26*(1), 45–56.

Butler, A. C. (1992). The attractions of private practice. *Journal of Social Work Education, 28*(1), 47–60.

Carr, P.B., Rattan, A., & Dweck, C.S. (2012). Implicit Theories Shape Intergroup Relations. In P. Devine & A. Plant (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 45, pp. 127–165). Elsevier Science & Technology. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-394286-9.00003-2.

Castonguay, L.G., Boswell, J.F., Constantino, M.J., Goldfriend, M.R., & Hill, C.E. (2010). Training Implications of Harmful Effects of Psychological Treatments. *American Psychologist, 65*(1), 34–49.

Cech, E.A. (2013). The Self-Expressive Edge of Occupational Sex Segregation. *American Journal of Sociology, 119*(3), 747–789.

Cerulo, K.A. (2010). Mining the Intersections of Cognitive Sociology and Neuroscience. *Poetics, 38*, 115–132.

Charles, M., & Bradley, K. (2009). Indulging Our Gendered Selves? Sex Segregation by Field of Study in 44 Countries. *American Journal of Sociology, 114*(4), 924–976.

Chiu, C., Dweck, C.S., Tong, J.Y., & Fu, J.H. (1997). Implicit Theories and Conceptions of Morality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*(5), 923–940.

Chow, D., Miller, S. D., & Hubble, M.A. (2020). *Better Results: Using Deliberate Practice to Improve Therapeutic Effectiveness*. American Psychological Association.

Cologon, J., Schweitzer, R. D., King, R., & Nolte, T. (2017). Therapist reflective functioning, therapist attachment style and therapist effectiveness. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health, 44*(5), 614–625. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-017-0790-5

Conway, M. A., & Pleydell-Pearce, C. W. (2000). The construction of autobiographical memories in the self-memory system. *Psychological review*, *107*(2), 261–288. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.107.2.261

Cooley, C.H. (1922). *Human nature and the social order*. C. Scribner's sons.

Costa., A., & Faria, L. (2018). Implicit Theories of Intelligence and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 1–16.

Council on Social Work Education. (2008). Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Revised March 27, 2010 / Updated August 2012.

Craciun, M. (2016). The Cultural Work of Office Charisma: Maintaining Professional Power in Psychotherapy. *Theory and Society, 45*(4)*,* 361–383.

Craciun, M. (2017). Time, Knowledge, and Power in Psychotherapy: A Comparison of Psychodynamic and Cognitive Behavioral Practices. *Qualitative Sociology, 20*(2)*,* 165–190.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299.

Crits-Christoph, P., & Mintz, J. (1991). Implications of Therapist Effects for the Design and Analysis of Comparative Studies of Psychotherapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 59*(1), 20–26.

D'Andrade, R. (1991). The identification of schemas in naturalistic data. In M. Horowitz, & M. Horowitz (Eds.), *Person schemas and maladaptive interpersonal patterns* (pp. 279–301). University of Chicago Press.

Dang, J., King, K. M., & Inzlicht, M. (2020). Why Are Self-Report and Behavioral Measures Weakly Correlated?. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, *24*(4), 267–269.

Danso, R. (2015). An integrated framework of critical cultural competence and anti-oppressive practice for social justice social work research. *Qualitative Social Work, 14*, 572–588.

Danso, R. (2018). Cultural competence and cultural humility: A critical reflection on key cultural diversity concepts. *Journal of Social Work, 18*(4), 410–430.

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Bantam Classic.

Duncan, B. (2012). The Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS): The Heart and Soul of Change Project. *Canadian Psychology, 53*(2), 93–104.

Dweck, C. S. (1999). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Dweck, C. S. (2008). Can personality be changed? The role of beliefs in personality and change. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*(6), 391–394. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2008.00612.x

Dweck, C. S., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (1995). Implicit theories and their role in judgments and reactions: A world from two perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry, 6*(4), 267–285. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0604_1

Edmunds, J.M., Beidas, R.S., & Kendall, P.C. (2013). Dissemination and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices: Training and Consultation as Implementation Strategies. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 20*(2), 152–165.

Elliot, R., Bohart, A.C., Watson, J.C., Greenberg, L.S., and Murphy, D. (2019). Empathy. In J.C. Norcross & M.J. Lambert (Eds.), *Psychotherapy Relationships That Work* (2nd ed.,Vol. 1) (pp. 245–287). Oxford University Press.

Elmore, K. C., & Oyserman, D. (2012). If 'we' can succeed, 'I' can too: Identity-based motivation and gender in the classroom. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 37*(3), 176–185.

Ericsson, K. A. (2003). Development of elite performance and deliberate practice: An update from the perspective of the expert performance approach. In J. L. Starkes & K. A. Ericsson (Eds), *Expert Performance in Sports: Advances in Research on Sport Expertise*. Human Kinetics.

Ericsson, K. A. (2004). Deliberate practice and the acquisition and maintenance in medicine and related domains: Invited address. *Academic Medicine, 79*, S70–S81.

Ericsson, K. A. (2008). Deliberate practice and acquisition of expert performance: A general overview. *Academic Emergency Medicine, 15*, 988–994.

Fillmore, C. J. (1976). Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 280*(1), 20-32.

Fisher-Borne, M., Cain, J. M., & Martin, S. L. (2015). From mastery to accountability: Cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence. *Social Work Education, 34*, 165–181.

Forsetlund, L., O'Brien, M. A., Forsén, L., Reinar, L. M., Okwen, M. P., Horsley, T., & Rose, C. J. (2021). Continuing education meetings and workshops: effects on professional practice and healthcare outcomes. *The Cochrane database of systematic reviews*, *9*(9), CD003030. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD003030.pub3

Foster, R. (2010). *Ballet Pedagogy*. University Press of Florida.

Frye, M. (2014). Bright Futures in Malawi's New Dawn: Educational Aspirations as Assertions of Identity. *American Journal of Sociology, 117*(6), 1565–1624.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Prentice-Hall.

Gawronski, B., Sherman, J.W., & Trope, Y. (2014). Two of What? A Conceptual Analysis of Dual-Process Theories. In J.W. Sherman, B. Gawronski, & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories of the social mind* (pp. 3–19). The Guilford Press.

Germain, C.B. (1981). Social Work Identity, Competence, and Autonomy: The Ecological Perspective. *Social Work in Health Care, 6*(1), 1–10.

Greenwald, A.G., Brendl, M., Cai, H., Cvencek, D., Dovidio, J.F., Freise, M., Hahn, A., Hehman, E., Hofmann, W., Huges, S., Hussey, I., Jordan, C., Kirby, T.A., Lai, C.K., Lang, J.W.B., Lindgren, K.P., Maison, D., Ostafin, B.D., Rae, J.R., . . . Wiers, R.W. (2022). Best research practices for using the Implicit Association Test. *Behavioral Research Methods, 54*, 1161–1180.

Greenwald, A.G., Nosek, B.A., Banaji, M., & Klauer, K.C. (2005). Validity of the Salience Asymmetry Interpretation of the Implicit Association Test: Comment on Rothermund and Wentura (2004). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 134*(3), 420–425.

Greenwald, A., Poehlman, A., Uhlmann, E., & Banaji, M. (2009). Understanding and Using the Implicit Association Test: III. Meta-Analysis of Predictive Validity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*(1), 17–41.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience.* Harvard University Press.

Grant, H., & Dweck, C. S. (2003). Clarifying achievement goals and their impact. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 541–553.

Haimovitz, K., & Dweck, C.S. (2016). What predicts children's fixed and growth intelligence mindsets? Not their parents' views of intelligence but their parents' views of failure. *Psychological Science, 27*, 859–869.

Haimovitz, K., & Dweck, C.S. (2017). The Origins of Children's Growth and Fixed Mindsets: New Research and a New Proposal. *Child Development, 88*(6), 1849–1859.

Harris, J., Jin, J., Hoffman, S., Phan, S., Prout, T.A., Rousmaniere, T., & Vaz, A. (2023). *Deliberate practice in multicultural therapy*. American Psychological Association.

Herschell, A.D., Kolko, D.J., Baumann, B.L., & Davis, A.C. (2010). The role of therapist training in the implementation of psychosocial treatments: A review and critique with recommendations. *Clinical Psychology Review, 30*(4), 448–466.

Heslin, P. A., Latham, G. P., & VandeWalle, D. (2005). The effect of implicit person theory on performance appraisals. *The Journal of applied psychology*, *90*(5), 842–856. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.5.842

Heslin, P. A., & VandeWalle, D. (2011). Performance appraisal procedural justice: The role of a manager's implicit person theory. *Journal of Management, 37*(6), 1694–1718. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309342895

Holden, G., Barker, K., Rosenberg, G., & Onghena, P. (2007). Assessing Progress Toward Accreditation Related Objectives: Evidence Regarding the Use of Self-Efficacy as an Outcome in the Advanced Concentration Research Curriculum. *Research on Social Work Practice, 17*(4), 456–465.

Holden, G., Barker, K., Kuppens, S., & Rosenberg, G. (2017). Self-Efficacy Regarding Social Work Competencies. *Research on Social Work Practice, 27*(5), 594–606.

Holden, G., Meenaghan, T., Anastas, J., & Metrey, G. (2002). Outcomes of Social Work Education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 38*(1), 115–133.

Hong, Y., Dweck, C.S., Chiu, C., Lin, D.M., & Wan, W. (1999). Implicit Theories, Attributions, and Coping: A Meaning System Approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*(3), 588–599.

House, J. (1977). Three Faces of Social Psychology. *Sociometry, 40*(2), 161–177.

Hyslop, I. (2018). Neoliberalism and social work identity. *European Journal of Social Work, 21*(1), 20–31.

Jerolmack C., & Khan, S. (2014). Toward an Understanding of the Relationship Between Accounts and Action. *Sociological Methods and Research, 42*(2), 236-247.

Katz, M., Christensen, M.J., Vaz, A., & Rousmaniere, T. (2023). *Deliberate Practice of TEAM-CBT*. Springer International Publishing AG.

Keating, L.A., & Heslin, P.A. (2015). The Potential Role of Mindsets in Unleashing Employee Engagement. *Human Resource Management Review, 25*, 329–341.

King, L. A. & Raspin, C. (2004). Lost and Found Possible Selves, Subjective Well-Being, and Ego Development in Divorced Women. *Journal of Personality, 72*, 603–632.

Knee, C.R., Patrick, H., & Lonsbary, C. (2003). Implicit Theories of Relationships: Orientations Toward Evaluation and Cultivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 7*(1), 41–55.

Kooij D.T.A.M., & H, Zacher. (2016). Why and when do learning goal orientation and attitude decrease with aging? The role of perceived remaining time and work centrality. *Journal of Social Issues, 72*(1), 146–168.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential learning*. Prentice Hall.

Korek, S., Sobiraj, S., Weseler, D., Rigotti, T., & Mohr, G. (2014). The gender role self-concept of men in female-dominated occupations: does it depend on how they see their jobs? *Journal of Applied Psychology, 44*, 241–254.

Kuhn, T.S. (2012). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition*. University of Chicago Press. (Original work published in 1969)

Kwang, T., & Swann, W.B. (2010). Do People Embrace Praise Even When They Feel Unworthy? A Review of Critical Tests of Self-Enhancement Versus Self-Verification. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14*, 263–280.

Lakoff, G. (1987). Women, fire, and dangerous things: what categories reveal about the mind. University of Chicago Press.

Lizardo, O. (2004). The cognitive origins of Bourdieu's habitus. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 34*, 375–401.

Lizardo, O. (2017). Improving Cultural Analysis: Considering Personal Culture in its Declarative and Nondeclarative Modes. *American Sociological Review, 82*(1), 88–115.

Lizardo, O., Mowry, R., Sepulvado, B., Stoltz, D.S., Taylor, M.A., Van Ness, J., & Wood, M. (2016). What Are Dual Process Models? Implications for Cultural Analysis in Sociology. *Sociological Theory, 34*(4), 287–310.

Lizardo, O., & Strand, M. (2010). Skills, toolkits, contexts and institutions: Clarifying the relationship between different approaches to cognition in cultural sociology. *Poetics, 38*, 204–227.

Logie, C., Bogo, M., Regehr, C., & Regehr, G. (2013). A critical appraisal of the use of standardized client simulations in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 49 (1)*, 66–80.

Macnamara, B.N., & Burgoyne, A.P. (2023). Do Growth Mindset Interventions Impact Students' Academic Achievement? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis With Recommendations for Best Practices. *Psychological Bulletin, 149*(3-4), 133–173.

Mahon, D. (2022). A scoping review of deliberate practice in the acquisition of therapeutic skills and practices. *Counseling and Psychotherapy Research*, 23(4), 965–981.

Mannix, K.A., Blackburn, I.M., Garland A., Gracie J., Moorey, S., Reid, B., & Scott, J. (2006). Effectiveness of brief training in cognitive behaviour therapy techniques for palliative care practitioners. *Palliative Medicine, 20*(6), 579–584.

Markus, H. & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*, 954–969.

Markus, H., Crane, M., Bernstein, S., & Siladi, M. (1982). Self-schemas and gender. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(1), 38–50. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.42.1.38

McHugh, K., & Barlow, D.H. (Eds) (2012). *Dissemination and Implementation of Evidence-Based Psychological Interventions*. Oxford University Press.

Merolla, D.M., Serpe, R.T., Stryker, S., & Schultz, P.W. (2012). Structural Precursors to Identity Processes: The Role of Proximate Social Structures. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 75*(2), 149–172.

Memari, M., Gavinski, K., & Norman, M. (2024). Beware False Growth Mindset: Building Growth Mindset in Medical Education Is Essential but Complicated. *Academic Medicine, 99*(3), 261–265.

Mendoza, A.N., Fruhauf, C.A., & Bishop, P. (2020). Social Work Students' Service Learning Experiences with Grandfamilies: Contact, Comfort, and Attitudes. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 41*(2), 156–168.

Merton, R. K. (1957). *Social theory and social structure* (Rev. ed.). Free Press.

Miles, A. (2014). Addressing the Problem of Cultural Anchoring: An Identity-Based Model of Culture in Action. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 77*(2), 210–227.

Miles, A., Charron-Chénier, R., & Schleifer, C. (2019). Measuring Automatic Cognition: Advancing Dual-Process Research in Sociology. *American Sociological Review, 84*(2), 308–333.

Miller, S., Hubble, M.A., & Chow, D. (2020). *Better Results: Using Deliberate Practice to Improve Therapeutic Effectiveness*. American Psychological Association.

Miller, W.R., Yahne, C.E., Moyers, T.B., Martinez, J., & Pirritano, M. (2004). A randomized trial of methods to help clinicians learn motivational interviewing. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical psychology, 72*(6), 1050–1062.

Mische, A. (2009). Projects and Possibilities: Researching Futures in Action. *Sociological Forum, 24*(3), 694–704.

Mische, A. (2014). Measuring futures in action: projective grammars in the Rio + 20 debates. *Theory and Society, 34*, 437–464.

Moore, R. (2017). Fast or Slow: Sociological Implications of Measuring Dual-Process Cognition. *Sociological Science, 4*, 196–223.

Multon, K. D., Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (1991). Relation of self-efficacy beliefs to academic outcomes: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 38*(1), 30–38.

Murrell, A., Frieze, I.H., & Frost, J.L. (1991). Aspiring To Careers in Male- And Female-Dominated Professions: A Study of Black and White College Women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 15*, 103–126.

Murphy, M. C., & Dweck, C. S. (2016). Mindsets shape consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 26*(1), 127–136. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2015.06.005

McCrystal, P., & Wilson, G. (2009). Research training and professional social work education: Developing research minded practice. *Social Work Education, 28*(8), 856–872.

McHugh, K., & Barlow, D.H. (Eds.) (2012). *Dissemination and Implementation of Evidence-Based Psychological Interventions*. Oxford University Press.

Mueller, C. M., & Dweck, C. S. (1998). Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(1), 33–52.

Norcross, J. C. (2011). *Psychotherapy relationships that work: therapist contributions and responsiveness to patients*, (2nd Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Norcross, J.C., Beutler, L.E., and Levant, R.F. (2006). *Evidence Based Practices in Mental Health: Debate and Dialogue on the Fundamental Questions* (3rd Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Nosek, B. A., Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (2005). Understanding and using the Implicit Association Test: II. Method variables and construct validity. *Personality & social psychology bulletin*, *31*(2), 166–180. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204271418

Nosek, B.A., Hawkins, C.B., & Frazier, R.S. (2011). Implicit social cognition: from measures to mechanisms. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 15*(4), 152–159.

Nosek, B. A., & Smyth, F. L. (2007). A multitrait-multimethod validation of the Implicit Association Test: Implicit and explicit attitudes are related but distinct constructs. *Experimental Psychology, 54*(1), 14–29. https://doi.org/10.1027/1618-3169.54.1.14

Nuttbrock, L., & Freudiger, P. (1991). Identity Salience and Motherhood: A Test of Stryker's Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 54*(2), 146–157.

O'Connor, C., & Joffe, H. Intercorder Reliability in Qualitative Research: Debates and Practical Guidelines. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,19*, 1–13.

Orlinsky, D.E., & Rønnestad, M.H. (2005). *How Psychotherapists Develop: A Study of Therapeutic Work and Professional Growth*. American Psychological Association.

Ortega, R. M., & Faller, K. C. (2011). Training child welfare workers from an intersectional cultural humility perspective: A paradigm shift. *Child Welfare, 90*, 27–49.

Oyserman, D. (2007). Social identity and self-regulation. In A. Kruglanski & T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 432–453). Guilford Press.

Oyserman, D. (2008). Racial-ethnic self-schemas: Multidimensional identity-based motivation. *Journal of Research in Personality, 42*(5), 1186–1198.

Oyserman, D. (2018). Possible selves citations, measure, and coding instructions. https://dornsife.usc.edu/daphna-oyserman/wp-content/uploads/sites/232/2023/11/Possible_Selves_Coding_Guide_-_July_2018.docx

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2003). Gendered racial identity and involvement with school. *Self and Identity, 2*(4), 307–324.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., Terry, K., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2004). Possible selves as roadmaps. *Journal of Research in Personality, 38,* 130–149.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 188–204

Oyserman, D., & Destin, M. (2010). Identity-based motivation: Implications for intervention. *The Counseling Psychologist, 38*(7), 1001–1043.

Oyserman, D., Elmore, K., & Smith, G. (2012). Self, Self-Concept, and Identity. In M.R. Leary & J.P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (2nd ed., pp. 69–104). Guilford Press.

Oyserman, D., Harrison, K., & Bybee, D. (2001). Can racial identity be promotive of academic efficacy? *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 25*(4), 379–385.

Oyserman, D., & James, L. (2011). Possible Identities. In S.J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V.L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 117–143). Springer Science.

Oyserman, D., Johnson, E., & James, L. (2011). Seeing the destination but not the path: Effects of socioeconomic disadvantage on school-focused possible self content and linked behavioral strategies. *Self and Identity, 10*(4), 474–492.

Oyserman, D., Kemmelmeier, M., Fryberg, S., Brosh, H., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2003). Racial-ethnic self-schemas. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 66*, 333–347.

Oyserman, D., & Markus, H. (1990). Possible Selves and Delinquincy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 59(1), 112-125.

Oyserman, D., & Sorensen, N. (2009). Understanding cultural syndrome effects on what and how we think: A situated cognition model. In R. S. Wyer, C. Chiu, Y. Hong, R. S. Wyer, C. Chiu, Y. Hong (Eds.), *Understanding culture: Theory, research, and application* (pp. 25–52). Psychology Press.

Oyserman, D., Terry, K., & Bybee, D. (2002). A possible selves intervention to enhance school involvement. *Journal of Adolescence, 25*, 313–326.

Oyserman, D., & Yan, V.X. (2019). Making Meaning: A Culture-as-Situated-Cognition Approach to the Consequences of Cultural Fluency and Disfluency. In D. Cohen and S. Kitayana (Eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 536–565). Guilford Press.

Quinn, N. (2005). How to Reconstruct Schemas People Share. In N. Quinn (Ed.) *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods* (pp. 35–81). Macmillan Palgrave.

Pham, L.B. & Taylor, S. E. (1999). From thought to action: Effects of process- versus outcome-based mental simulations on performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25,* 250-260.

Plaks, JE., & Chasteen., A.L. (2013). Entity versus incremental theories predict older adults' memory performance. *Psychology and Aging, 28*(4), 948–957. DOI: 10.1037/a0034348. PMID: 24128076.

Ragin, C. C. (1994). *Constructing social research: the unity and diversity of method.* Pine Forge Press.

Rattan, A., & Georgeac, O. A. M. (2017). Understanding intergroup relations through the lens of implicit theories (mindsets) of malleability. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 11*(4), Article e12305. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12305

Racker, H. (1968). *Transference and Countertransference*. Routledge.

Rakovshik, S. G., & McManus, F. (2010). Establishing evidence-based training in cognitive behavioral therapy: A review of current empirical findings and theoretical guidance. *Clinical psychology review*, *30*(5), 496–516. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.03.004

Reu, P., & Jarldorn, M. (2022). Social Work Students' Perceptions of Eco-Social Work in the Curricium.*Australian Social Work, 76*(4), 480–492.

Rhew, E., Piro, J.S., Goolkasian, P., & Cosentino, P. (2018). The effects of a growth mindset on self-efficacy and motivation. *Cogent Education, 5*, 1–16.

Risman, B.J. (2004). Gender As A Social Structure: Theory Wrestling With Activism. *Gender & Society, 18*(4), 429–450.

Ridgeway, C.L. (2009). Framed Before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations. *Gender and Society*, *23*(2), 145–160.

Robinson, K., & Goldingay, S. (2023). Questioning Identities: Social Service Workers Transition to Being Social Work Students. *Social Work Education, 42*(6), 900–916.

Rosch, E., & Mervis, C.B. (1975). Family resemblances: Studies in the internal structure of categories. *Cognitive psychology*. Elsevier Inc.

Rosch, E. (1975). Cognitive representations of semantic categories. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 104*(3), 192–233. https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.104.3.192

Rousmaniere, T. (2017). *Deliberate Practice for Psychotherapists: A Guide to Improving Clinical Effectiveness*. Routledge.

Rubin, A., & Johnson, P. J. (1984). Direct practice interests of entering MSW students. *Journal of Education for Social Work, 20*(2), 5–16.

Ryan, S., & Irie, K. (2014). Imagined and Possible Selves: Stories We Tell Ourselves About Ourselves. In S. Mercer & M. Williams (Eds.) *Multiple Perspectives on the Self in SLA* (pp. 109–126). Channel View Publications.

Sakamoto, I., McPhail, B., Anastas, J. & Colarossi, L. (2008). Status of women in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 44*, 37–62.

Sampson, M., Parrish, D.E., & Washburn, M. (2018). Assessing MSW Students' Integrated Behavioral Health Skills Using an Objective Structured Clinical Examination. *Journal of Social Work Education, 54*(2), 287–299.

Sarrasin, J.B., Nenciovici, L., Foisy, L.M.B., Allaire-Duquette, G., Riopel, M., & Masson, S. (2018). Effects of teaching the concept of neuroplasticity to induce a growth mindset on motivation, achievement, and brain activity: A meta-analysis. *Trends in Neuroscience and Education, 12*, 22–31.

Segal, H. (1993). *Countertransference*. Routledge.

Schank, R. C., & Abelson, R. P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals, and understanding: an inquiry into human knowledge structures*. Erlbaum Associates.

Schön, D.A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.

Schwarz, G. (1978). Estimating the Dimension of a Model. *Annals of Statistics, 6*, 461–464.

Shulman, L. (1981). *Identifying, measuring, and teaching helping skills*. Council on Social Work Education.

Shulman, L. (1993). *Teaching the Helping Skills: A Field Instructors Guide*. Council on Social Work Education.

Singer, J.B., Gray, S.W., & Miehls, D. (2012). An Educator's Guide to the Development of Advanced Practice Competencies in Clinical Social Work. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 32*(5), 451-470.

Skoura-Kirk, E. (2023). 'Through no fault of their own': Social work students' use of language to construct 'service user' identities. *Qualitative Social Work, 22*(4), 700–719.

Smith, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books.

Smith, G. C., James, L. E., Varnum, M. E., & Oyserman, D. (2014). Give up or get going? Productive uncertainty in uncertain times. *Self and Identity, 13*(6), 681–700.

Stets, J.E. (2006). Identity Theory and Emotions. In J. E. Stets & J. H. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions* (pp. 203–223). Springer.

Stets, J.E. (2011). Applying Identity Theory to Moral Acts of Commission and Omission. *Advances in Group Processes, 28*, 97–124

Smith, L.T. (2021). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. Zed Books.

Stets, J.E. & Asencio, E.K. (2008). Consistency and Enhancement Processes in Understanding Emotions. *Social Forces, 86*, 1055–1058.

Stets, J.E., & Burke, P.J. (2014). Emotions and Identity Nonverification. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 77*(4), 387–410.

Stets, J.E., and Carter, M.J. (2011). The Moral Self: Applying Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 74*(2), 192–215.

Stets, J.E., & Carter, M.J. (2012). A Theory of the Self for the Sociology of Morality. *American Sociological Review, 77*(1), 120–140.

Stets, J.,E., & Cast, A.D. (2007). Resources and Identity Verification From an Identity Theory Perspective. *Sociological Perspectives, 50*(4), 517–543.

Stets, J.E., & Harrod, M.M. (2004). Verification across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 67*(2), 155–171.

Strahan, E. J., & Wilson, A. E. (2006). Temporal Comparisons, Identity, and Motivation: The Relation Between Past, Present, and Possible Future Selves. In C. Dunkel & J. Kerpelman (Eds.), *Possible selves: Theory, research and applications* (pp. 1–15). Nova Science Publishers.

Stryker, S. (1968). Identity salience and role performance: The relevance of symbolic interaction theory for family research. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 30*(4), 558–564.

Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1994). Identity salience and psychological centrality: Equivalent, overlapping, or complementary concepts? *Social Psychology Quarterly, 57*(1), 16–53.

Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1982). Commitment, identity salience, and role behavior: Theory and research example. In W. Ickes & E. S. Knowles (Eds.), *Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior* (pp. 199–218). Springer.

Squire L. R. (1992). Declarative and nondeclarative memory: multiple brain systems supporting learning and memory. *Journal of cognitive neuroscience*, *4*(3), 232–243. https://doi.org/10.1162/jocn.1992.4.3.232

Taylor, S.E. & Schneider, S. K. (1989). Coping and the simulation of events. *Social Cognition, 7,* 174-194

Tervalon, M., & Murray-Garcia, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved,* 9(2): 117–125.

Tulving, E. (1983). *Elements of episodic memory*. Oxford University Press.

Vaisey, S. (2009). Motivation and justification: toward a dual-process theory of culture in action. *American Journal of Sociology, 114*(6), 1675–1715

Vaisey, S. (2014). Is interviewing compatible with a dual-process model of culture? *American Journal of Cultural Sociology, 2*(1), 150–158.

Vila-Henninger, L.A. (2015). Toward Defining the Causal Role of Consciousness: Using Models of Memory and Moral Judgment from Cognitive Neuroscience to Expand the Sociological Dual-Process Model. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 45*(2): 238–260.

Wacquant, L. (2004). *Body & soul: notebooks of an apprentice boxer*. Oxford University Press.

Wallin, D.J. (2007). *Attachment in psychotherapy*. Guilford Press.

Wampold, B.E., & Imel, Z.E. (2015). *The Great Psychotherapy Debate : The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work*. Second edition, Routledge: New York.

Westwood, S. (2022). Religious-based negative attitudes towards LGBTQ people among healthcare, social care and social work students and professionals: A review of the international literature. *Health and Social Care in the Community, 30*, e1449-e1470. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hsc.13812

Wilson, A. E., and Ross, M. (2001). From chump to champ: People's appraisals of their earlier and present selves. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 572–584.

Wolcott, M.D., McLughlin, J.E., Hann, A., Miklavec, A., Dallaghan, G.L., Rhoney, D.H., & Zomorodi, M. (2021). A review to characterise and map the growth mindset theory in health professions education. *Medical Education Review, 55*(4), 430–440.

Yeager, D. S., Romero, C., Paunesku, D., Hulleman, C. S., Schneider, B., Hinojosa, C., Lee, H. Y., O'Brien, J., Flint, K., Roberts, A., Trott, J., Greene, D., Walton, G. M., & Dweck, C. S. (2016). Using Design Thinking to Improve Psychological Interventions: The Case of the Growth Mindset During the Transition to High School. *Journal of educational psychology*, *108*(3), 374–391. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000098

Zuber, S., Cauvin, S., Haas, M., Daviet A-S., Da Silva Coelho, C., & Kliegel, M. (2020). Do self-reports of procrastination predict actual behavior? *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research, 29*(e1843), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1843