A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH FOR MULTIFACETED SOCIAL WORK

- Devyani Hakakian is beginning her workday at an international advocacy organization devoted to women's rights.

- Sylvia Gomez and other members of her team at the rehabilitation hospital are meeting with the family of an 18-year-old male who is recovering from head injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

- Mark Bernstein is on the way to the county jail to assess the suicide risk of an inmate.

- Caroline O'Malley is knocking at the door of a family reported to her agency for child abuse.

- Helen Moore is preparing a report on environmental justice for a legislative committee.

- Juanita Alvarez is talking with an unhoused man about taking his psychotropic medications.

- Stan Weslowski is meeting with a couple who would like to adopt a child.

- Andrea Thomas is analyzing the results of a needs assessment recently conducted at the service center for older adults where she works.

- Anthony Pacino is wrapping up a meeting of a cancer support group.

- Sam Belick is writing a social history for tomorrow's team meeting at the high school where he works.

- Sharlena Cook is preparing to meet with a group of Head Start parents to discuss parenting issues.

- Sarah Sahair has just begun a meeting of a recreational group of 9- and 10-year-old girls.

- Jane Kerr is facilitating the monthly meeting of an interagency coalition of service providers for substance-abusing women and their children.

- Ann Noles is planning a fund-raising project for the local Boys' and Girls' Club.

- Meg Hart is wrapping up her fourth counseling session with a lesbian couple.

- Chien Liu is meeting with a community group concerned about youth gang behavior in their neighborhood.

- Mary Wells is talking with one of her clients at the rape crisis center.

- Nagwa Nadi is evaluating treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder at a Veteran's Administration hospital.

What do these people have in common? You have probably guessed that they all are social workers. They work in a variety of settings, and they are involved in a variety of activities, but they all are doing social work. They all are involved in activities to engage with, assess, and intervene in human behavior. Social work is a multifaceted profession, and because it is multifaceted, social workers need a multidimensional understanding of human behavior. This book provides such an understanding. The two chapters in Part I introduce you to a multidimensional way of thinking about human behavior and set the stage for subsequent discussion. In Chapter 1, you are introduced to the multiple dimensions of person, environment, and time that serve as the framework for the book, and you are introduced to social work's emphasis on human rights; social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; and diversity, equity, and social inclusion. You also are given some tools to think critically about the multiple theories and varieties of research that make up our general knowledge about these dimensions of human behavior. In Chapter 2, you encounter seven theoretical perspectives that contribute to multidimensional understanding. You learn about their central ideas and their scientific merits. Most important, you consider the usefulness of these seven theoretical perspectives for social work.

1 HUMAN BEHAVIOR

A Multidimensional Approach

Elizabeth D. Hutchison

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1 Recognize one's own emotional and cognitive reactions to a case study.

1.2 Analyze the historical connection between social work and the person-in-environment perspective.

1.3 Outline the elements of a multidimensional person-in-environment approach to human behavior.

1.4 Advocate for an emphasis on a global perspective; human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; and anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in social work's approach to understanding human behavior.

1.5 Summarize four ingredients of knowing to do social work.

1.6 Analyze the roles of theory and research in guiding social work practice.

1.7 Apply knowledge of the multidimensional person-in-environment framework; human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion to recommend guidelines for social work engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

A CASE STUDY ABOUT PERSON AND ENVIRONMENT

Case Study 1.1: Joshua, Making a New Life

Joshua spent the first 10 years of his life in the city of Uvira, in the South Kivu Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly Zaire. He is the fourth oldest child in a family that included 11 children. He is of the Banyamulenge ethnic group, and his family spoke Swahili, Kinyamulenge, and French while living in Uvira. He was raised Christian in the United Methodist Church. Joshua's family lived comfortably in Uvira. His mother owned a boutique that sold clothes, shoes, lotions, accessories, and petroleum. His father bought cows, had them butchered, and then sold the meat.

Of his life in Uvira, Joshua recalls that a typical day included getting up for breakfast and spending the day at school. After school, he did chores and sometimes helped his mom in her boutique. Then he played soccer until dinner. It was a good life.

All of that changed in 2003. The long-standing Congo civil war was getting closer to his family's home in Uvira. Joshua recalls hearing gunshots about 15 miles away. His family left their home in Uvira in the middle of the night by foot and walked across the Burundi border to the nearby Gatumba refugee camp run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They were joined on the walk and in the camp by a lot of other people from Uvira. Life was hard in the crowded camp, where people slept in tents with mosquitoes buzzing around. Sometimes there was not enough water or food for the whole camp. The hygiene in the camp was not good, and a lot of people were sick. Joshua lost a lot of friends and family in the camp. He recalls that the children were not able to attend school in the camp.

A terrible thing happened on August 13, 2004. There was a heinous massacre at the Gatumba refugee camp, killing 166 refugees and seriously wounding over 100 more. News reports indicate that refugees who were members of the Banyamulenge ethnic group were the specific target of the massacre. Joshua's mom died of gunshot wounds, and his 8-year-old sister's body was never found. The whole camp was burned down, and Joshua's family was separated. Joshua, who was 11 years old at the time, ran with his 7-month-old sister. They were first in the hospital and then taken in by a stranger with whom they stayed for several weeks before finding their father and other siblings. Their father had been shot during the massacre and was taken to the hospital. Two of Joshua's siblings were also found in the hospital. Other siblings had found safety a few miles away at a makeshift camp. After finding his father and siblings, Joshua and his 7-month-old sister stayed with an extended family relative in Bujumbura, Burundi, for about 4 months. His father went to a hospital in Kenya, and some siblings were in an orphanage. At some point, Joshua and some older siblings went back to Uvira in the DRC. They stayed in the house where they had lived before they fled and were able to go to school again, but not right away.

In 2006, Joshua's father was discharged from the hospital, came back to Uvira, and took all the family back to Bujumbura, Burundi, where he filed for refugee status. Joshua and his siblings went to a few interviews for the refugee status application, but mostly the process was handled by his father, and Joshua doesn't know much about it.

In May 2007, Joshua's family, consisting of a single father and 10 children, arrived in Boise, Idaho. Joshua was almost 14 years old, and he felt excited and eager to begin school. He was also struck by how cold the weather was. Joshua's father received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) because of disability related to wounds from the massacre. His father also had to continue with treatment for his wounds, was hospitalized from time to time, and continues to receive periodic treatment. His father is now ordained as a pastor in a local African church and currently serves on a committee for the local African community. He received his citizenship in 2013.

The language issue was really hard at first for Joshua, but it was even harder for his older siblings and father. Joshua graduated from high school in 2011, from community college in 2013, and from university in May 2017. He received citizenship in September 2017 and was married in October 2017. He coaches local Nations United and Boys & Girls Club soccer teams and works as the employment specialist and donations manager at the Agency for New Americans, the refugee resettlement agency that sponsored his family during their resettlement. All of Joshua's

surviving siblings still live in Boise. Unfortunately, his oldest sister died in November 2016. She had been shot in the head during the massacre, and her injuries left her paralyzed on the left side of her body. She had gotten married after the family arrived in Boise and left six children behind when she died. Joshua says the family misses her very much.

Story provided by Agency for New Americans, Boise, Idaho

HUMAN BEHAVIOR: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

As eventful as it has been, Joshua's story is still unfolding. As a social worker, you will become a part of many unfolding life stories, and you will want to have useful ways to think about those stories and effective ways to be helpful to people like Joshua, his family, and other refugees from the DRC, as well as the many other people you will encounter in your social work journey. This book and its companion volume, *Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course*, provide ways for you to think about the nature and complexities of human behavior—the people and situations at the center of social work practice. To begin to do that, we must first clarify the purpose of social work and the approach it takes to individual and collective human behavior. This is laid out in the 2022 *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE):

> The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally. (CSWE, 2022, p. 14)

Let's put that statement into some historical context. The CSWE was formed in 1952 to bring the accreditation of social work education under a single body, bringing together separate accrediting bodies for medical social work, psychiatric social work, and generalist practice to accredit both undergraduate and graduate social work education programs. Three years later, in 1955, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was formed by consolidating seven existing organizations, the American Association of Social Work plus specialized associations of psychiatric social workers, medical social workers, school social workers, group workers, community organizing social workers, and social work researchers. Both the newly formed CSWE and NASW were dedicated to identifying what was common to all social work practice. The CSWE immediately set to work to develop curriculum policy and accreditation standards for a social work education that could prepare students for all practice settings and social work roles.

In these early efforts to identify the common base of social work, presenters of one workshop at the 1952 meeting of the American Association of Schools of Social Work, a forerunner of CSWE, argued that "knowledge and understanding of human behavior is considered an indispensable base for social work education and for all social work activity" (Social Welfare

History Archives, 1952, p. 1). I agree wholeheartedly with that statement. Whether we are concerned about

- how an individual can recognize the role of emotions and cognitive biases shaping their behavior;

- how a family can improve its communication patterns;

- how a group can become more cohesive;

- how a community can become empowered to solve problems;

- how to maximize the benefits of increasing diversity in an organization;

- or the most effective ways to organize efforts to advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice;

we are concerned about human behavior.

In 1958, in the first working definition of social work practice after the formation of CSWE and NASW, Harriett Bartlett linked the person-in-environment perspective on human behavior to the definition of social work (Kondrat, 2008). That connection has endured for six decades. In discussion of social work competencies, the CSWE 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) notes that social workers "apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks" to engage with, assess, intervene with, and evaluate practice with "individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities" (CSWE, 2022, pp.11–13).

It is important to recognize that the social work profession, like all disciplines and professions, continues to change and evolve. In 2020, in the midst of health disparities in a global pandemic and the high-profile brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers, social work—like other professions and disciplines—began to reexamine its own history of racism and white supremacy (see Aguilar & Counselman-Carpenter, 2021; Wright et al., 2021). In July 2021, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2021a) submitted a report to the profession on racial justice, noting some ways that the social work profession had contributed to ongoing discrimination and oppression of people of color. In this report, NASW apologized for grave mistakes in the profession's history and called for a renewed effort to live up to its mission to pursue justice. Here are some of the grave mistakes in the history of social work noted in the report:

- The white social reformers in the progressive era did not welcome Black Americans into the programs developed for white immigrants.

- Many white social reformers of the progressive era supported the eugenics movement and participated in involuntary sterilization programs that targeted women of color and low-income women.

- White suffragists, including some social work and social welfare leaders, blocked efforts of Black women to vote in their efforts to secure the right for white women to vote.

- African American social reformers were not allowed to attend most of the first schools of social work and were not included in the telling of the history of social work until recent times.

- Social workers played a role in the Indian boarding school movement that separated Indigenous children from their families and cultures.

- New Deal safety net programs created during the Franklin Roosevelt administration excluded people involved in domestic work and farm labor, the two low-wage occupations open to African Americans at that time.

- Poor Black men were recruited into the fraudulent Tuskegee medical experiment by social workers.

- Social workers were part of the intake teams at the internment camps for Japanese American families during World War II.

The contributing authors and I applaud the reinvigorated effort to live up to social work's mission to pursue justice for all and have attempted to revise the chapters of this book in a way that supports that renewed mission. As social workers, we must recognize the roles we play in existing systems of oppression, avoid interventions that maintain those systems, and develop new interventions to challenge those systems.

In this book, we use the language of "person and environment" rather than "person-in-environment" because the emphasis is not always on the individual person. Although the person-in-environment (person and environment) construct noted in the CSWE educational policy is an old idea in social work, it still is a very useful way to think about human behavior—a way that can accommodate such contemporary themes in human life as the emotional life of the brain, human–robot relationships, social media, human rights, economic globalization, the racialization process, and environmental justice. This book elaborates and updates the person and environment construct that has guided social work intervention since the earliest days of the profession. The element of time is added to the person and environment construct to call attention to the dynamic nature of both people and environments. This is important in rapidly changing societies around the world. Early social workers could not have imagined television and air travel, much less cell phones, a plethora of social media platforms, remote education, or instant communications across continents. And, no doubt, the world 50 years from now would seem as foreign to us as the United States seemed to Joshua and his family when they first arrived here.

As you reflect about Joshua's story, you may be thinking, as I am, not only about Joshua but also about the different environments in which he has lived and the ways in which both Joshua and his environments have changed over time. As they live their lives in the natural environment, humans join with other humans to develop physical landscapes and structures, technologies, and social systems that form the context of their lives. These landscapes, structures, technologies, and social systems are developed by collective action, by humans interacting with each other. Once developed, they then come to shape the way humans interact with each other and with their natural environments. Landscapes, structures, technologies, and social systems can support

or deter individual and collective well-being. Usually, they benefit some individuals and groups while causing harm to others. Social workers are concerned about both individual and collective behavior and well-being; when we talk about human behavior, we are referring to both the individual and collective behavior of humans. Sometimes we focus on individual behavior, and other times we are more concerned about the social systems created by human interaction.

This book identifies multiple dimensions of both person and environment and draws on ongoing scientific inquiry, both conceptual and empirical, to examine the dynamic understanding of each dimension. Special attention is paid to globalization; human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; and anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in examination of each dimension. In this chapter, a multidimensional approach to person and environment is presented, followed by discussion of human rights and social, racial, economic, environmental justice; anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice; diversity; and equity and inclusion. After a brief discussion of the process by which professionals such as social workers move from knowing to doing, the chapter ends with a discussion of how scientific knowledge from theory and research informs social work's multidimensional understanding of human behavior.

Organization of Book

In this book, Part I includes two stage-setting chapters that introduce the framework for the book and provide a foundation for thinking critically about the discussions of theory and research presented in Parts II and III. Part II comprises four chapters that analyze the multiple dimensions of persons—one chapter each on the biological person, the psychological person (or the self), the psychosocial person (or the self in relationship), and the spiritual person. The eight chapters of Part III discuss environmental dimensions: the physical environment, cultures, social structure and social institutions, families, small groups, formal organizations, communities, and social movements.

As noted earlier, presenting person and environmental dimensions separately, as we do in Parts II and III, is a risky approach. We do not wish to reinforce any tendency to think about human behavior in a way that camouflages the inseparability of person and environment. In our work as social workers, we engage in both *analysis* and *synthesis*. Sometimes we need to think analytically, breaking down a complex situation by thinking more critically about specific aspects and dimensions of the situation, whether that is a biological system or a pattern of family relationships. But we also need to be able to put the puzzle pieces back together to see the whole story. That is synthesis. We are always working back and forth between analysis and synthesis. Each chapter in the book attempts to capture some of the complexity of multiple interacting dimensions of behavior.

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

Social work's person and environment construct has historically recognized both person and environment as complex and **multidimensional**, that is, as having several identifiable dimensions. A **dimension** refers to a feature that can be focused on separately but that cannot be

understood without also considering its embeddedness with other features. This last piece is really important: Although we can focus on one dimension of a human story to help us think about that dimension more clearly, no one dimension can be understood without considering other dimensions as well. We are walking a treacherous path here by separating out the dimensions to explore each in some depth. The fear is that by doing so, we will reinforce the human tendency to think of these dimensions as things that are separate and unrelated rather than recognizing how they are all utterly intertwined. As neuroscientist Robert Sapolsky (2017, p. 5) warns, "It's human behavior. And, it is indeed a mess, a subject involving brain chemistry, hormones, sensory cues, prenatal environment, early experience, genes, both biological and cultural evolution, and ecological pressures, among other things." In a similar vein, writing about child development, Arnold Sameroff (2010, p. 7) writes that "it is both child and parent, but it is also neurons and neighborhoods, synapses and schools, proteins and peers, and genes and governments." Throughout this book, we try to call attention to how dimensions of human behavior are related to each other and intertwine to influence specific behaviors. Think about Joshua. What comes quickly to your mind as you think about the factors that influence his current behavior?

If we were writing a book focusing on only one type of behavior, such as aggression as Sapolsky (2017) writes about, we could demonstrate how all the elements of person and environment are intertwined to create that one type of behavior. Because, instead, we are writing a book that covers the wide range of human behaviors, both individual and collective behaviors, we organize the book around various dimensions of person and environment and do our best to illustrate how those dimensions are related to each other. For example, the chapter on cultures includes discussion of the neuroscience of prejudice as well as discussion of gene–culture co-evolution. We encourage you to pay particular attention to these discussions of the way in which different dimensions of person and environment are intertwined.

With an explosion of behavioral science research across a number of disciplines in the past few decades, the trend has been to expand the range of dimensions of both person and environment folded into the person and environment construct. Time too can be thought of as multidimensional. Let's look at some of the dimensions of person, environment, and time in Joshua's story.

If we focus on the *person* in Joshua's story, we think about the conditions in the refugee camp that threatened his biological systems and how he survived while many others died in the camp, where hygiene was poor and water and food were scarce. We also think about the biological damage done to members of his family at the time of the massacre and are reminded how humans often carry both biological and psychological reminders of physically and emotionally traumatic situations. Joshua appears to have emotional resilience and good problem-solving skills, having had the discernment to run from the massacre with his baby sister, the fortitude to survive the perilous days while the family waited to be resettled in the United States, and the flexibility to adapt to a new life once he arrived in the United States. He was able to learn a new language and culture and plan for the future. It appears that he has been able to build meaningful interpersonal relationships at work and in the community. The Christian faith has been a source of comfort for him and his family as they adapted to a new environment.

If we focus on the *environment*, we see many influences on Joshua's story. Consider first the physical environment. Joshua lived a comfortable life in the city of Uvira, where he spent his days in school and was able to be outside playing soccer after chores were done. From there, he took a short walk across the Burundi border to a crowded and primitive refugee camp where he has memories of being bothered by mosquitoes. After the massacre, he, his father, and his siblings lived where they could—in camps, hospitals, and other people's homes. They were finally resettled in a city about the size of his original city of Uvira but where the climate was much colder. They were surrounded by mountains as they had been in Uvira. Joshua is once again able to be outside playing soccer but for a shorter season.

Culture is a dimension of environment that exerts a powerful influence in Joshua's story. Ethnic culture clash was a large part of the Congo civil war, and Joshua and his family were of the Banyamulenge ethnic group that had been targets for ongoing discrimination and exclusion since the colonial period. Such cultural conflict is not new; historical analysis suggests that intercultural violence has actually declined in recent times (Pinker, 2011), but it continues to be a source of great international upheaval and the driving force behind refugee resettlement. As is true in many parts of the world, ethnic conflict is intertwined in the Congo with control over a natural resource, in this case coltan, a metallic ore used in electronics such as computers and cell phones (McMichael & Weber, 2021).

Joshua's story has been powerfully influenced by the geopolitical unrest that marked his young life in Africa. His relationships with social institutions have changed over time, and he has had to adapt his behavior to the changing situations. Even though his country was engaged in civil war during much of his young life, it did not reach his city until he was 10 years old. Before that, his family lived in relative comfort and peace. His family was relieved to get to the United Nations refugee camp, but life there was hard, and ultimately the war followed them there, even though the camp was supposed to be protected by the Burundi government. Once they arrived in the United States, Joshua and his siblings were able to go to school again, to make their way economically, and to work toward citizenship in their adopted country.

Another dimension of the environment, family, is paramount to Joshua. He has suffered family loss and endured time when members of his family were separated before resettling in the United States. He has been lucky, however, to have his father and surviving siblings living nearby. Many refugee families end up spread across several continents, and that may or may not be true for Joshua's extended family. Joshua now has a wife to count as family.

Small groups, organizations, and communities have been important forces in Joshua's life, but he has had little direct contact with social movements. His soccer teams are important small groups in the life he has created in Boise. He participates in small groups at church and in the African community in Boise. He is a member of the small staff group at the refugee resettlement agency.

Several organizations have been helpful to Joshua and his family since they fled Uvira. The refugee camp was an organization that brought initial safety but ultimately trauma and loss. Joshua's association with other organizations has been much more positive; he did well in several school organizations and has returned to work for the refugee resettlement agency that sponsored his family and assisted them to make a successful resettlement. The African Christian

church where his father is a minister is a source of close relationships, spiritual connectedness, and continuity with life in Uvira.

Joshua and his family needed to adapt their behavior to live in several different types of communities. In Uvira, they were surrounded by extended family, long-term friends and neighbors, and a church community. In the crowded refugee camp, disease and despair were common, and Joshua was not able to go to school. That community was split, with some being targeted for massacre while others were not. After the massacre, Joshua and his family moved about from camps and hospitals to strangers and family relatives in Burundi, and even back to Uvira, always trying to find safety. Now he lives in a city in southwestern Idaho in proximity to other refugees from the DRC and worships with many of them.

We don't know if Joshua is aware that the Gatumba Refugees Survivors Foundation (Davey et al., 2022) has spearheaded a social movement to undertake inquiry about the Gatumba massacre, seek justice for the survivors of the Gatumba genocide, raise global awareness of torture and genocide, organize memorial gatherings to help survivors heal, reunite family members who were separated during the evacuation of the camp, relocate survivors from unsafe areas, and advocate for medical support for survivors. It is possible that the Boise community of Banyamulenge refugees has benefited from the work of the GRSF as they heal from the trauma of that massacre.

Time is also an important part of Joshua's story. His story, like all human stories, is influenced by the human capacity to live not only in the present time but also in past and future times. Escape, crowded camps, massacre, family loss and separation, and resettlement are past events in his family's life and can be vividly recalled. There were times in the family's life when they needed to focus on future possibilities with such questions as "Will our father get better?" and "Will we be granted refugee status, and if so when and where will we go?" This future thinking has had an enormous impact on the current circumstances of the family's lives. In the interview for this case study, Joshua engaged in thinking about his past life in Uvira and the refugee camp, as well as the massacre event, but for the most part he lives largely in the present while imagining possibilities for the future with his wife, siblings, and father.

Joshua's story is also influenced by the historical times in which he has lived and is living. He has lived in a time of violent ethnic discord in his home country, and the civil strife continues in the DRC (Human Rights Watch, 2021). He is lucky to have been resettled to the United States in an era of international support for refugees. The times in which we live shape our behaviors in many ways.

Another way to think about the role of time in human behavior is to consider the way in which age, or life stage, influences behavior. Joshua notes that although learning English was difficult for him, it was much easier for him at age 13 than it was for his father. He finds this stage of his life, with school behind him and a new marriage, to be an exciting time with a future stretching out before him.

As suggested, social work has historically recognized human behavior as an interaction of person with environment, although the relative emphasis on different dimensions of person and environment has changed over time. Today, a vast multidisciplinary literature is available to help us in our social work efforts. The good news is that the multifaceted nature of this literature provides a broad knowledge base for the varied settings and roles involved in social work practice. The bad news is that this literature is highly fragmented, scattered across a large

number of fields. What we need is a structure for organizing our thinking about this multifaceted, multidisciplinary, fragmented literature.

The multidimensional approach provided in this book should help. This approach is built on the person–environment–time model described earlier. Although in this book we focus on specific dimensions of person and environment separately, including information on how our understanding of these dimensions has changed over time, keep in mind the earlier caution that *dimension* refers to a feature that can be focused on separately but cannot be understood without considering other features. The dimensions identified in this book have largely been studied as detached or semidetached realities, with one dimension characterized as causing or leading to another. In recent years, however, behavioral science scholars have collaborated across disciplines, leading to exciting new ways of thinking about human behavior, which the contributing authors and I share with you. We emphasize again that we do not see the dimensions analyzed in this book as detached realities, and we are not presenting a causal model. We want instead to show how these dimensions work together, how they are interwoven with each other, and how many possibilities are opened for social work practice when we think about human behavior in a multidimensional way. We are suggesting that humans engage in **multidetermined behavior**, that is, behavior that develops as a result of many causes. As Sapolsky (2017, p. 8) says, "It is impossible to conclude that behavior is caused by *a* gene, *a* hormone, *a* childhood trauma"— because all these factors and many others interact in one individual to produce unique results . . . you have to think complexly about complex things" like human behavior. Figure 1.1 is a graphic overview of the dimensions of person, environment, and time discussed in this book. Table 1.1 defines and gives examples of each dimension.

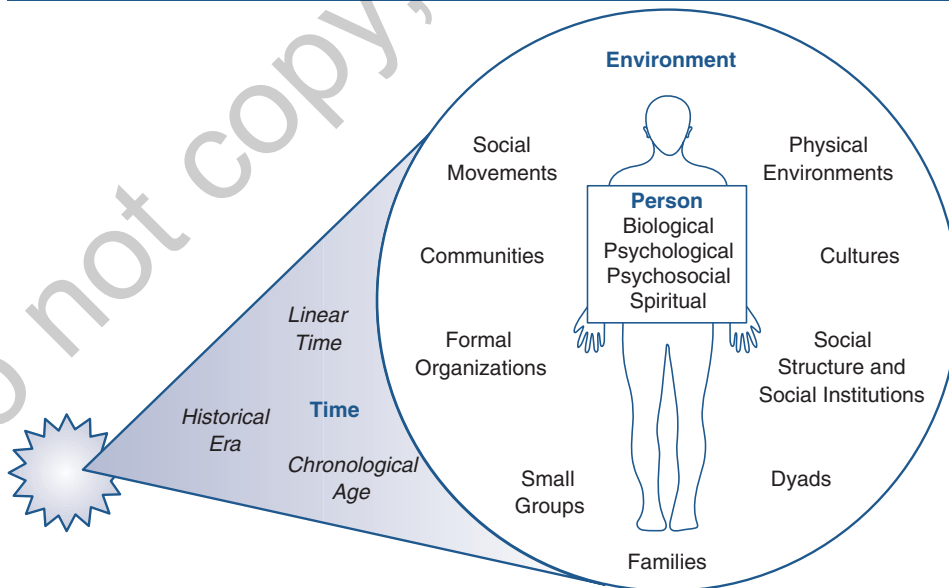FIGURE 1.1 ■ Person, Environment, and Time Dimensions

TABLE 1.1 ■ Definitions and Examples of Dimensions of Person, Environment, and Time		
Dimension	**Definition**	**Examples**
Person		
Biological	The body's biochemical, cell, organ, and physiological systems	Nervous system, endocrine system, immune system, cardiovascular system, musculoskeletal system, reproductive system
Psychological	The mind and behavior	Cognitions, emotions, personality, and self
Psychosocial	Self in relationship	Relationships, stress, coping
Spiritual	The aspect of the person that searches for meaning and purpose in life	Themes of morality; ethics; justice; interconnectedness; creativity; mystical states; prayer, meditation, and contemplation; relationships with a higher power
Environment		
Physical	The natural and human-built material aspects of the environment	Water, sun, trees, climate, buildings, landscapes
Culture	A system of knowledge, beliefs, values, language, symbols, patterns of behavior, material objects, and institutions that are created, learned, shared, and contested by a group of people	Values, beliefs, symbols, language, norms, subcultures, countercultures
Social structure and social institutions	Social structure: a set of interrelated social institutions Social institutions: stable, organized, patterned sets of roles, statuses, groups, and organizations that provide a basis for behavior in particular areas of social life	Social structure: social class Social institutions: government, economy, education, health care, social welfare, religion, mass media, and family
Dyads	Two persons bound together in some way	Parent and child, romantic couple, social worker and client
Families	A social group of two or more persons, characterized by ongoing interdependence with long-term commitments that stem from blood, law, or affection	Nuclear family, multigenerational family, chosen family

(*Continued*)

TABLE 1.1 ■ Definitions and Examples of Dimensions of Person, Environment, and Time (*Continued*)

Dimension	Definition	Examples
Small groups	Two or more people who interact with each other because of shared interests, goals, experiences, and needs	Friendship group, self-help group, therapy group, committee, task group, interdisciplinary team
Organizations	A collection of people deliberately coming together to pursue a common purpose	Civic and social service organizations, business organizations, professional associations
Communities	People bound either by geography or by webs of communication, sharing common ties, and interacting with one another	Territorial communities such as neighborhoods; relational communities such as the social work community, the disability community, a faith community, a soccer league, social media community
Social movements	Sustained and intentionally organized collective efforts, usually working outside of established institutions, to advance causes and challenge existing social systems	Civil rights movement, poor people's movements, disability movement, gay rights movement, environmental justice movement
Time		
Linear time	Time in terms of a straight line	Past, present, future
Historical era	A discrete block of time in human history	Progressive Era, the Great Depression, 1960s
Chronological age	Age of a person measured in years, months, and days from the date the person was born; may also be described in terms of a stage of the human life course	Six months old (infancy), 15 years old (adolescence), 80 years old (late adulthood)

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 1.1

What courses have you taken that added to your understanding of human behavior? How does content from any of these courses help you to understand Joshua's story and how a social worker might have been helpful to Joshua and his family at any time during their resettlement? Do you agree that the person and environment construct is still useful for social work? Explain your answer.

Personal Dimensions

Any story could be told from the perspective of any person in the story. The story at the beginning of this chapter is told from Joshua's perspective, but it could have been told from the perspectives of a variety of other persons, such as a member of a different ethnic group in the DRC, Joshua's father or one of his siblings, a staff member at the Gatumba refugee camp, the family in Burundi who took Joshua and his baby sister in, or the case manager at the refugee resettlement agency. You will want to recognize the multiple perspectives held by different persons involved in the stories of which you become a part in your social work activities.

You also will want tools for thinking about the various dimensions of the persons involved in these stories. In recent years, social work scholars, like contemporary scholars in other disciplines, have taken a *biopsychosocial approach* that recognizes human behavior as the result of interactions of integrated biological, psychological, and social systems (see Choy et al., 2015; Sapolsky, 2017; Yeager et al., 2016). In this approach, psychology—personality, emotion, cognition, and sense of self—is seen as inseparable from biology. Emotions and cognitions affect the health of the body and are affected by it (D. Banerjee et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2013; Yeager et al., 2016). Neurobiologists are identifying the brain circuitry involved in thoughts and emotions (Davidson & Begley, 2012; Sapolsky, 2017). They are finding evidence that the human brain is wired for social life and identifying the regions and circuitry of the "social brain" (Porcelli et al., 2019). They are also finding that physical and social environments have an impact on brain structure and processes and on body systems and disorders (McEwen & Bulloch, 2019). Interpersonal relationships are an important part of social environments. Two concepts are important in this study of the connection between physical and social environments and the human body: biological embedding and epigenetics. **Biological embedding** occurs when life experience changes the biological processes and affect later life health and well-being (Nist et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2022). **Epigenetics** is the study of how behaviors and environments can affect the way genes work, changing how the body reads a DNA sequence without changing the DNA (Li, 2021). Environments influence biology, but the same environment acts on diverse genetic material. This can help us understand how some people survived and some did not before the massacre in the Gatumba refugee camp. Two people with the same genetic makeup and biological characteristics can have very different behavioral outcomes, and two people with very different genetic makeup and biological characteristics can have the same or similar behavioral outcomes. In addition, two people with the same or similar experiences with the environment can have very different behavioral outcomes, and two people with very different experiences with the environment can have the same or similar behavioral outcomes (Sameroff, 2010).

Social work scholars and those in the social and behavioral sciences and medicine have argued for greater attention to the spiritual dimension of persons as well (Bowles et al., 2017; Crisp, 2017; Pandya, 2016; Pathan, 2016). Beginning in the late 20th century, a group of U.S. medical faculty and practitioners initiated a movement to reclaim medicine's earlier spiritual roots (Fleenor et al., 2022), and in 2014, Puchalski et al. reported that content on spirituality and health was incorporated into the curricula of over 75% of U.S. medical schools. Developments in neuroscience have generated new explorations of the unity of the biological, psychological,

and spiritual dimensions of the person. For example, some research has focused on the ways that emotions and thoughts, as well as spiritual states, influence the immune system and some aspects of mental health (Davidson & Begley, 2012; Dehghan et al., 2021; Holmes et al., 2019). One national longitudinal study examined the role of spirituality in physical and mental health after the collective trauma of the 9/11 attacks and found that high levels of spirituality were associated with fewer infectious ailments, more positive emotions, and more immediate processing of the traumatic event in the 3 years following the attacks (D. McIntosh et al., 2011). Spirituality and religious affiliation appear to be a source of resilience for Joshua, his family, and the Boise African community. In this book, we give substantial coverage to four personal dimensions: biological, psychological, psychosocial, and spiritual.
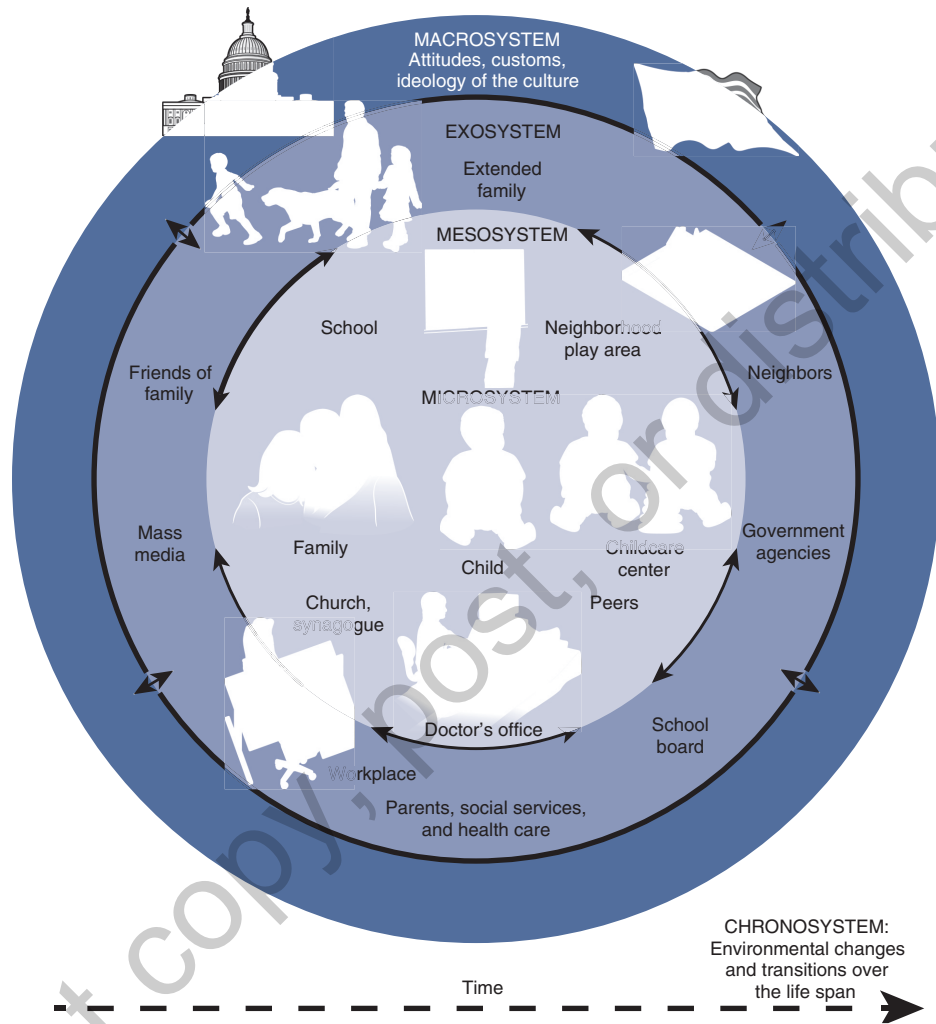
Environmental Dimensions

As we think about Joshua's story, we are aware of the important role that the multidimensional environment has played in his life journey to date. Social workers have always thought about the environment as multidimensional. Several models for classifying dimensions of the environment have been proposed over time. Social workers (see, e.g., Ashford et al., 2018) have been influenced by Urie Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological perspective, which identifies the five interdependent, nested categories or levels of systems presented in Figure 1.2. You might notice some similarities between Bronfenbrenner's model and the one presented in Figure 1.1. By adding chronosystems in his later work, Bronfenbrenner was acknowledging the importance of time in person–environment transactions, but this book presents a more fluid, less hierarchical model of person and environment than presented by Bronfenbrenner. Some social work models have included the physical environment (natural and built environments) as a separate dimension (see Norton, 2009). There is growing evidence of the impact of the physical environment on human well-being and growing concern about environmental justice issues in the physical environment.

Crudup et al. (2021) argue that the Bronfenbrenner ecological framework needs to be revised for anti-racist practice. They note that Bronfenbrenner's model puts the individual at the center of nesting systems and does not accurately portray the relationships, the interactions among and between systems. They suggest that visual representations like the one presented in Figure 1.2 put the focus and responsibility on the individual to overcome years of historical trauma, discrimination, and exclusion. They raise the question, "What would happen if the community was at the center rather than the individual?" (p. 657). These are important questions for social workers to consider. See Figure 1.3 for the visual model for the revised ecological systems framework proposed by Crudup et al. (2021). The funnel approach presented in Figure 1.3 captures the ongoing mix of history, systems of oppression (race and gender), community, social networks, family, and individual. It is an important addition to human behavior theory.

To have an up-to-date understanding of the multidimensional environment, I recommend that social workers have knowledge about the eight dimensions of environment described in Table 1.1 and presented as chapters in this book: the physical environment, cultures, social structure and social institutions, families, small groups, formal organizations, communities,

> **FIGURE 1.2 ■ Five Categories or Levels of Systems as Presented by Urie Bronfenbrenner**

MACROSYSTEM
Attitudes, customs, ideology of the culture

EXOSYSTEM
Extended family

MESOSYSTEM

School

Neighborhood play area

Neighbors

MICROSYSTEM

Friends of family

Mass media

Family

Child

Childcare center

Peers

Government agencies

Church, synagogue

Doctor's office

School board

Workplace

Parents, social services, and health care

CHRONOSYSTEM:
Environmental changes and transitions over the life span

Time

Sources: Adapted from *How Children Develop* (3rd ed.), by R. S. Siegler, J. S. DeLoache, and N. Eisenberg, 2011, Sage. Based on "The Bioecological Model of Human Development," by U. Bronfenbrenner and P. Morris, in W. Damon and R. Learner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical Models of Human Development* (6th ed.), 2006, John Wiley.

and social movements. We also need knowledge about dyadic relationships—those between two people, the most basic social relationship. Dyadic relationships receive attention throughout the book and are emphasized in Chapter 5, which focuses on the psychosocial person. Simultaneous consideration of multiple environmental dimensions provides new possibilities for action, perhaps even new or revised approaches to social work practice.

FIGURE 1.3   ■   **Crudup et al. Revised Ecological Systems Framework**
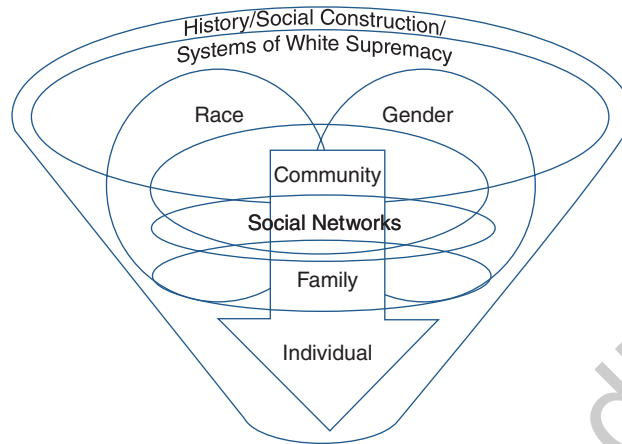
These dimensions are neither mutually exclusive nor hierarchically ordered. For example, family is sometimes referred to as a social institution, families can also be considered small groups or dyads, and family theorists write about family culture. Remember, dimensions are useful ways of thinking about person–environment configurations, but we should not think of them as detached realities.

Time Dimensions

Time is an important part of Joshua's story. He spent 10 years in his native land of the Democratic Republic of Congo, followed by 4 years of seeking safety in various places, and has now lived 15 years in Boise, Idaho, in the United States. He graduated from high school in 2011, from community college in 2013, and from university in 2017, the same year he received U.S. citizenship and married. The situation for Joshua and his family is very different from that of many DRC refugees resettled in the United States in more recent years, many of whom spent 10 to 20 years in refugee camps in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, or Zambia before being resettled in the United States (Mahoney et al., 2020). Think about how those long years in refugee camps may affect their resettlement experience.

When I was a doctoral student in a social work practice course, Professor Max Siporin began his discussion of social work assessment with this comment: "The date is the most important information on a written social work assessment." This was Siporin's way of acknowledging the importance of time in human behavior, of recognizing the ever-changing nature of both person and environment. The importance of time in human behavior is reflected in the finding that *time* is the most commonly used noun in print in the English language; *person* is the second most common (English Club, 2022).

There are many ways to think about time. Physics is generally seen as the lead discipline for studying time, and quantum physics has challenged much about the way we think about time. Various aspects of time are examined by other disciplines as well, and there are a number of different ways to think about time. In this book and the companion volume *Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course*, we examine three dimensions of time that have been studied by behavioral scientists as important to the understanding of human behavior: linear time, historical era, and chronological age.

Linear time—time ordered like a straight line from the past through the present and into the future—is the most common way that humans think about time. Although it is known that people in some cultures and groups think of time as stationary rather than moving (Boroditsky et al., 2011), contemporary behavioral science researchers are interested in what they call "mental time travel," the human ability to remember events from the past and to imagine and plan for the future (Eacott & Easton, 2012). There is some evidence that mental time travel is not human-specific but is better developed in humans than in other primates, currently thought to be related to evolutionary changes in the hippocampus (Benítez-Burraco, 2021). The research on mental time travel has focused on the conscious processes of reminiscence and anticipation, but there is also considerable evidence that past events are stored as unconscious material in the brain and the body and show up in our thoughts, emotions, and behavior (see Davidson & Begley, 2012; Sapolsky, 2017; Prescott et al., 2019). Traces of past events also exist in the natural and built environments, for example, in centuries-old buildings or in piles of debris following a hurricane or tornado.

Sapolsky (2017) uses the perspective of linear time to demonstrate how different dimensions of person and environment influence a specific behavior. When a behavior occurs, we can think about the multiple influences on that behavior in the context of time:

1. *A second before the behavior:* What went on in the person's brain a second before the behavior?

2. *Seconds to minutes before the behavior:* What sensory input reached the brain?

3. *Hours to days before the behavior:* What hormones acted hours to days earlier to change how responsive the person was to a particular sensory stimulus?

4. *Days to months before the behavior:* What features of the environment in the days and months before the behavior changed the structure and function of the person's brain and thus changed how it responded to hormones and environmental stimuli?

5. *Early development:* What genetic codes were created at the time of conception, and what elements of the fetal and early childhood environment shaped the structure and function of the brain and body and affected gene expression?

6. *Centuries to millennia before the behavior:* How has culture shaped the behavior of people living in that individual's group? What ecological factors, including the physical environment, helped shape that culture?

Linear time is measured by clocks and calendars. This approach to time has been called *clock time* (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). However, this approach to time is a relatively new invention, and many people in the contemporary world have a very different approach to time. In nonindustrialized countries, and in subcultures within industrialized countries, people operate on *event time*, allowing scheduling to be determined by events. For example, in agricultural societies, the most successful farmers are those who can be responsive to natural events—sunrise and sunset, rain, drought, temperature—rather than to scheduled events (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). On his farm in rural Tennessee, my grandfather operated with a combination of event time and clock time.

Clock time cultures often use the concept of **time orientation** to describe the extent to which individuals and collectivities are invested in the three temporal zones—past, present, and future (see Figure 1.4). Research indicates that cultures differ in their time orientation. In most cultures, however, some situations call for us to be totally immersed in the present, others call for historical understanding of the past and its impact on the present, and still others call for attention to future consequences and possibilities. Psychologists Philip Zimbardo and John Boyd (2008) have been studying time orientation for more than 30 years and have identified the six most common time perspectives held in the Western world.

- *past-positive:* invested in the past, focused on its positive aspects

- *past-negative:* invested in the past, focused on its negative aspects

- *present-hedonistic:* invested in the present and getting as much pleasure as possible from it

- *present-fatalistic:* invested in the present, sees life as controlled by fate

- *future:* invested in the future, organizes life around goals

- *transcendental-future:* invested in the future, focuses on new time after death

FIGURE 1.4 ■ Mental Time Travel/Time Orientation

Three dimensions of human behavior are captured in this photo—person, environment, and time.

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Zimbardo and Boyd's research using the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (ZTPI) in a number of Western societies indicates that human well-being is maximized when people in these societies live with a balance of past-positive, present-hedonistic, and future perspectives. People with biases toward past-negative and present-fatalistic perspectives are at greater risk of developing physical and mental health problems. Zimbardo and Boyd's (2008) book *The Time Paradox* suggests ways to become more past-positive, present, and future oriented to develop a more balanced time orientation. You might want to visit www.thetimeparadox.com and complete the ZTPI to investigate your own time orientation. It is important to remember the important role that life experiences play in time orientation and avoid pathologizing people who have developed past-negative time orientations as a result of an accumulation of mistreatment and marginalization.

Zimbardo and Boyd have carried out their research in Western societies and acknowledge that the ZTPI may not accurately reflect time orientation in other societies. They make particular note that their description of present-hedonistic and present-fatalistic does not adequately capture the way Eastern religions think about the present. Western behavioral scientists have begun to incorporate Eastern mindfulness practices of being more fully present in the current moment (present orientation) to help people buffer the persistent stresses of clock time and goal monitoring (future orientation). Research also indicates age-related differences in time orientation, with older adults tending to be more past oriented than younger age groups (Yeung et al., 2012). Women have been found to be more future oriented and men more present oriented (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). Researchers have observed that trauma survivors who experienced the most severe loss are more likely than other trauma survivors to be highly oriented to the past (see Zimbardo et al., 2012). Zimbardo and colleagues (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008; Zimbardo et al., 2012) suggest that trauma survivors may need assistance to think in different ways about

past trauma and to enhance their capacity for past-positive, present, and future thinking. With this goal in mind, they have developed what they call *time perspective therapy* for working with people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Sword et al., 2014). Researchers have found time perspective therapy to be effective in increasing psychological well-being in veterans with PTSD (Malekiha & Moradi, 2019). This approach might be useful to some members of the refugee community of which Joshua is a part. It is something to keep in mind when we interact with refugees, military veterans who have served in war zones, and other groups who have an increased likelihood of having a history of trauma, including racialized and other marginalized groups. It is also important for social workers to be aware of the meaning of time for the individuals and communities they serve.

Time is one of the three elements outlined in this text for studying human behavior. It recognizes that people and environments are ever changing, dynamic, and flowing.

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Two other dimensions of time have been identified as important to the understanding of human behavior. Both dimensions are aspects of linear time but have been separated out for special study by behavioral scientists. The first, *historical era*, refers to the specific block or period of time in which individual and collective lives are enacted. The historical era in which we live shapes our environments. The economies, physical environments, institutions, technologies, and geopolitical circumstances of a specific era provide both options for and constraints on human behavior. We can see what impact the historical era in which Joshua spent his childhood has had on his life trajectory. In an earlier time, he might have continued to live peacefully in Uvira. How would his life have been different or the same? Historical era has influenced Joshua's story in another way. His family resettled in the United States in 2007, a historical era in which large refugee admissions programs existed in the United States. If his family had wanted to resettle in the United States between 2016 and 2020, they might have met the plight of many DRC refugees who were denied an opportunity to settle here during a time when federal funds for resettlement service organizations were slashed (Mahoney et al., 2020). Researchers who study the impact of external migration across national lines (also known as international migration) on health point out that external migrants face different social, political, and economic contexts during different historical eras as conditions change in both their sending and receiving countries. In addition, shifting immigration policies and shifting attitudes toward particular migrant groups change the landscape for external migrants over different historical eras (see Torres & Young, 2016).

The second time dimension, *chronological age*, seems to be an important variable in every society. How people change at different ages and life stages as they pass from conception to death has been one of the most enduring ways of studying human behavior. Historical era is examined throughout this book and its companion book *Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course*, and chronological age is the organizing framework for *The Changing Life Course*.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 1.2

How would our understanding of Joshua's story change if we had no knowledge of his prior life experiences in the DRC and the Gatumba refugee camp—if we only assessed his situation based on his current functioning? What personal and environmental dimensions would we note in his current functioning?

ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL, RACIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The CSWE's statement of the purpose of social work indicates that social work practice is guided by a global perspective (CSWE, 2022). What exactly does it mean, and why is it valued? We are increasingly aware that we are part of an interconnected world, and Joshua's story is one reminder of this. Here are some aspects of what it means to take a global perspective:

- To be aware that my view of the world is not universally shared, and others may have a view of the world that is profoundly different from mine

- To have a growing awareness of the diversity of ideas and cultural practices found in human societies around the world

- To be curious about conditions in other parts of the world and how they relate to conditions in our own society

- To understand where I fit in the global social structure and social institutions

- To have a growing awareness of how people in other societies view my society

- To have a growing understanding of how the world works, with special attention to systems and mechanisms of privilege, inequality, and oppression around the world

We have always been connected to other peoples of the world, but those connections are being intensified by **globalization**, a process by which the world's people are becoming more interconnected economically, politically, environmentally, and culturally. It is a process of increased connectedness and interdependence that began at least 5 centuries ago but has intensified in recent times and is affecting people around the world (Mann, 2011; Sernau, 2020). This increasing connectedness is, of course, aided by rapid advancements in communication technology. There is much debate about whether globalization is a good thing or a bad thing, a conversation that is picked up in Chapter 9 as we consider the globalization of social institutions. What is important to note here is that globalization is increasing our experiences with social diversity and raising new questions about racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As we strive to provide a global context, we encounter current controversies about appropriate language to describe different sectors of the world. Following World War II, a distinction was made between First World, Second World, and Third World nations, with *First World* referring to the Western capitalist nations, *Second World* referring to the countries belonging to the socialist bloc led by the Soviet Union, and *Third World* referring to a set of countries that were primarily former colonies of the First World. More recently, many scholars have used the language of First World, Second World, and Third World to define global sectors in a slightly different way. First World has been used to describe the nations that were the first to industrialize, urbanize, and modernize. Second World has been used to describe nations that have industrialized but have not yet become central to the world economy. Third World has been used to refer to nonindustrialized nations that are considered expendable in the global economy. This approach has lost favor in recent years because it is thought to suggest some ranking of the value of the world's societies. Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1979) uses different language but makes a similar distinction; he refers to wealthy *core* countries, newly industrialized *semiperiphery* countries, and the poorest *periphery* countries. Wallerstein is looking not to rank the value of societies but to emphasize the ways that some societies (core) exploit other societies (periphery).

Other writers divide the world into *developed* and *developing* countries (McMichael & Weber, 2021), referring to the level of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. Although scholars who use those terms are not necessarily using them to rank the value of different societies, the terms are sometimes used that way. Still other scholars divide the world into the *Global*

North and the *Global South*, calling attention to a history in which the Global North colonized and exploited the people and resources of the Global South. This system of categorization focuses specifically on how some societies exploit other societies. And, finally, some writers talk about the *West* versus the *East*, where the distinctions are largely cultural. We recognize that such categories carry great symbolic meaning and can either mask or expose systems of power and exploitation. Different researchers have used different language and different characteristics to describe categories of nations, and when reporting on their findings, we have used their own language to avoid misrepresenting their findings—with some critique of the language and measures used.

Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

In its statement of social work competencies, the CSWE (2022, p. 9) identifies the following two interrelated competencies "advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice" and "engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion." In the following section we begin with a discussion of human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice and move to a discussion of anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice, diversity, and equity and social inclusion (ADEI) in practice. Before examining the different concepts presented in these two competencies, it is important to note that social, racial, economic, and environmental justice are intertwined, integrated in major social institutions. That will be the topic of Chapter 9, Social Structure and Social Institutions.

Let's look first at *human rights.* The CSWE (2022) states that "social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights" and "engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice" (p. 9). As social workers have expanded the conversation about social justice to include global social justice, they have more and more drawn on the concept of human rights to organize thinking about social justice (see Mapp, 2021; Wronka, 2017). In the aftermath of World War II, the newly formed United Nations (1948) created a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that spelled out the rights to which all humans were entitled, regardless of their place in the world, and this document has become a point of reference for subsequent definitions of human rights. Cox and Pawar (2013) identify eight philosophical values suggested by the UDHR: life (human and nonhuman); freedom and liberty; equality and nondiscrimination; justice; solidarity; social responsibility; evolution, peace, and nonviolence; and relationships between humankind and nature. This listing of human rights values reminds us of the many ways that basic human rights were denied to Joshua and his Banyamulenge ethnic group. It is important for social workers who work in refugee resettlement organizations to recognize the history of human right violations faced by the refugee families they meet and to ensure human rights protections in their resettlement work.

The idea that every human has certain basic rights is a relatively new idea and is not equally shared around the world today. Slavery was a universal institution in ancient and medieval times and still exists in some places, and the limitation of human rights of some was a feature of colonialization and continues today (Moore, 2020). Joshua's story is one example of the ways that human rights as we now think of them continue to be violated around the world. One of the issues that arises when we think of human rights is whether reparations should be made for human rights violations. The UDHR declaration on human rights claims that victims of human

rights violations are entitled to compensation (United Nations, 1948). *Transitional justice* is an approach to systematic and massive violations of human rights that calls for both accountability of the perpetrators and redress for victims. It includes such measures as criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparation programs, and institutional reforms (Seul, 2019). Growing numbers of such measures are being implemented in the United States and around the world.

Now, let's look at the concept of *social justice*. Several theories of social justice have been proposed. Probably the most frequently cited theory of social justice in the social work literature is John Rawls's (1971, 2001) theory of justice as fairness which focuses on the fair distribution of primary social goods. In the past decade or so, some social work scholars (M. Banerjee & Canda, 2012; Carlson et al., 2016; Navratilova et al., 2021) have recommended the capabilities approach to social justice as an alternative to Rawls's theory of justice as fairness. The capabilities approach was originally proposed by Amartya Sen (1992, 2009) and revised by Martha Nussbaum (2011). The capabilities approach draws on both Western and non-Western thinking. In this approach, capabilities are, in simplest terms, opportunities and freedoms to be or do what we view as worthwhile; justice is served when people have such opportunities and freedoms. Nussbaum carries the capabilities approach a step further and identifies 10 core capabilities that all people in all societies must have to lead a dignified life. She asserts that promotion of social justice involves supporting the capabilities of people who are denied opportunities and freedoms related to any of the core capabilities:

- *Life.* To live to the end of a normal life course

- *Bodily health.* To have good physical health and adequate nourishment and shelter

- *Bodily integrity.* To exercise freedom of movement, freedom from assault, and reproductive choices

- *Senses, imagination, and thought.* To have pleasant sensory experiences, pain avoidance, adequate education, imagination, free self-expression, and religious freedom

- *Emotion.* To experience a full range of emotions and to love and be loved

- *Practical reason.* To think critically and make wise decisions

- *Affiliation.* To live with others with empathy and compassion, without discrimination

- *Concern for other species.* To show concern for animals, plants, and other aspects of nature

- *Play.* To laugh and play and enjoy recreational activities

- *Control over one's political and material environment.* To participate freely in the political process and have equal access to employment and property

In contrast with Nussbaum, Sen argues that no list of core capabilities can be arbitrarily delineated because of the great diversity of people and environments in the world. He thinks that individuals should be left to decide which capabilities they choose to enhance or neglect.

Social workers also value the advancement of *racial justice*, which is the systemic fair treatment of all people and equitable opportunities for everyone. The identity of the United States is rooted in the political ideals of liberty, equality under the law, dignity, and individual rights, an identity juxtaposed with a history of racial injustices such as slavery, Jim Crow, racial terror, stolen property, discrimination in many forms, and genocide and cultural annihilation of Indigenous people, a history that has created pervasive structural inequality. Heather Cox Richardson (2020) writes that the history of the United States is built on paradox and contradictions. The very men who wrote the founding documents that declared "all men" equal were slave owners. When thinking of racial justice, the first question that arises is how does a society make the transition from a long history of racial injustice that has accumulated over time to become a society characterized by racial justice? Is transitional justice necessary and, if so, what measures are needed? There are some examples of reparation compensations in the United States: payments to Japanese Americans interned during World War II, survivors of police abuse in Chicago, victims of forced sterilization, and Black residents of a Florida town that was burned by a murderous mob. In 2021, Virginia legislators passed a law that requires five public universities to make reparations to descendants of enslaved workers who built their institutions, using such measures as scholarships, community-based economic development, and memorial programs (Perry & Barr, 2021).

The future of transitional racial justice in the United States is unclear, but social workers can participate in two types of reforms to advance racial justice in the United States and other countries. First, the truthful racial history must be told. In the United States there are many attempts to prevent the true telling of racial history in public primary and secondary schools. Recently, this resistance to racial truth-telling in public schools has appeared in the form of state and local laws prohibiting the teaching of critical race theory (discussed in Chapter 2). Social workers should join in the effort to promote truth-telling about race in public school curricula. Second, every major social institution must be examined for ways it perpetuates systemic racism and the necessary institutional reforms must be pursued. Social workers must put a critical eye to the systemic racism in the organizations in which they are employed and the ones with which they have collaborative relationships. In addition, themes of white superiority in interpersonal interactions must be recognized, challenged, and disrupted.

Advancing *economic justice* is a goal of social work both internationally and in the United States (CSWE, 2022; International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2020). And yet there is no agreed-on definition of economic justice. The Boston University School of Public Health (2017) defines economic justice as "a set of moral principles for building economic institutions, the ultimate goal of which is to create an opportunity for each person to create a sufficient material foundation upon which to have a dignified, productive, and creative life beyond economics" (para. 3). This definition focuses on economic justice as the provision of the necessary economic resources for social inclusion, a topic to be covered shortly. As I am sure you have observed, there are many conflicting ideas about what constitutes a fair distribution of income, wealth, and economic opportunity. Economic justice includes issues of fair price in the economic market, fair wage, and just profit.

Writing about economic justice and social work, Simmons (2021) defines six realms of economic justice for social work consideration:

1. Issues of the interplay of economic inequality with racial and gender inequalities

2. Workplace rights, including the right to organize

3. Wage levels

4. Immigrant worker rights

5. Community-labor partnerships

6. Expansion of social programs, such as assistance to unemployed, underemployed, and never-employed people; expanding unemployment insurance; expanding nutritional assistance; and so on

In its statement of the grand challenges for social work, the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW, 2021) includes two economic justice issues: (1) building financial capability and assets for all, and (2) reducing extreme economic inequality. As discussed in Chapter 9, Social Structure and Social Institutions, economic inequality has been growing around the world, and especially in the United States, under the political theory of neoliberalism and the rate of growth accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social work has recently committed to advancing *environmental justice*, which involves equitable access to clean and healthy environments for all people, the same degree of protection from environmental hazards or degradation across demographic groups or communities, and equal inclusion in decision-making about how to create healthy communities. Issues of environmental justice will be discussed in Chapter 7, The Physical Environment.

Anti-oppressive and Anti-racist Practice

In the case study at the beginning of the chapter, Joshua's ethnicity, but not his race, opened him to human rights violations in the DRC. He has been surprised to learn the extent of racial bias and discrimination in the United States. The CSWE (2022) states that "social workers demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice" at all levels of practice (p. 10). Let's look first at the broader idea, anti-oppressive practice. **Oppression** is the act of disempowering, marginalizing, silencing, or otherwise subordinating a social group or category. It may include observable actions but more typically refers to complex, covert, interconnected processes and practices (such as discriminating, devaluing, and exploiting a group of individuals). To practice anti-oppressive social work, social workers must recognize and disrupt a variety of mechanisms of oppression.

Suzanne Pharr (1988) provides some useful conceptual tools that can help us recognize oppression and injustice when we see it. She identifies a set of mechanisms of oppression, whereby the everyday arrangements of social life systematically block opportunities for some groups and inhibit their power to exercise self-determination. Table 1.2 provides an overview of these mechanisms of oppression. As you review the list, you may recognize some that are familiar to you, such

TABLE 1.2 ■ Common Mechanisms of Oppression	
Economic power and control	Limiting of resources, mobility, education, and employment options to all but a few
Myth of scarcity	Myth used to pit people against one another, suggests that resources are limited and blames people (e.g., poor people, immigrants) for using too many of them
Defined norm	A standard of what is good and right, against which all are judged
The other	Those who fall outside "the norm" but are defined in relation to it, seen as abnormal, inferior, marginalized
Invisibility	Keeping "the other's" existence, everyday life, and achievements unknown
Distortion	Selective presentation or rewriting of history so that only negative aspects of the other are included
Stereotyping	Generalizing the actions of a few to an entire group, denying individual characteristics and behaviors
Violence and the threat of violence	Laying claim to resources, then using might to ensure superior position
Lack of prior claim	Excluding anyone who was not originally included and labeling as disruptive those who fight for inclusion
Blaming the victim	Condemning the others for their situation, diverting attention from the roles that dominants play in the situation
Internalized oppression	Internalizing negative judgments of being the other, leading to self-hatred, depression, despair, and self-abuse
Horizontal hostility	Extending internalized oppression to one's entire group as well as to other subordinate groups, expressing hostility to other oppressed persons and groups rather than to members of dominant groups
Isolation	Physically isolating people as individuals or as a "minority" group
Assimilation	Pressuring members of minority groups to drop their culture and differences and become a mirror of the dominant culture
Tokenism	Rewarding some of the most assimilated others with position and resources
Emphasis on individual solutions	Emphasizing individual responsibility for problems and individual solutions rather than collective responsibility and collective solutions

Source: Adapted from *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, by S. Pharr, 1988, Chardon Press.

as stereotyping and perhaps blaming the victim. There may be others that you have not previously given much thought to. You may also recognize, as I do each time I look at the list, that although some of these mechanisms of oppression are sometimes used quite intentionally, others are not so intentional but occur as we do business as usual. For example, when you walk into your classroom or other public room, do you give much thought to the person who cleans that room, what wage this person is paid, their financial security during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether this is the only job this person holds, and what opportunities and barriers this person has experienced in life? Most likely the room is cleaned in the evening after it has been vacated, and the person who cleans it, like many people who provide services that make our lives more pleasant, is invisible to us. Giving serious thought to common mechanisms of oppression can help us to recognize oppression and social injustice and think about ways to challenge it.

One form of anti-oppressive practice is *anti-racist practice*. **Anti-racism** is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. **Racialized groups** and *racialized communities* are terms frequently used to refer to all people who are not considered white in the processes of categorizing and marginalizing people according to race for the purpose of maintaining white supremacy and social exclusion. In the United States, racialized groups are also referred to as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), often with the intent of centering their experiences in a racialized world. In this book, both racialized group and BIPOC are used to refer to the same group of people. At times, researchers study only one racialized group, such as Black or African American or Indigenous, and in those situations, the specific group will be noted using the researcher's language.

Although social work has long had a stated commitment to social justice, both social work education and the practice of social work have too often reflected white supremacy. The telling of the history of the profession has focused on white women leaders such as Jane Addams and Mary Richmond and been silent on the early leadership of the many BIPOC social work pioneers such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Eugene Kinckle Jones, Dorothy Height, W. E. B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, and many other hidden BIPOC social reform leaders (Wright et al., 2021). The profession has too often thought of BIPOC people as receivers, not providers, of service and used theories and diagnostic systems of trauma that do not consider the cumulative trauma faced by racialized groups (Riquino et al., 2021). It has too often failed to recognize the natural helping networks of Indigenous and other racialized groups (McCleary & Simard, 2021). Human behavior and practice theories that center white culture have been used, and educational institutions and service organizations have too often been unwelcoming, even hostile, spaces for members of racialized groups. The issue of culture-bound human behavior theories will be explored in Chapter 2 of this book. Social workers dedicated to anti-oppressive, anti-racist practice can benefit from learning the methods for identifying and opposing racism presented in Sue and colleagues' book *Microintervention Strategies* (Sue et al., 2021).

Diversity

The CSWE (2022) states that

Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are
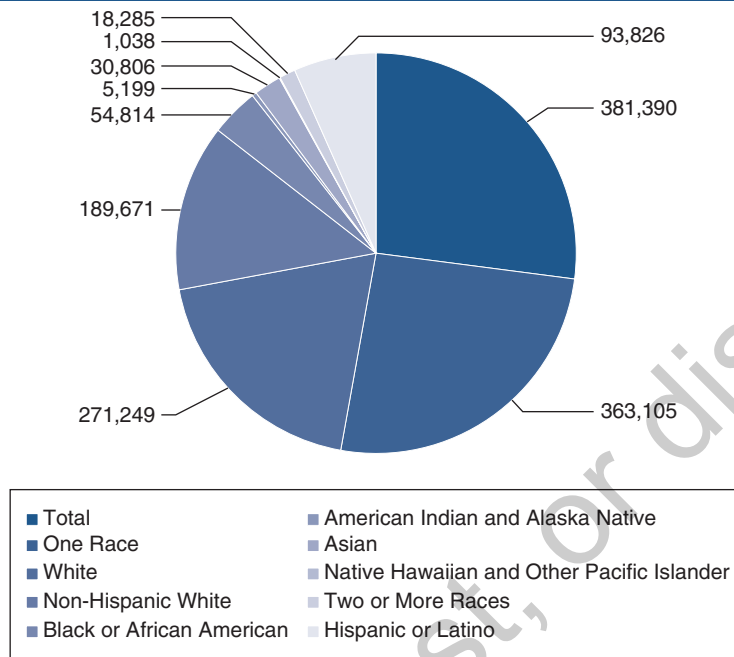
understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. (p. 9)

To understand who Joshua (case study at the beginning of the chapter) is, we would want to think of him in relation to some of these factors.

Diversity has always been a part of the social reality in the United States. Even before the Europeans came, the Indigenous people were divided into about 200 distinct societies with about 200 different languages (Parrillo, 2013). Since the inception of the United States of America, many waves of immigration have created the multiethnic, multicultural character of the country. There have always been tensions about how we as a nation handle diversity. Are we a *melting pot* where all are melted into one indistinguishable model of citizenship, or are we a *pluralist society* in which groups have separate identities, cultures, and ways of organizing but work together in mutual respect? Pluralism is consistent with social work's concern for human rights.

Even though diversity has always been present in the United States, it is accurate to say that some of the diversity in our national social life is new. There is increasing racial, ethnic, and religious diversity in the United States, and the mix in the population stream has become much more complex in recent years. The United States was 87% white in 1925, 80% white in 1950, and 72% white in 2000; by 2045, it is projected that we will be about 49.7% white (Frey, 2018; Taylor & Cohn, 2012). Figure 1.5 shows the projected racial profile of the United States for 2045. It is important to note, as you will read in Chapter 8, Cultures, that the meaning of *white* has been and continues to be a moving target in the United States. But why is this demographic change happening at this time? A major driving force is the demographic reality that native-born white people are no longer reproducing at replacement level in the wealthy postindustrial nations, which, if it continues, will lead to a declining population skewed toward advanced age. One solution used by some countries, including the United States, is to change immigration policy to allow new streams of cross-national migration. The current rate of foreign-born persons in the United States is lower than it has been throughout most of the past 150 years, but foreign-born persons are less likely to be white than when immigration policy, prior to 1965, strictly limited entry for persons of color. With the recent influx of immigrants from around the globe, the United States has become one of many ethnically and racially diverse nations in the world today. In many wealthy postindustrial countries, including the United States, there is much anti-immigrant sentiment, even though the economies of these countries are dependent on such migration. Waves of immigration have historically been accompanied by anti-immigrant sentiment. There appear to be many reasons for anti-immigrant sentiment, including fear that new immigrants will dilute the "purity" of the native culture, racial and religious bias, and fear of economic competition. Wilkerson (2020) proposes that fear of no longer being the majority race is fueling a rise in white nationalism in the United States and is the motive behind such political phenomena as calls for restricted immigration, gerrymandered congressional districts, and voter suppression laws. As this chapter is being written, a "great replacement" conspiracy theory is circulating, claiming that there is an ongoing active but covert effort to replace white populations in countries that are currently white majority (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022).

FIGURE 1.5 ■ Racial Profile of U.S. Population, 2045

Legend:
- Total
- One Race
- White
- Non-Hispanic White
- Black or African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races
- Hispanic or Latino

Values shown: 18,285; 1,038; 30,806; 5,199; 54,814; 189,671; 271,249; 93,826; 381,390; 363,105

Source: The US Will Become "Minority White" in 2045, Census Projects: Youth Minorities Are the Engine of Future Growth, by W. Frey, 2018, Brookings. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/.

On the other hand, some of the diversity in our social life is not new but simply newly recognized. In the contemporary era, we have been developing a heightened consciousness of human differences—gender, gender identity, and gender expression differences; racial and ethnic differences; cultural differences; religious differences; differences in sexual orientation; differences in abilities and disabilities; differences in family forms; and so on. It is important for social workers to respect diversity of human experiences and recognize differences *within* groups as well as *between* groups.

As we seek to honor differences, we make a distinction between heterogeneity and diversity. We use *heterogeneity* to refer to individual-level variations—differences among individuals. For example, as a social worker who came in contact with Joshua's family at the time they were resettled in Boise, you would want to recognize the ways in which they are different from you and from other people you know, and different from other people of Banyamulenge heritage. An understanding of heterogeneity allows us to recognize the uniqueness of each person and situation. **Diversity**, on the other hand, is used to refer to patterns of group differences. Diversity refers to social groups, groups of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within a category of social identity. Knowledge of diversity helps us to provide culturally sensitive services.

When we think about human diversity, it is important to think in terms of **intersectionality**, a theory of group-based social identity that recognizes that all of us are simultaneously members of a number of socially constructed identity groups, such as those based on gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, religion, geographical location, disability/ability, and so on (Crenshaw, 2021; Guittar & Guittar, 2015; Holman & Walker, 2021). Intersectionality theory is rooted in the writings of U.S. Black feminists who challenged the idea of a universal gendered experience (see Collins, 2012; Collins & Bilge, 2020). For any one of us, our *social location* (place in society) is at the intersection of our multiple identity groups. We must recognize how our own particular social location shapes how we see the world, what we notice, and how we interpret what we "see." Intersectionality theory emphasizes that either advantage or disadvantage is associated with identity groups, and when considering the life journey of any one individual, it is important to consider the multiple identity groups of which they are a part (Brown, 2018).

Attending to diversity involves recognition of the power relations and the patterns of opportunities and constraints for social groups. If we are interested in the Banyamulenge community in our city, for example, we will want to note, among other things, the neighborhoods where they live, the access to community resources and quality of the housing stock in those neighborhoods, the comparative educational attainment in the community, the occupational profile of the community, the comparative income levels, and so on. When we attend to diversity, we not only note the differences between groups but also how socially constructed hierarchies of power are superimposed on these differences.

Recent U.S. scholarship in the social sciences has emphasized the ways in which three types of categorizations—gender, race, and class—are used to develop hierarchical social structures that influence social identities and life chances (Rothenberg, 2016; Sernau, 2020). This literature suggests that these social categorizations create **privilege**, or unearned advantage, for some groups and disadvantage for other groups. In a much-cited article, Peggy McIntosh (2016) has pointed out the mundane daily advantages of white privilege that are not available to members of groups of color, such as assurances "that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race," and "Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability." We could also generate lists of advantages of male privilege, age privilege, economic privilege, heterosexual privilege, ability privilege, religious privilege, and so on. McIntosh argues that members of privileged groups benefit from their privilege but have not been taught to think of themselves as privileged. They take for granted that their advantages are normal and universal and are often resistant to attempts to point out the privilege of their social locations. For survival, members of nonprivileged groups must learn a lot about the lives of groups with privilege, but groups with privileged status are not similarly compelled to learn about the lives of members of nonprivileged groups.

Michael Schwalbe (2006) argues that those of us who live in the United States also carry "American privilege," which comes from our dominant position in the world. (I would prefer to call this "U.S. privilege," because people living in Canada, Ecuador, and Brazil also live in America.) According to Schwalbe, among other things, American privilege means that we don't have to bother to learn about other countries or about the impact of our foreign policy on people living in those countries. For example, we don't have to learn about how our society's romance

with computers and cell phones helps to drive conflict over the natural resource of coltan in the Congo. American privilege also means that we have access to cheap goods that are produced by poorly paid workers in impoverished countries. As Chapter 9 shows, the income and wealth gap between nations is mind-boggling. In 2020, the average per capita income in the DRC was $544.00 in U.S. dollars, compared with $63,593.40 in the United States (World Bank, 2020). The DRC is rich in natural resources wanted by the United States and other wealthy nations, but the country's economic conditions have been hurt by a colonial history followed by continuous war (Sernau, 2020). It is becoming increasingly difficult to deny the costs of exercising American privilege by remaining ignorant about the rest of the world and the impact our actions have on other nations.

This is a good place to interject some words about the language of diversity as used in this book. In their study of human diversity, human behavior researchers continuously struggle to find respectful language to define different identity groups. You have probably noticed that the language used to describe identity groups is ever-changing and that not every member of a given identity group embraces the same language at a given point in time. For example, there is much controversy over the use of the term Latinx to describe people from Latin America (Newport, 2022). There are personal, generational, regional, and other types of variations in preferred diversity language. We have also found that different researchers define and measure identity groups in different ways—and the U.S. Census Bureau and other governmental agencies use their own, sometimes peculiar, language to describe and measure identity groups. In this book, when we report on human behavior research, we use the language of the researcher so as not to distort their work. Likewise, when we report on census data, research based on census data, or data from other governmental agencies, we use the language of those agencies. That means that different terms are used at different points to describe the same identity group. We are also guided by copyediting style manuals regarding bias-free language. We hope that you will recognize that the ever-changing language of diversity has both constructive potential to find creative ways to affirm diversity and destructive potential to dichotomize diversity into *the norm* and *the other*.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 1.3

What impact is globalization having on your own life? Do you see it as having a positive or negative impact on your life? What about for Joshua? Do you think globalization is having a positive or negative impact on his life? Do you agree with Martha Nussbaum that it is important for all people to have opportunities and freedoms in relation to the 10 core capabilities she identifies? How do you see Joshua in relation to these core capabilities?
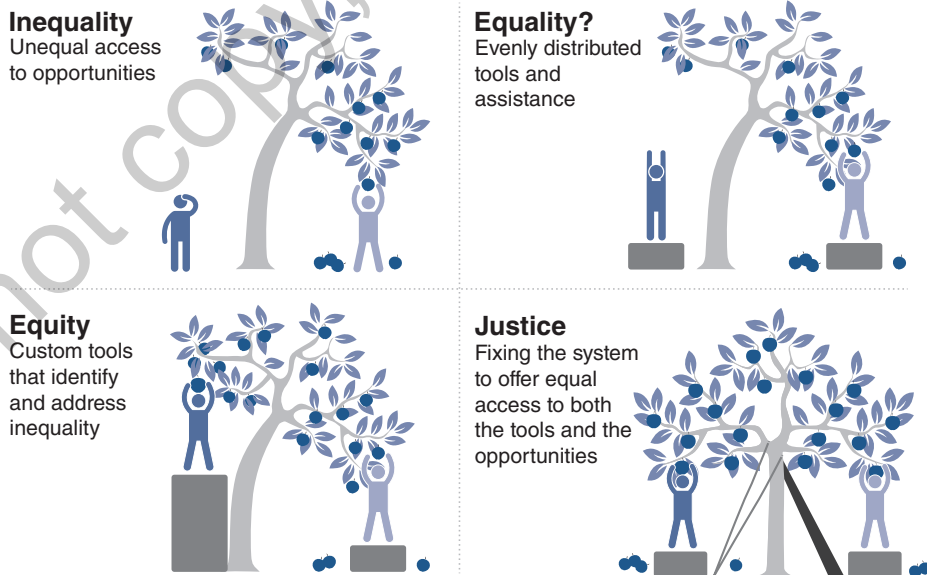
Equity and Social Inclusion

When Joshua and his siblings entered public school in Boise, Idaho, their lack of knowledge of the English language meant they were not on a level playing field with native English speakers. Joshua and his siblings were among the one in five students in the United States who speak a

language other than English at home (New America, 2022). Special assistance to English learners in the school system is essential to level the playing field for these students, to allow them to pursue learning and be included in the social life of the school.

As social workers participate in advancing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, we focus on two important interrelated goals: equity and social inclusion. **Equity** is an ethical norm that proposes that existing social, racial, economic, political, and environmental inequalities require policies and practices that aim to level the playing field for those in disadvantaged position, recognizing that not all people are starting from the same place. As demonstrated in Figure 1.6, the principle of equity recognizes that equal treatment may be unfair, and measures must be taken to ensure that those with fewer resources have equal access to social inclusion. Although it has not been fully realized, equity was the goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which became law in the United States in 1990 (Pappas, 2020). It required reasonable accommodations to allow people with disabilities to be included in all sectors of society.

Social inclusion is a multidimensional process to ensure that people at risk of being left out gain the opportunities and resources needed to participate fully in all aspects of life, including civic, social, economic, political, and cultural life. It involves creating environments where individuals and groups are respected, valued, and supported and eliminating policies, practices, and behaviors that result in the marginalization and exclusion of some. Social inclusion involves removing both structural and interpersonal barriers to the full participation by excluded groups. It recognizes that some groups have been excluded not only by social policies and social institutions but also by stigmatizing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Berger and Sarnyai (2015) report that chronic exposure to social exclusion affects the brain in such a way

FIGURE 1.6 ■ Inequality, Equality, Equity, and Justice

Inequality
Unequal access to opportunities

Equality?
Evenly distributed tools and assistance

Equity
Custom tools that identify and address inequality

Justice
Fixing the system to offer equal access to both the tools and the opportunities

to lead to social defeat, a sense that one has no power to affect the course of one's life and may contribute to the development of mental illness.

Figure 1.6 demonstrates that social inclusion and justice require changing social systems where possible to offer equal access to resources and opportunities. Social inclusion also requires that people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. This idea has been captured in the phrase "nothing about me without me," a phrase that has been used to mean that medical decisions should not be made without consulting the patient. It has also been stated as "nothing about us without us" to communicate that no social policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy. Social workers have an important role to play to ensure that all people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

The U.S. social welfare institution has, historically, put primary emphasis on promoting independence and preventing dependence. In contrast, the European social welfare states have put more emphasis on promoting social inclusion and using the social welfare institution as an investment to protect the health of the society, which they refer to as social protection (European Commission: Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, 2022). Some policy analysts in the United States argue that social inclusion should be the goal of U.S. social welfare policy (Boushey et al., 2007), and this should be a goal of legislative advocacy by U.S. social workers.

KNOWING AND DOING

Social workers, like other professional practitioners, must find a way to move from knowing to doing, from "knowing about" and "knowing that" to "knowing how to" (for fuller discussion of this issue, see Hutchison et al., 2007). Social workers *know about* human behavior for the purpose of *doing*. Like architects, engineers, physicians, and teachers, social workers are faced with complex problems and case situations that are unique and uncertain. You no doubt will find that social work education, social work practice, and even this book will stretch your capacity to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty. That is important because, as Carol Meyer (1993) suggested, "There are no easy or simple [social work] cases, only simplistic perceptions" (p. 63). There are four important ingredients of "knowing how" to do social work: knowledge about the case, knowledge about the self, values and ethics, and scientific knowledge. These four ingredients are intertwined in the process of doing social work. The focus of this book is on scientific knowledge, but all four ingredients are essential in social work practice. Before moving to a discussion of scientific knowledge, let's take a brief look at the other three ingredients.

Knowledge About the Case

In this context, *case* is used to mean the situation at hand, a situation that has become problematic for some person or group of people, resulting in a social work intervention. Our first task as social workers is to develop as good an understanding of the situation as possible: Who is involved in the situation, and how are they involved? What is the nature of the relationships of the people involved? What are the physical, societal, cultural, organizational, and community contexts of the situation? What are the contextual constraints as well as the contextual resources

for bringing change to the situation? What elements of the case are maintaining the problematic situation? How have people tried to cope with the situation? What preferences do the involved people have about the types of intervention to use? What is the purpose, culture, and social resources of the social agency to whose attention the situation is brought? You might begin to think about how you would answer some of these questions in relation to Joshua's family when they arrived in Boise and were assisted by the refugee resettlement agency.

It is important to note that knowledge about the case is influenced by the quality of the relationship between the social worker and client(s). There is good evidence that people are likely to reveal more aspects of their situation if they are approached with commitment, an open mind, warmth, empathic attunement, authentic responsiveness, and mutuality (Hepworth et al., 2017). For example, as Joshua became comfortable in the interview, feeling validated by the interviewer, he began to engage in deeper reflection about what happened in the DRC and Burundi. He had never put the story together in this way before. This can be an important part of his grieving and adjustment process. The integrity of knowledge about the case is related to the quality of the relationship, and the capacity for relationship is related to knowledge about the self.

But knowledge about the case requires more than simply gathering information. We must select and order the information at hand and decide if further information is needed. This involves making a series of decisions about what is relevant and what is not. It also involves searching for recurring themes as well as contradictions in the information. For example, family loss is a consistent theme throughout Joshua's story, as is his strength and commitment to move forward to adjust to new situations. Listening to his story, you notice that the Gatumba massacre is mentioned very early in the story telling, and this alerts us to the possibility that other Banyamulenge refugees may need to reflect on the Gatumba massacre.

To assist you in moving between knowledge about the case and scientific knowledge, each chapter in this book begins as this one does with one or more case studies. Most of the case studies change names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality. Each of these unique stories suggests what scientific knowledge is needed. For example, to work effectively with Banyamulenge refugees like Joshua, you will want to understand some things about the DRC, the Banyamulenge ethnic group, grief reactions, the acculturation process, challenges facing immigrant families, and cross-cultural communication. Throughout the chapters, the stories are woven together with relevant scientific knowledge. Keep in mind that scientific knowledge is necessary, but you will not be an effective practitioner unless you take the time to learn about the unique situation of each person or collectivity you serve. It is the unique situation that guides what scientific knowledge is needed.

Knowledge About the Self

In his book *The Spiritual Life of Children*, Robert Coles (1990) wrote about the struggles of a 10-year-old Hopi girl to have her Anglo teacher understand Hopi spirituality. Coles suggested to the girl that perhaps she could try to explain her tribal nation's spiritual beliefs to the teacher. The girl answered, "But they don't listen to hear *us;* they listen to hear themselves" (p. 25, emphasis in the original). This young girl has captured, in a profound way, a major challenge to our everyday personal and professional communications: the tendency to approach

the world with preconceived notions that we seek to validate by attending to some information while ignoring other information (Kahneman, 2011). The capacity to understand oneself is necessary to tame this very human tendency.

Three types of self-knowledge are essential for social workers: understanding of one's own thinking processes, understanding of one's own emotions, and understanding of one's own social location. We must be able to think about our thinking, a process called *metacognition*. We all have biases that lead to thinking errors, and it is very difficult to get control of our biases. In addition, both anger and stress can lead us to think less critically and make erroneous judgments (Sapolsky, 2017). As Daniel Kahneman (2011) suggests in his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, constant questioning of our own thinking can become tedious and immobilize us. The best we can do, therefore, is to understand the types of situations in which we are likely to make mistakes and slow down and use multiple sources of information to help correct for our biases. We also must be able to recognize what emotions get aroused in us when we hear stories like Joshua's and when we contemplate the challenges of a given situation, and we must find a way to use those emotions in ways that are helpful and avoid using them in ways that are harmful. Although writing about physicians, Gunnar Biorck (1977) said it well when he commented that practitioners make "a tremendous number of judgments each day, based on inadequate, often ambiguous data, and under pressure of time, and carrying out this task with the outward appearance of calmness, dedication and interpersonal warmth" (p. 146).

In terms of social location, social workers must identify and reflect on where they fit in a system of social identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, social class, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability, age, and so on. A strong personal identity in relation to important societal categories, and an understanding of the impact of those identities on other people, is essential for successful social work intervention across cultural lines. This type of self-knowledge requires reflecting on where one fits in systems of privilege and disadvantage.

Values and Ethics

The CSWE (2022) indicates the importance of values and ethics for social work practice by making it number one in its identification of social work competencies: Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior (p. 4). Knowledge about the self is critical to ethical and professional social work practice. To engage in such practice, we must recognize the difference between personal and professional values and use reflection and self- regulation to manage our personal values and our very human cognitive biases and emotional reactions. That is why the first learning objective for each chapter in this book and the companion volume *Dimensions of Human Behavior: The Changing Life Course* is to recognize one's own cognitive and emotional reactions to the case studies that introduce the chapter. Doing this kind of self-reflection is an important part of ethical social work practice.

The process of developing knowledge about the case is a dialogue between the social worker and client system, and social workers have a well-defined value base to guide the dialogue. Six core values of the profession have been set out in a preamble to the Code of Ethics established by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in 1996 and revised in 2021 (NASW, 2021b). These values are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of

human relationships, integrity, and competence. The value of social justice was discussed earlier in the chapter. The Code of Ethics articulates an ethical principle for each of the core values:

1. Service. Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

2. Social justice. Social workers challenge social injustice.

3. Dignity and worth of the person. Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

4. Importance of human relationships. Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

5. Integrity. Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

6. Competence. Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Value 6, competence, requires that we recognize the science available to inform our work. It requires understanding the limitations of the available science for considering the situation at hand but also that we use the strongest available evidence to make practice decisions. This is where scientific knowledge comes into the picture.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 1.4

If you were the social worker at Joshua's refugee resettlement program when he first arrived in the United States, what knowledge about the case would you like to have? What information would you find most important? What emotional reactions did you have to reading Joshua's story? What did you find yourself thinking about his story? Where do you see Joshua fitting in systems of privilege and disadvantage? Where do you see yourself fitting? How might any of this impact your ability to be helpful to Joshua and his family?

SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE: THEORY AND RESEARCH

The CSWE (2022) notes that social work practice is guided by "knowledge based on scientific inquiry" (p. 14). Ethical social workers are always searching for or recalling what is known about the situations they encounter, turning to the social and behavioral sciences for this information. Scientific knowledge serves as a screen against which the knowledge about the case is considered. It suggests *hypotheses*, or tentative statements, to be explored and tested, not facts to be applied, in transactions with a person or social group. Because of the breadth and complexity of social work practice, usable knowledge must be culled from diverse sources and a number of scientific

disciplines. **Science** is a systematically organized body of knowledge on a particular subject. Scientific knowledge is the knowledge produced by scientific inquiry. Two interrelated approaches to knowledge building, theory and empirical research, fit the scientific criteria of being logical, systematic, and documented for the public. Together, they create the base of knowledge that social workers need to understand human behavior. In your coursework on social work research, you will be learning much more about these concepts, so only a brief description is provided here to help you understand how this book draws on theory and research.

Theory

As we discuss in Chapter 2, the CSWE (2022) notes that "social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge" (p. 11). Social workers use theory to help organize and make sense of the situations they encounter. A **theory** is a system of ideas that helps us make sense of interrelated phenomena. Human behavior theories help us think about and understand the complexities of human behavior, both individual behavior and collective behavior. As Elaine Leeder (2020) so aptly put it, "To have a theory is to have a way of explaining the world" (p. 8). Thus, theory gives us a framework for engaging with, assessing, and intervening with client systems. It seems to be human nature to develop theories to make sense of the world. As social workers we put our personal theories of the world to the test by studying theories proposed by serious scholars of human behavior. Theories allow us to organize our thinking, but theories are not "fact" or "truth." They can provide a window on human behavior but if taken as fact or truth they can put us in a box that does not allow us to see alternative views of human behavior.

Other terms that you will often encounter in discussions of theories are *model*, *paradigm*, and *perspective*. *Model* usually is used to refer to a visual representation of the relationships between concepts, *paradigm* most often means a way of seeing the world, and *perspective* is an emphasis, view, or lens through which we look. Paradigms and perspectives are broader and more general than theory. But different scholars use these terms in different ways, and sometimes interchangeably.

If you are to make good use of theory, you should know something about how it is constructed. *Concepts* are the building blocks of theory. They are symbols, or mental images, that summarize observations, feelings, or ideas. Concepts allow us to communicate about the phenomena of interest. Some relevant concepts in Joshua's story are culture, cultural conflict, refugee, resettlement, acculturation, trauma, loss, and grief. Theoretical concepts are put together to form *propositions*, or assertions about the relationships among concepts. For example, loss and grief theory proposes that the loss of a person, object, or ideal leads to a grief reaction. This proposition, which asserts a particular relationship between the concepts of loss and grief, may help a refugee resettlement social worker understand some of the sadness, and sometimes despair, that they see in work with refugee families. They have lived with an accumulation of losses—loss of land, loss of livelihood, loss of roles, loss of status, loss of family members, loss of familiar language and rituals, and many more. It is important to remember that theory is about likelihood, not certainty. Not all who experience loss will grieve and not all grief reactions are the same.

Social and behavioral science theories are based on *assumptions*, or beliefs held to be true without testing or proof, about the nature of human social life. Human behavioral theoretical assumptions have raised a number of controversies, three of which are worth introducing at this point.

1. Do the dimensions of human behavior have an *objective reality* that exists outside a person's consciousness, or is all reality based on personal perception (*subjective reality*)?

2. Is human behavior determined by forces beyond the control of the person (*determinism*), or are people free and proactive agents in the creation of their behavior (*voluntarism*)?

3. Are the patterned interactions among people characterized by harmony, unity, and social cohesion or by conflict, domination, coercion, and exploitation?

It is important to consider the assumptions a theory makes as you think about its usefulness for social work practice. The nature of the controversies noted above will become more apparent in Chapter 2 and other chapters. The contributing authors and I take a middle ground on all of them: We assume that reality has both objective and subjective aspects, that human behavior is partially constrained and partially free, and that social life is marked by both cohesion and conflict.

Empirical Research

Traditionally, science is equated with empirical research, which is widely held as the most rigorous and systematic way to understand human behavior. Research is typically viewed, in simple terms, as a problem-solving process, or a method of seeking answers to questions. If something is empirical, we experience it through our senses, as opposed to something we experience purely in our minds. The process of **empirical research** includes a careful, purposeful, and systematic observation of events with the intent to note and record them in terms of their attributes, to look for patterns in those events, and to make our methods and observations public. Each empirical research project is likely to raise new questions, often producing more questions than answers. The new questions become grist for future research. Like theory, empirical research is a key tool for social workers. The CSWE (2022) specifies that social workers "apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs" (p. 10). It is important to understand, however, that empirical research, like theory, informs us about probabilities, not certainties (Firestein, 2012). For example, research can tell us what percentage of parents who were abused as children will become abusive toward their own children, but it cannot tell us whether a specific parent who was abused as a child will become abusive toward their children. Social workers, of course, must make decisions about specific parents, recognizing the probabilities found in research as well as considering the knowledge about the case.

We must recognize both the benefits and limitations of empirical research. Human behavior is complex, and human observers have limitations in their ability to capture that complexity. Neuroscientist Stuart Firestein (2012) reminds us that we must learn to live with

"unknowable unknowns" (p. 30) and become capable of working with uncertainties. The lack of available research on a novel coronavirus produced much uncertainty during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the uncertainties paved the way for the politicization of the pandemic. Nevertheless, research remains the most rigorous and systematic way to understand human behavior.

Research can serve a number of purposes; it can be used to define and describe social phenomena (descriptive research), explore what is going on with a population or situation about which little is known (exploratory research), identify causes and effects of social phenomena and predict future occurrences (explanatory research), and evaluate programs and practices (evaluation research). For example, descriptive research could be used to gather facts about the Banyamulenge refugees in Boise, such as their ages, their English proficiency, their educational level, and their medical needs. Exploratory research could be used to study what it has been like to be resettled in Boise, perhaps with narrative methods that capture stories of refugee experiences. Explanatory research could be used to understand the connection between accumulated losses and mental and physical health. Evaluation research could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of specific resettlement interventions with this population.

Different methods of research are used for different purposes of research. No single research method can adequately capture the whole, the complexity of human behavior. The CSWE (2022) indicates that "Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods" (p. 10). **Qualitative methods of research** are methods such as participant observation, intensive interviewing, and focus groups that are designed to understand the lives of the participants in their own words rather than in categories predetermined by the researcher. These methods usually involve exploratory research questions and seek the meanings participants attach to events in their lives. The findings are reported in words. **Quantitative methods of research** are methods such as surveys and experiments that record variation in human behavior and social life in categories that are predetermined by the researcher. These methods use quantifiable measures of concepts, standardize the collection of data, attend only to preselected variables, and use statistical measures to look for patterns and associations (Hilton et al., 2020). Some researchers combine qualitative methods and quantitative methods in the same study, an approach known as *mixed methods.* Mixed methods research can provide a fuller picture of the phenomena under study by utilizing the strengths of both methods.

Recently, researchers have used narrative and other qualitative research approaches to tell the stories of members of racialized and other marginalized groups to develop deeper understanding of the role racism and other forms of oppression have played in their lives. Examples of this research include examination of forms of racism faced at different life course stages (Breheny et al., 2021); life course trajectories of African American centenarians, the changing nature of racism they faced, the survival skills they used, and the support systems that sustained them (Heinz et al., 2021); and how different cohorts of Black parents have prepared their sons for racial bias and discrimination (DiAquoi, 2018). Other researchers have examined the impact of chronic physical and mental health conditions on life trajectories (Jetha et al., 2018; Müller et al., 2011); the career trajectories of gay men (MacCharles & Melton, 2021); and the experiences of transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse people (Hereth, 2021; Tasker & Gato, 2020). Use of qualitative

exploratory research is essential for telling the stories of members of racialized and other marginalized groups in their own words, filling an important gap in available research. Researchers are also developing measures for anti-oppressive, anti-racist quantitative research (see Knowles & Hawkman, 2019), such as the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS; Williams et al., 1997) and the Gender Minority Stress and Resilience Measure (Testa et al.; 2015).

Critical Use of Theory and Research

You may already know that social and behavioral science theory and research have been growing at a fast pace in modern times, and you will often feel, as McAvoy (1999) aptly put it, that you are "drowning in a swamp of information" (p. 19), both case information and scientific information. Ironically, as you are drowning in a swamp of information, you will also be discovering that the available scientific information is incomplete. You will also encounter contradictory theoretical propositions and research results that must be held simultaneously and, where possible, coordinated to develop an integrated picture of the situation at hand. That is, as you might guess, not a simple project. It involves weighing available evidence and analyzing its relevance to the situation at hand. That requires critical thinking. **Critical thinking** is a thoughtful process of questioning and reflecting on knowledge and information that is presented; it involves thinking about your own thinking and the influences on that thinking, as well as a willingness to change your mind. It also involves careful analysis of assumptions and evidence. Critical thinkers also ask, "What is left out of this conceptualization or research?" "What new questions are raised by this research finding?" Throughout the book, we call out critical thinking questions to support your efforts to think critically.

As you read this book and other sources of scientific knowledge, begin to think critically about the theory and research they present. Give careful thought to the credibility of the claims made. Let's look first at theory. It is important to remember that although theorists may try to put checks on their biases, they write from their own cultural frame of reference, from a particular location in the social structure of their society, and from life experiences. As we work in a highly diversified world, we need to be attentive to the possibilities of biases related to race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, social class, and so on. One particular concern is that such biases can lead us to think of marginalized members of society as pathological or deficient, rather than focusing on the systemic and interpersonal mechanisms that marginalize them.

Social and behavioral science scholars disagree about the criteria for evaluating theory and research. However, we recommend the criteria presented in Table 1.3 because they are consistent with the multidimensional approach of this book and with the value base of the social work profession. (The five criteria for evaluating theory presented in Table 1.3 are also used in Chapter 2 to evaluate seven theoretical perspectives relevant to social work.) There is agreement in the social and behavioral sciences that theory should be evaluated for coherence and conceptual clarity as well as for testability and evidence of empirical support. The criterion of comprehensiveness is specifically related to the multidimensional approach of this book. We do not expect all theories to be multidimensional, but critical analysis of a theory should help us identify deterministic and unidimensional thinking where they exist. The criterion of consistency

TABLE 1.3 ■ Criteria for Evaluating Theory and Research

Criteria for Evaluating Theory

Coherence and conceptual clarity. Are the concepts clearly defined and consistently used? Is the theory free of logical inconsistencies? Are propositions stated in the simplest possible way, without oversimplifying?

Testability and evidence of empirical support. Can the concepts and propositions be expressed in language that makes them observable and accessible to study by persons other than the theoretician? Does research support the theory?

Comprehensiveness. Does the theory address multiple dimensions of persons, environments, and time? What is included and what is excluded? What dimension(s) is (are) emphasized? Does the theory account for important variables that other theories have overlooked or been unable to account for?

Consistency with social work's emphasis on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Does the theory help us understand human diversity? Does it help us understand racism, systems of oppression, and power arrangements? How inclusive is it? Does it avoid pathologizing members of marginalized groups? Is the theory strengths oriented rather than deficit oriented? Is it useful for understanding how to promote equity and social inclusion?

Usefulness for social work practice. Can principles of action be derived from the theory? How can the theory be used at different levels of practice? Can the theory be used in practice in a way that is consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the goals of anti-oppressive, anti-racist practice?

Criteria for Evaluating Research

Corroboration. Are the research findings corroborated by other researchers? Are a variety of research methods used in corroborating research? Do the findings fit logically with accepted theory and other research findings?

Multidimensionality. Does the research include multiple dimensions of persons, environments, and time? Does it include social structural variables as well as individual and family measures? If not, do the researchers acknowledge the omissions, connect the research to larger programs of research that include omitted dimensions, or recommend further research to include omitted dimensions?

Definition of terms. Are major variables defined and measured in a manner accessible to people other than the researchers? Are they defined and measured in ways that avoid bias against members of racialized and other marginalized groups?

Limitation of sample. Does the researcher make sufficient effort to include diversity in the sample where appropriate? Are underrepresented groups represented in sufficient numbers to show the variability within them? Are the terms used to describe diversity in the sample precise and accurate? When demographic groups are compared, are they equivalent on important variables? Does the researcher specify the limitations of the sample for generalizing to specific groups?

Influence of setting. Does the researcher specify attributes of the setting of the research, acknowledge the possible contribution of the setting to research outcomes, and present the findings of similar research across a range of settings?

Influence of the researcher. Does the researcher specify their attributes and role in the observed situations? Does the researcher specify their possible contributions to research outcomes?

Criteria for Evaluating Theory
Social distance. Does the researcher attempt to minimize errors that could occur because of literacy, language, and cultural and power differences between the researcher and respondents?
Specification of inferences. Does the researcher specify how inferences are made, based on the data? What biases, if any, do you identify in the inferences?
Suitability of measures. Does the researcher use measures that seem suited to, and sensitive to, the situation being researched?

with emphasis on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion examines the utility of the theory for a profession that places high value on social justice, and the criterion of usefulness for practice is essential for a profession.

Now let's look at research. The CSWE (2022) calls for social workers to "use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge . . . and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective" (p. 10). Just as theory may be biased toward the experiences of members of dominant groups, so too may research be biased. The results may be misleading, and the interpretation of results may lead to false conclusions about members of marginalized groups. Bias can occur at all stages of the research process.

Theories and research about human behavior are boundless and constantly growing. Active readers must question what they read.

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- Funding sources, governmental agencies, and other vested interests have a strong influence on which problems are selected for research attention. For example, for more than 20 years, between 1996 and 2017, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stopped funding research into firearm injuries and deaths. The result was that public health funding for this issue almost totally dried up (Frankel, 2017). Taffe and Gilpin (2021) report that grant applications submitted by African American or Black researchers to the U.S. National Institutes of Health are less likely to be funded than applications submitted by white researchers.

- Bias can occur in the choice and definition of variables for study. For example, although epidemiological research has consistently found racial disparities in physical and mental health, it is only in recent years that epidemiologists have begun to explore the role racism, both structural and interpersonal, plays in the consistent finding that African Americans have poorer health, more disease, than their white peers (Bailey et al., 2017; Garcia, 2022; Goosby et al., 2018; Paradies et al., 2015). When studying marginalized social groups, it is essential to examine the oppressive contexts of their lives. In addition, it is important that questions posed to research participants are culturally appropriate.

- Bias can occur in choosing the sample to be studied. Because there are fewer of them, members of underrepresented groups may not be included in sufficient numbers to demonstrate the variability within a particular identity group. Or a biased sample of an underrepresented group may be used (e.g., it is not uncommon to make Black/white comparisons on a sample that includes middle-class whites and low-income Blacks). Analysis of articles in the major behavioral science journals indicates that most of the samples are drawn almost exclusively from Western, educated, industrialized, and democratic (WEIRD) societies (Henrich et al., 2010). This same analysis concludes that these research participants are different from most other people of the world in important ways. We need to keep this in mind as we review available empirical research.

- Bias can occur in data collection. The validity and reliability of most standardized measuring instruments have been evaluated by using them with white, non-Hispanic male respondents, and their cultural relevance with members of racialized groups, women, impoverished persons, or members of other groups is questionable. Language and literacy difficulties may arise with both written survey instruments and interviews. Some groups may be reluctant to participate in research because they don't trust the motives of the researchers. Researchers should keep in mind that interview responses are influenced by similarities and differences in characteristics of the interviewer and the respondent (Hilton et al., 2020).

- Bias can occur in interpretation of the data because empirical research typically fails to produce uncontestable results (Firestein, 2012). It is important to consider the social locations of the researchers making the interpretation.

As with theory evaluation, there is no universally agreed-upon set of criteria for evaluating research. We recommend the nine criteria presented in Table 1.3 for considering the credibility

of a research report. These criteria can be applied to either quantitative or qualitative research. The contributing authors and I want you to know that in preparation of this book, we have collectively reviewed hundreds of research reports. Ideally, we would share with you our evaluation of each research report used in our analysis, but that would make for a book of immense length. Please know, however, that we make every effort to think critically about the research cited; on occasion we will call your attention to problematic issues in the research. One major problem in existing research is that it has too often studied racialized and other marginalized groups without studying the oppressive social structures and interactions that frame their lives. That has led to a deficit approach to such groups, providing individual-level explanations and interpretations (Kornbluh et al., 2021). Such research asks, "what is wrong with marginalized people?" rather than "what is wrong with the oppressive social structures and social systems within which marginalized people live?" In this seventh edition of the book, we have made renewed effort to seek out anti-oppressive, anti-racist research to frame our understanding of human behavior.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 1.5

If I drew a line on the floor with objective reality at one end and subjective reality at the other end, where would you place yourself on the line to demonstrate your own understanding of human behavior?

Objective Reality _____ Subjective Reality

And if I drew another line with determinism at one end and voluntarism at the other end, where would you place yourself on this line?

Determinism _____ Voluntarism

And if I drew a third line with harmony, unity, and social cohesion on one end and conflict, domination, coercion, and exploitation at the other end, where would you place yourself on this line to demonstrate your theory about what happens in human social interaction?

Harmony, Unity,
Social Cohesion _____ Conflict, Domination, Coercion, Exploitation

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The multidimensional approach outlined in this chapter suggests several principles for social work engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation—for both prevention and remediation services.

- Be aware of your own implicit and explicit biases as you work to improve your capacity for anti-oppressive, anti-racist social workers.

- For successful social work engagement, allow people to tell their own stories and pay attention to how they describe the pattern and flow of their person–environment configurations.

- In the assessment process, collect information about all the critical dimensions of the changing configuration of person and environment.

- In the assessment process, attempt to see the situation from a variety of perspectives. Use multiple data sources, including the person(s), significant others, and direct observations.

- Use the multidimensional database of information about critical dimensions of the situation to develop a dynamic picture of the person–environment configuration.

- Link intervention strategies to the dimensions of the assessment.

- In general, expect more effective outcomes from interventions that are multidimensional, because the situation itself is multidimensional.

- Pay particular attention to the impact of human rights violations and social, racial, economic, and environmental injustice.

- Learn methods for disrupting racism and other forms of oppression in social structures and interpersonal relationships.

- Develop and use practice methods that promote equity and social inclusion.

- Allow the unique stories of people and situations to direct the choice of theory and research to be used.

- Use scientific knowledge to suggest tentative hypotheses to be explored in the unique situation.

- Give attention to multiple dimensions of person–environment configurations in practice evaluation.

KEY TERMS

Anti-racism	Multidetermined behavior
Biological embedding	Multidimensional
Critical thinking	Oppression
Dimension	Privilege
Diversity	Qualitative methods of research
Empirical research	Quantitative methods of research
Epigenetics	Racialized groups
Equity	Science
Globalization	Social inclusion
Intersectionality	Theory
Lineartime	Time orientation

ACTIVE LEARNING

1. We have used multiple dimensions of person, environment, and time to think about Joshua's story. If you were the social worker at the refugee resettlement agency that sponsored his family's resettlement, you would bring your own unfolding person–environment–time story to that encounter. With the graphic in Figure 1.1 as your guide, write your own multidimensional story. What personal dimensions are important? What environmental dimensions? What time dimensions? What might happen when these two stories encounter each other?

2. Select a social issue that interests you, such as child abuse or youth gangs. List five things you "know" about this issue. Think about how you know what you know. How would you go about confirming or disproving your current state of knowledge on this topic?