



A paradigm framework for social work theory for early 21st century practice

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A Paradigm Framework for Social Work Theory for Early 21st Century practice.

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Please note re names: Author wrote as Caroline Skehill up to 2012 and Caroline McGregor from 2012.

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Abstract:

This paper explores whether paradigms for social work that helped structure and focus social work theory in the late 20th century can continue to inform social work theorising in the present day. The question is considered by reviewing the work of Burrell and Morgan (1979), Howe (1987), Whittington and Holland (1995), Johnson et al, 1984 (cited in Rojek, 1996) and Mulally (1993O) who offer specific considerations of paradigm frameworks. The main argument developed in the discussion is that while the nature and orientation of theories in paradigms from later 20th to early 21st century are themselves transformed, the value of a paradigm as framework for theory for practice persists. But for a paradigm framework to hold sway, there are some essential requirements. These include a need to: emphasise more the importance of local context in global conditions; broaden scope of theory away from predisposition to 'Western' dominated ideas; include space for certain constants in social work; and recognise the role of critical reflexivity in activating theory. . The need for further global and local research studies that systematically test and interrogate the range of social work theories and practices to progress this project is emphasised.

Key words: Paradigms, postmodernism, social work theory, 21st century practices.

A Paradigm Framework for Social Work Theory for Early 21st Century Practice.

Introduction

The 21st century can be referred to as a post-modern era although postmodernism is itself a contested idea (See for e.g. Gray and Webb, 2009; Fawcett, 2017). Postmodernism is characterised by complexity, fluidity, uncertainty and reflexivity within a risk society (see Beck, 2009; Giddens, 1990; 1999). In the postmodern era, binary positions- such as subjective-objective or regulation-support –are problematised and more nuanced understandings that capture greater complexity, uncertainty, non-linear relations and diversity preferred. Relativism impacted on the nature and form of knowledge (See Peile and McCouat, 1997). There has been a redistribution of power away from the single or binary dominance of knowledge in the academy to an emphasis on the multi-dimensional nature of knowledge to include that of service user and practitioner knowledge co-produced by authors such as Beresford & Croft (2001) in relation to social work practice and (Tanner et al, 2017) regarding social work education (see also Golightley & Holloway, 2018). . Within a wider global context, the expressions of social work theory and knowledge are more diverse influencing how social problems are being understood and addressed (Domenelli and Ioakimidis, 2017, 265) In many contexts, a persistent discourse of neo-liberalism dominates (See Hyslop, 2018) with an emphasis on leaner welfare systems, greater reliance of private markets and a mis-fit between care and for-profit services in core social service provision (See Ferguson et al 2018; Golightley and Holloway, 2017). In wider global contexts, corruption at government level, war and human rights abuses and structural and societal discrimination are other major factors. The need for transformation in social work perspective, focus and approach is emphasised in various works focused on present day

challenges such as environmental social work (Gray & Coates, 2015) and Indigenous social work around the world (Gray, 2005; Gray et al, 2008, Gray et al, 2013; Yellow Bird, 2013).

Despite these changes, there remains a strong power dynamic leading to so called ‘Western’ theory still dominating over ‘non-Western’ or ‘global’ theories. The need for the decolonisation of social work is clearly articulated by authors such as Gray et al (2013), Ferguson et al (2018), Lyons (2016), Kriesberg & Marsh (2016) and Domenelli and Ioakimidis (2017). Such works provide comprehensive commentaries on the current challenges for responding adequately to the diversity of global social work as do journals such as *International Social Work* and *Critical Social Work Theory: An Inter-disciplinary Journal*. The need to rethink social work theory is reflected in many recent country specific social work theory articles also. . The following are just brief examples of this. Shek et al (2017), highlight this challenge from the perspective of the Asia-Pacific Region relating to the imposition of dominant ‘Western’ norms of individualised social work within diverse cultural and political contexts. On a similar vein, Montano (2012) argues with regard to the Latin American context, the idea that there is a ‘divide’ between service user and social worker and ‘theory and practice’ in the first place is problematic. Ferguson et al (2018) highlight the strong influence of progressive and radical social work in Latin American social work within what is called the ‘reconceptualisation movement’ influenced by Paulo Freire. The same authors also reflect on the current expansion of social work in China which they argue is focused on creating solidarity and social order arguably due to fear of revolt and critique. Cheung (2016) refers to a social worker with ‘two watches’ in the context of state sanctioned social work in Hong Kong and how to balance between Left and right ideologies. Harrikari et al (2014) captured the range of social change surrounding European social work and offer a number of theoretical and conceptual frameworks to analyse this. Bain and

Evans explore specifically the tension between the relationship between European and English social work (Bain and Evans, 2017). Theorisation of social work in Greece, focuses on new structures of poverty beyond simple socio-stratification systems and the impact of chronic economic stress and disadvantage on both clients and social workers in the region(e.g. Pentaraki, 2017)

Students and practitioners need some scaffolding around which to make sense of such a range of theories applicable to the understanding of individual and social problems and the development of actions and interventions to address these in this context. Yet the question of how one might ‘organise’ this diversity of theory in and for social work may seem at odds with the very notion of postmodernism. Looking back to modernity, many attempts to organise the main theories that influence practice can be identified right back to the early 20th century (e.g. Mary Richmond, 1917; see also. Roberts and Nee1970, Whitaker 1974 and Butrym(1976). , Leonard (1975) suggested breaking theory into two paradigms – physical science and social science. Burrell and Morgan (1979) progressed the paradigm approach byproposing the situating of social theory along two axes of subjective versus objective and order versus conflict creating four quadrants. This was later adapted by Howe to social work theory in 1987. Figure One shows an adapted paradigm framework from the work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Howe (1987). Figure Two maps on the work of Whittington and Holland (1995), Johnson et al, 1984 (cited in Rojek, 1986) and Mulally (1993) all of who availed of and problematised the use of paradigms in this way. The following section reviews the work referred to in Figure 1 and 2 to consider how paradigms have been used by selected authors in the late 20th century. This is followed by a section that reflects on how a paradigm framework can be sustained for the 21st century using Figure 3 to illustrate this.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the scope of social work theory internationally. It is a consideration of how a paradigm framework can be updated and adapted to better accommodate the global diversity of social work theory by offering a device to position, explain and critique the purpose and orientation of different theoretical positions that inform methods of intervention and practice that must remain a work in progress.

Review of Paradigms as an Organising Framework for Social Work Theory.

A Paradigm was described by Kuhn (1962) as something that provides model problems and model solutions to a community of practitioner. Paradigms help workers express their orientation. It has also been explained as: ‘a concept in which all of the assumptions, theories, beliefs, values and methods that make up a particular and preferred view of the work are said to constitute a paradigm’ (Howe, 1987, p. 22). Paradigms are there to guide practice and assumptions to answer questions such as: what do I think the problem is here? what is the cause? what part has society played? what part has the person played? where am I in the mix? Mulally calls it ‘a specific type of cognitive framework from which a discipline or professional views the work and its place in it’ (Mulally, 1993, p.27) like a starting point to explain and justify choices of theory and intervention to other disciplines and service users and groups. And for Whittington and Holland, it is ‘a collection of theories and models which have the same broad theoretical and philosophical view of the world’ (Whittington and Holland, 1985, p.27), This it helps focus the consideration of how theoretical knowledge can be used alongside other key knowledge from workers, service users, context and so on..

Burrell and Morgan argued that sociological theory could be mapped within four paradigms along two axes; the sociology of radical change (also referred to as conflict) and sociology of regulation (or order) and subjective-objective. The terms functionalist (objective –order), interpretivist (subjective- order) radical humanism (subjective-conflict based) and radical structuralism (objective-conflict) are used (See Figure One). Burrell and Morgan assert that each paradigm is founded on a mutually exclusive view of the world which will have some common features with other paradigms and some that are exclusive and distinct. They explain paradigms to be ‘contiguous but separate’. Each paradigm reflects a particular view on the nature of science (objective-subjective) and the nature of society (order-conflict/Regulation-radical change). Burrell and Morgan argue that while there can be theoretical movement within a paradigm, movement between paradigms is rarer – ‘contrary to the widely held belief that synthesis and mediation between paradigms is what is required, we argue the real need is for paradigmatic closure’ (1979; p397-8).

Howe (1987), in his adaptation of Burrell and Morgan’s work for social work, suggested that this framework of theory could also be applied to understand social work theory by rephrasing some of the definitions to capture social work activity and incorporate both psychologically and sociologically oriented theories. For example, functionalist (objective-order) was called ‘fixer (e.g. behavioural, psycho-social); interpretative (subjective-order) was called seekers of meaning (e.g. humanist theories); radical humanism (subjective-conflict) became ‘raisers of consciousness’ (e.g. advocacy); and radical structuralism (objective –conflict) was described as ‘revolutionaries’ (e.g. Marxist social work) (See Figure One). Howe (1987) maintained Burrell and Morgan’s assertion that the paradigms, while sharing some features with their neighbours, are exclusive in terms of their core underpinning assumptions. Many traditional social work theories readily fit into the paradigm framework

such as behavioural and cognitive behavioural theory which can be described as residing within an objective and order paradigm and humanist counselling which is in the subjective and order based paradigm. What was termed radical social work at this time was split into approaches that focused more on a humanist collectivist paradigm through advocacy (subjective-conflict) or a stronger critique of the structural economic and governance constraints (Marxist or socialist social work). Howe offers a longstanding useful framework for theorising and organising social work theory (Howe, 2008; 2017) but the fixed nature of the paradigms as presented in these two frameworks needs further interrogation.

Consideration of three papers from the 1980's and 1990's offer insights that allow for fluidity between paradigms that can be adapted more easily to postmodern conditions. These papers are : Whittington and Holland (1995), Mulally (1993) and Rojek, (1986) who draws on the work of Johnson et al (1984) .

Whittington and Holland (1995) used the 'cognitive map' provided by Burrell and Morgan to explore how an educator can embody new material in the academic curriculum without either abandoning perspectives of established relevance or reducing new or existing materials and theories to 'token' level. They apply three criteria to the four paradigms. These are view of society, view of social problems and view of social work. While availing of Burrell and Morgan's framework, they are critical of the fact that there is limited movement between the different paradigms. They propose and illustrate how some theories can and do span two or more paradigms (e.g. interpretative social theory). Their theorisation of social work theory puts in mind the idea of the axes as continuums where theories are on different points in terms of their emphases be it subject- objective (e.g. behavioural social work is more objective oriented than psycho-social) or order-conflict (e.g. Interpretative anti-psychiatry

perspectives). For Whittington and Holland, the best use of the paradigm framework is to be a medium for exploration and analysis of theory which can be used to 'see, identify, dismantle, reassemble and reallocate' social work theory (1985, p. 42). They also capture the importance of change over time, suggesting that not only will some theories be open to contradictions regarding their orientation but also subject to movement and change of positions with time and new developments and insights. Whittington and Holland suggest that practitioners are not confined to drawing from one paradigm only depending on their philosophical positions. In sum, they highlight the value of paradigm models to identify core orientations but also recognise the limit of linear formulation of complex theory.

Rojek (1986) also argued for greater flexibility in the paradigm framework along the same lines as Whittington and Holland referring to the idea of setting up competing paradigms as 'gladiatorial' and adversarial (1986, p. 72). He challenged two assumptions: that paradigms are in opposition and that there is coherence of theories within paradigms. He argued that

'By placing so much significance upon the opposition between the two approaches, the structural continuities which underpin them are marginalized. These continuities are hardly negligible. For example, traditional and radical approaches hold in common the belief that the material world is external to the individual; that events have causes; that rational explanations of nature and society are superior to supernatural explanations; that social conduct does reproduce certain regularities; and that these regularities are the basis for social planning and social intervention.' (1986, p. 72).

Rojek (1986) also argued that 'the continuities between theories of social work are at least as significant as the oppositions which divide them' (1986; 76). He used the work of Johnson

et al (1984) to offer a paradigm framework that applied to the question of '(a) what the subject in social work is, and (b) what the aim of social work practice ought to be' (1986; 75). Johnson et al (1984) identified four core paradigms of empiricism, subjectivism, substantialism and rationalism offering a different set of parameters to organise the two axes of the paradigm framework. Rojek (1986) explains that while the axes that these are based on are two fold and similar to the gladiatorial paradigms, they are different with regard to the defining features which are described as : 'materialism-idealism' and 'realism-nominalism'. A materialist view is explained as the view that 'social conditions shape social consciousness' such as Marxist theory (1986;, p.74). On the other hand, idealism denotes that there is 'there is no social reality which is independent of social consciousness' (1986, p. 74) such as interactionist theory that influenced work on the helping relationship. On the second axes, realism is put forward as 'the view that knowledge reflects objective reality' (1986, p.75) whereas nominalism relates to the view that 'accounts of social reality are the products of our subjective perceptions about the world' (1986, p.75).

The particular value of the work of Johnson et al, as adapted by Rojek (1986) is their view on the structure of the paradigm framework. They recognise that each paradigm quadrant has its own clear frame of reference but emphasise that it is not exclusive or separate from other points of view. They also refer to the idea of a field of tension between the four paradigms and propose that they are not static but rather in dialogue. This dialogue can be seen as an attempt, within each paradigm, to cope with the persistent paradoxes presented in sociological debates about theories. Rojek (1986) concludes that "the continuities between theories of social work are at least as significant as the oppositions which divide them.' (1986, p. 76).

Mulally (1993) contributed further to the problematisation of framing social work theory within paradigms by attempting to sort out what he calls the 'clutter' of radical social work practice. He argues that a paradigm 'presents a specific type of cognitive framework from which a discipline or profession views the world and its place in it' (1993, p. 22). In so doing, he is helping to clarify and advance one of the four paradigms - i.e. the paradigm of radical change (conflict). Mulally theorises social work as intrinsically connected to the social order in which it occurs. He presents four paradigms on a single axes drawn as a continuum to frame this: neo-conservative; liberal, social democratic and Marxist. On Mulally's continuum, neo-liberalism in the present day would be placed alongside neo-Conservatism. Mulally (1993, 2009) presents structural social work as a progressive form of social work that can be located in different paradigms. He argues that it is possible that traditional social work can be very progressive while community organisation can be just as conservative or oppressive as more traditional methods. Similar to Johnson et al (1984), Rojek (1986) and Whittington and Holland (1985), Mulally emphasises the non-linear and more nuanced nature of knowledge, theory and idea. He refers to the dialectical nature of social work theory that acknowledges the existence of opposing social forces and seeks to avoid false (and over-simplified) dichotomies. His commentary provides a mechanism to challenge the assumption that individual intervention is necessarily regulation or reform and collective is automatically transforming. Each paradigm has the potential to be progressive or not depending on its application.

Collectively, the critical commentaries by Whittington and Holland, Johnson et al, Rojek and Mulally have each contributed to the advancement of a paradigm framework that can account for greater uncertainty and fluidity akin to more postmodern conditions that enhance the work

developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and by Howe (1987). Figure Two depicts the main contributions made regarding the structure of the paradigm framework involving the ongoing maintenance of a quadrant created by two axes with an emphasis on flexibility, relationality and fluidity.

Jumping forward to the 21st century, in 2008, Howe (2008) and Payne (2012) have continued to support the notion of paradigm as an organising device for social work theory. Bell (2012) discusses the need for post-conventional paradigms in social work and recommends that social work should take on work such as that of Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Margrit Shildrick to challenge current paradigms which she argues are too linear and positivist (See also: Júlíusdóttir,2006). Poulter (2005) also offered a useful structural analysis of theories informing social work practice using paradigms to organise theory according to basic assumptions about the nature of human society and human behaviour. In addition to four paradigms, she established a fifth 'heuristic paradigm' as an inner circle. She suggests that this fifth heuristic paradigm serves to accommodate the paradoxes, such as the coexistence of free will and determinism. This resonates with what Mulally discussed in 1993 regarding aspects that cut across paradigms and what Rojek (1986) discussed with regard to cross – cutting features common to all paradigms.

In the next section, the idea of paradigms for social work is progressed as a framework that offers a scaffolding and guide to organise our thinking that informs our actions and interventions . The challenge is to devise a paradigm framework that can strike a balance between differentiating and conceptualising social work theory without locking things down in a too fixed and rigid way. Such a framework needs to be one that can evolve with time and space to ensure the range and scope of theories featuring in the framework are representative of the global international diversities of theories that inform social work practice.

Positioning A Rethought Paradigm Framework

This section begins with the identification of four caveats required before a rethought paradigm framework can be considered. The first caveat is the need to recognise the relationship between the State, governance and social work in different domains. This includes a recognition that social work is not a benign profession with regard to its role in its own 'horrible histories' (See Ferguson et al, 2018) is a taken-for-granted nor is it a simple linear strategy for good or bad. Rather it has evolved and changed depending on context full of continuities and discontinuities. Global frameworks and theories can only go so far in informing this (Donovan et al, 2017; Domenelli and Ioakimidis, 2017) and a paradigm framework for the present day must allow for a balance between a general frame of reference and one that is adaptable to context of time, space and place (See Parton, 2000). One could call this the 3D embedded elements that include the context, socio-economic conditions, local government environment and time (See Figure Three).

The second caveat relates to enhancing and giving more knowledge-power to the existing and emerging works that are focused on decolonisation and theories beyond traditional 'Western' perspectives. Even while being developed in the 20th century, paradigm models were already being criticised for their over-use of Western focused theory. This is highlighted for example in work such as Graham (1999) who discussed the need for an African developmental paradigm and Yellow Bird and Chenault (1999) who argued for the need for greater attention to theorising in relation to social work with indigenous people in social work at the same time. Presently, there is a much wider breadth of theory for and of social work to consider and map onto a paradigm framework including a growing body of work that is testing theories in different contexts – e.g. the application of strengths based (Western) approaches in India (Pulla & Kay, 2016). There is also greater inclusion of theory

generation from clients and service users recognising the very division of client and worker as a false dichotomy (Golightly & Holloway, 2018) and by population groups (e.g. Dauti 2017). As such theory gains great space in power and position, the paradigm framework needs to shift accordingly to accommodate this.

The third caveat is that there is a need for more clarity on the common features that permeate social work globally that is known from research, evidence and experience, I suggest here that there is a need for a 'fifth element' in the paradigm quadrant to accommodate the paradoxes (see Poulter, 2005) and the constants which are of the particular moment in time. I am going to call this the 'box in the middle' (Figure Three). This denotes the constants that permeate all aspects of social work theory irrespective of what paradigm is used to identify the orientation, approach and intention in any given moment and place. As Rojek (1986) suggested earlier, there is a need to be able to say what features are common across paradigms. This may include view on the core nature of social work such as creation of subjects as expressed by Philp (1979) and still used by authors including Hyslop (2018) to reinforce that which is core to the form and nature of social work knowledge. Other Rrelevant constants can include, but are not limited to aspects of social work such as the centrality of relationship, communication, language and discourse, value and ethical dilemmas, social justice, service user and carer involvement, partnership, participation, co-production , human rights, balancing risk rights and responsibility (care-control) and mediating person and environment.

The fourth caveat is the need for recognition of the importance of critical reflexivityFor any theory to find its way to informing practice, theory must be contextualised and mediated by the creativity, intelligence and ability of the individual or collective worker/group through reflexive engagement and self-awareness of their own paradigm for practice. The social' part

of 'social work' is deciding on the perspective from which to engage with the person, group or community in their environment and the 'work' part is the critical reflexive engagement of individuals or collectives in the activation of the thinking to inform actions and interventions. The traditional positivist divide between theory and practice does not work in this realm and instead, a view of theory as one of a number of forms of knowledge at play is key (see Montana, 2012). This can lead to the activation of intervention or action designed for the unique and complex individual, group or community it is intended for using the scaffolding of a framework of theories to inform the reflexivity and ensure it is critical and constructive as a guide for practice.

The paradigm framework of four quadrants cut along vertical and horizontal as illustrated in Figure Three has sought to adapt Figure 1 and Figure 2 and take into account the four caveats discussed above. The proposition is that it is possible to continue to use two axes to frame an overall paradigm framework for social work with its four quadrants to depict social work theory. The axes should not be constructed as two polar (gladiator) (op)positions (Rojek, 1986). The framework needs to take on board the complex and inherent contradictory nature of ideas and actions in social work. The axes should be drawn as Likert style continuums where theories can be located within a quadrant to allow for sufficient clarity of concept, assumption and inherent values. This should also presume fluidity to move up and down continuums to emphasise the degree and level of orientation in one direction or another. The axes moving horizontally and vertically make possible the mapping of many relevant theories of and for social work to explain firstly the *orientation* of social work from individual to –collective and secondly, the *purpose* of social work from reform and/or maintenance to transformation. (Figure Three).

The individual-collective axes focused on orientation can be used to plot social work on the continuum from individual therapeutic work to group work and collective community oriented work. It also accommodates a mapping of theories on a 'person-environment' continuum. For example, the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1988) conceptualises this relationship in terms of core interactions and proximal processes between different levels of a person's system in their environment. Differential impact theory (Ungar, 2017) on the other hand comes more from a psycho-social individually focus on the person-environment relationship. Many methods of social work come within the individual sphere in some contexts whereas in others usages of methods of community work are more common. This changes over time and space showing the value of considering theory for social work with regard to its historical development across a range of global contexts.

The second axes is adapted to differentiate understanding of perceived cause and response to different social issues and purpose of social work in this regard. This axis is adapted from its predecessors as reform/ maintenance and transformational change. With regard to Transformational change, this can be transformational at individual level (e.g. motivational theory/solution focused/strengths theory, humanist feminist theory) or at collective level (e.g., structural social work, Marxist theory, socialist feminist theory, developmental theory, radical humanist Theory). Many forms of community development and community work theory would be included in collective-transformation though not all. For example, some state run community development programmes may be more inclined towards aims of maintenance rather than structural and societal change (See Ferguson et al, 2018; Healy, 2017). Radical Social work represents one of a number of theories that can fit within the structural dimension at both individual and collective levels of analysis and transformation and continues to be an important theoretical guide for the profession as it evolves to take

account of 21st century context (see Bailey and Brake, 2011; Lavallette, 2011) and within a wider global context (see Ferguson et al, 2018). It. The work of Freire (cited in Ferguson et al, 2018) is another important and less often cited source for transformational critical social work as are models of collective social justice practice (e.g. Mendes et al, 2015). The potential of theorists such as Habermas, Giddens, Bourdieu, Butler, Fraser, and Foucault to contribute to transformation practice have been explored by many authors in mostly Western contexts. These include Chambon et al, (1999) Garrett, (2018) Gray and Webb (2009); Houston, (2002, 2008, 2010; 2018), Satka & Skehill (2011) and Winter, (2017). Other global examples of transformative practices include theories in social work on anti-corruption (Dauti, 2017) and Green social work (Domenelli 2018).

With regard to maintenance and reform, a number of traditional social work theories of reform, care-control, change, problem solving, crisis intervention and behavioural intervention can be located here quite similar to Howe's idea of 'fixer'. It is important that theories in this domain are understood for their purpose and assumptions and are not misapplied to inform practices that lead to individuals being helped to cope and adapt to unequal structures and circumstances that should be addressed at a wider structural societal level. For example, in theorising child welfare issues, recent research highlights differentiate the impact of poverty and structural inequality on child welfare (See Bywaters et al, 2017, Morris et al, 2018; Butterfield et al, 2017) with the individual focus on child and family and identify direct action to address this. The fact that overt attempts to challenge poverty and unequal systems can produce contradictory results must also be taken account of (see for e.g. Dauti , 2017; Montano, 2012; Kriesberg and Marsh, 2016). Maintenance theories include coping, social support and person centred theories. Wholly inappropriate for matters pertaining to social and economic strife, human rights abuse or wider social issues, maintenance can be an essential aspect of social work work relating to issues such as mental illness, disability,

bereavement, child care. Likewise, 'reform' theories includes theories of family support aimed at improving parenting to prevent children coming into care and desistance theory is one option used in probation as a means of diversion from offending. Many well-known methods of social work reside the maintenance/reform end of the continuum such as theory informing task-centred practice and behavioural social work. In a fluid structure, it is possible that in the activation of theories of change, coping and social support (maintenance) theories can embrace a strengths and solution oriented critical frame, that moves activation up the continuum towards transformation at individual or collective level (See Figure Three). A question arising from this consideration is how can we develop further knowledge of how use of theory for social work is received by those it applies to and with? , We need to continue to progress the paradigms of social work around two core axes of individual-collective and maintenance-reform through further research studies that systematically tests and interrogates the use of theory and its impact in social work practice on a local and global scale from the view point of those who deliver and receive these interventions. Use of the expanding knowledge relating to practice based research and practitioner research is one way in which to encourage systematic testing of theories as they are activated in practice though as aforementioned, how to overcome the language and translation challenges mentioned above is essential to prioritise. More extensive engagement with methods of co-production of knowledge with service users that challenge the false dichotomy between service users and workers is essential (Golightley & Holloway, 2018) . In developing new theory work, the inherent inequality within social work publishing itself whereby English language publications have greatest reach and impact giving automatic power advantage to discourse and theory needs attention and strategies considered as to how support for more multiple translations of work can be developed to allow greater access to the range of breath of international social work theorising.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, if we consider the use of paradigms as an ongoing and evolutionary process (See Kelly et al ,2018) then their ongoing use can be defended. The paradigms for practice should not be viewed as positivist ‘guides to practice’. Instead, they offer scaffolding around which to ask questions, pose challenges and be adapted and developed for specific times, spaces and places, As a framework, it is not something to be ‘applied’ but rather something that should be stretched, adapted and revised as needed by creative and intelligent practitioners, service users, educators and policy makers around the globe. In so doing, this paper concludes that a paradigm framework can support an ongoing dialogue about how we make sense of both the purpose and orientation of social work bearing in mind that by its nature, social work has always been contradictory, contested and ambivalent about the connection of ideas and theory to practice and action.

FIGURES

Figure 1: Adaptation of Burrell & Morgan (1979) and Howe (1987) Paradigm Framework for Social Work Theory

Subjective	Sociology of Radical Change		Objective
	Radical Humanism (Raisers of Consciousness) E.G. Humanist Feminism	Radical Structuralism (Revolutionaries) E.G. Marxist Radical Feminist	
	Interpretivist (seekers of Meaning) E.G. Client Centred	Functionalist (Fixers) E.G. Behavioural Task-Centred	
Sociology of Regulation			

. Figure 2: Revised Paradigm Framework for Social Work Theory adapted from Whittington & Holland (1985), Rojek (1986) and Mulally (1993)

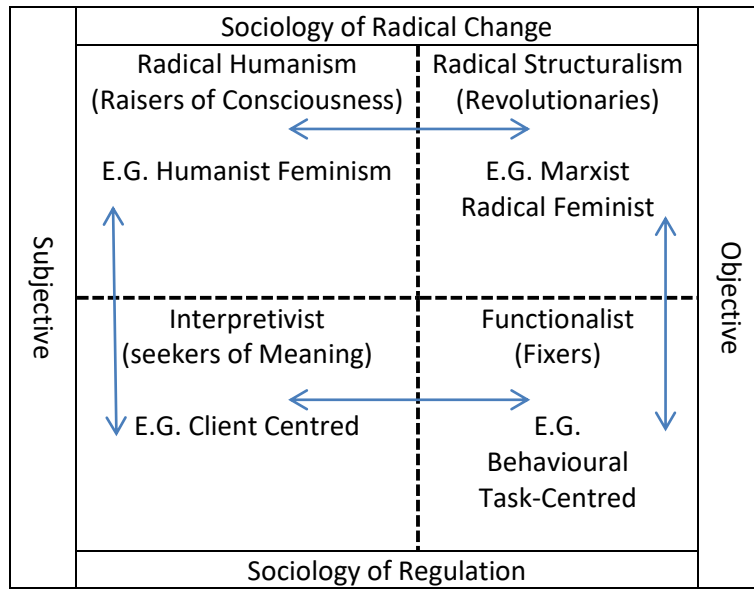
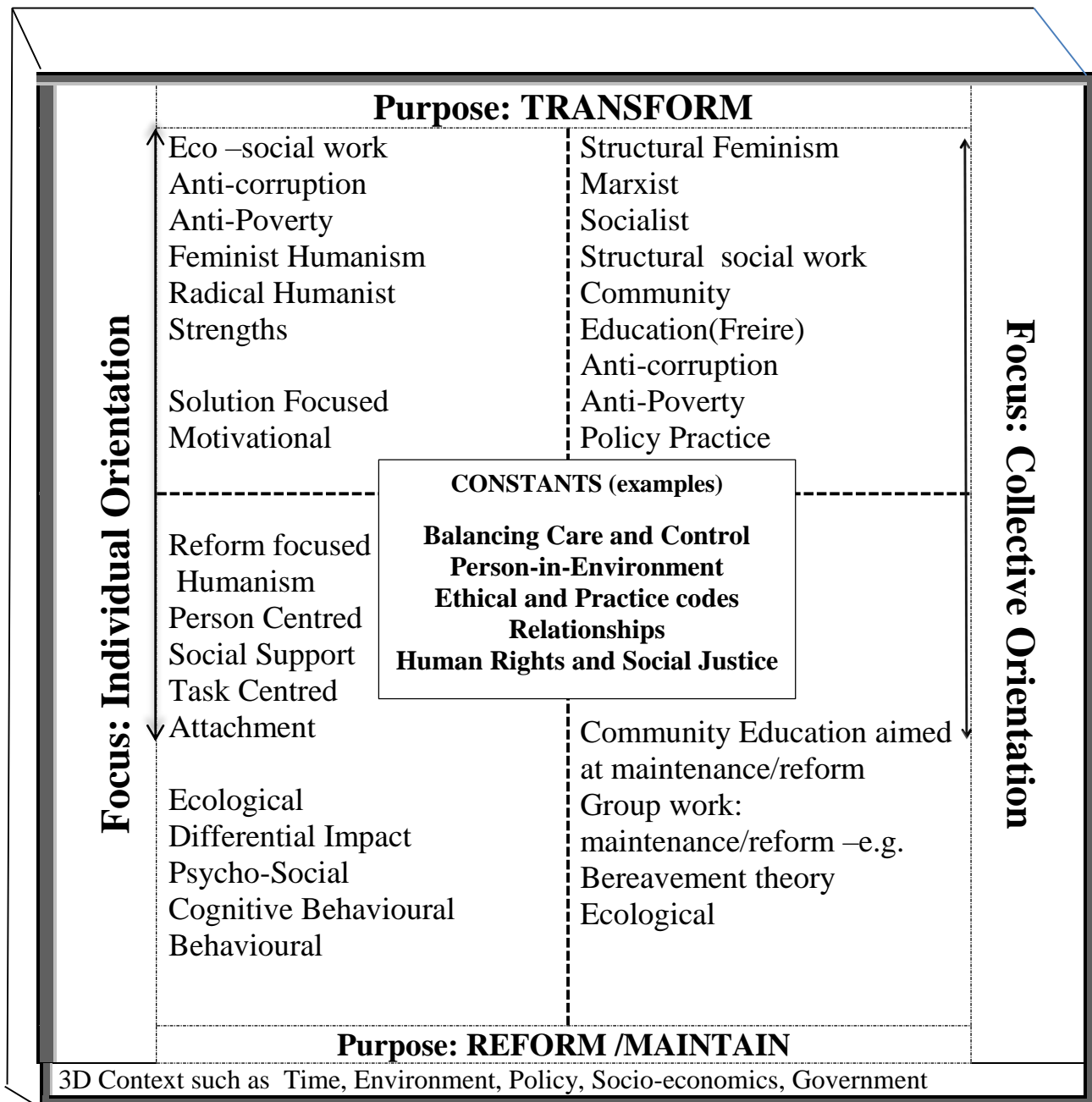


Figure 3: Revised Paradigm Framework for Social Work Theory: A Sample Mapping and (non-exhaustive) illustration of Theories



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