

# Multicultural Career Counseling: Theoretical Applications of the Systems Theory Framework

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Increasing recognition of cultural influences on career development requires expanded theoretical and practical perspectives. Theories of career development need to explicate views of culture and provide direction for career counseling with clients who are culturally diverse. The Systems Theory Framework (STF) is a theoretical foundation that accounts for systems of influence on people's career development, including individual, social, and environmental/societal contexts. The discussion provides a rationale for systemic approaches in multicultural career counseling and introduces the central theoretical tenets of the STF. Through applications of the STF, career counselors are challenged to expand their roles and levels of intervention in multicultural career counseling.

As populations change from homogeneous groups to a mosaic of people with diverse customs and cultures, career counselors must shift their perspectives from monoculturalism to multiculturalism (Hartung, 2002; Leong & Hartung, 2000). There is a myriad of literature attesting to the problems of applying Western frameworks of career development theories and counseling techniques to populations whose values and cultural norms are in contrast to those of the dominant culture (e.g., Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994; Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003; Leong & Hartung, 2000; Leung, 1995). Increasing recognition of cultural influences on career development has prompted a call for expanded theoretical and practical perspectives to increase the cultural validity of career development practices (Leong & Brown, 1995). Theories need to explicate the interplay between individual and systemic levels of cultural influences and provide direction for career counseling interventions.

More than 20 years ago, Osipow (1983) suggested that through using systems theory,

elements of the social, personal, and economic situation within which individuals operate may be more explicitly analyzed, and the relationships of the larger systems to one another may be more clearly understood than in the traditional approaches to behavior, which tend to emphasize only one major segment of the individual or the environment. (p. 320)

The potential of systems theory to account for diversity and the complexity of influences on career development has only recently been documented.

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What is shared in common by systems approaches is the “ongoing relationship, between elements or subsystems of the system and the changes that occur over time as a result of these continual interactions” (Patton & McMahon, 1999, pp. 9–10). Systems perspectives emphasize both the parts within a whole system and view the whole system as greater than the sum of its parts. In practical terms, clients seeking career development assistance are viewed within the contexts of their lives; in turn, individuals are viewed as active agents for influencing their surrounding contexts. Systems theory examines the interconnections between internal and external variables that have an impact on people’s career development. It is a theoretical lens for examining both a macroanalysis of external influences on people’s lives while also facilitating a microanalysis of factors that are relevant for the career development of individual clients (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Systems theory appears to have strong conceptual utility for integrating issues of culture into career development practices.

The purpose of this discussion is to introduce the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development (McMahon, 2002; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999) as a theoretical foundation for enhancing multicultural career counseling. The STF has been specifically chosen because in its short history, its application across countries, cultures, and career counselor training has been suggested (e.g., Association for Counselor Education and Supervision and National Career Development Association, 2000; Lim, 1997; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2002). Our purpose is not to compare the STF to other systems approaches (e.g., the ecological approach; Conyne & Cook, 2004; Cook, Heppner, & O’Brien, 2002) or the developmental-contextual model (Vondracek, Lerner, & Schulenberg, 1986). The focus of this article is to highlight the theoretical applications of the STF to multicultural counseling. First, we discuss views on cultural influences in career development to provide a rationale for using systemic approaches in career counseling. Second, we provide a summary of the core theoretical foundations of the STF. The overriding goal of the discussion is to expand perspectives about multicultural career counseling through integrating theoretical foundations from the STF. In a subsequent article currently under development, we will elaborate on the practical applications of the STF for multicultural counseling.

## Incorporating Culture Into Career Development and Career Counseling

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Career counselors need to examine how culture is represented in theories of career development and in models of career counseling. There are debates about “who counts” as clients who are culturally diverse and debates about how theories of career development should account for cultural diversity. Each debate has implications for how professionals approach counseling (Patterson, 1996; Thomas & Weinrach, 1998).

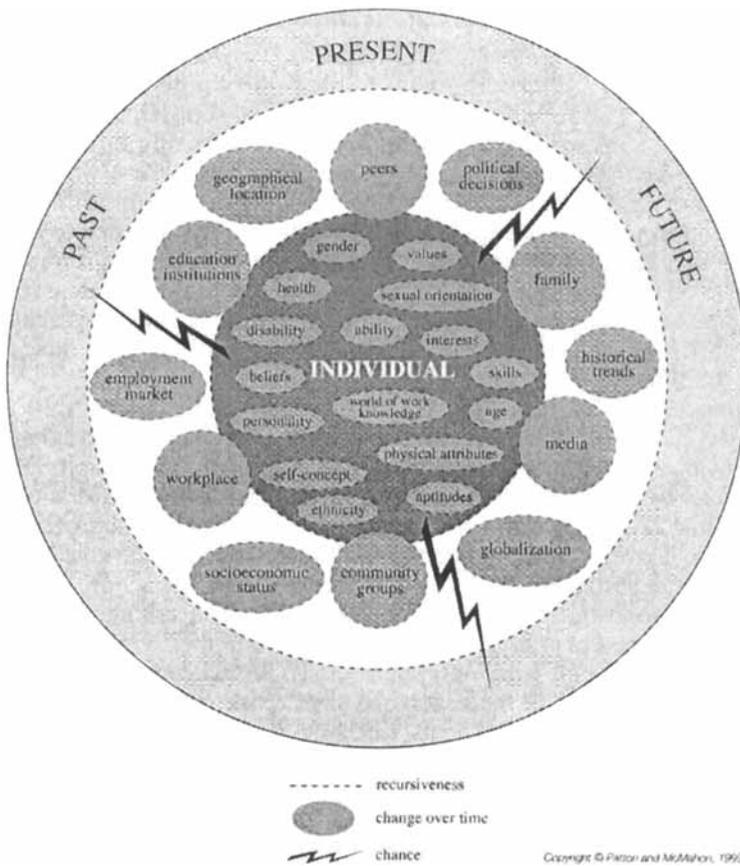
In a group specific (emic) view, cultural diversity is represented according to group membership based on cultural variables such as ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age. Advocates of the universalistic (etic) position argue that each person has a unique cultural background and that all forms of counseling must be approached as

multicultural (Patterson, 1996; Pedersen, 1991). The appeal of the universalistic perspective is recognition of the diversity found in both intergroup and intragroup experiences. This perspective suggests that explorations of cultural influences on people's career development must extend beyond group membership to appreciate the culture internalized by the individual (Ho, 1995). It encourages career counselors to go beyond cultural variables that define group membership to consider the worldview and unique needs of clients (Trevino, 1996; Williams, 2003). There will be relative similarities and differences between the worldviews of group members and between the worldviews of counselors and clients (Pedersen, 1991; Weinrach & Thomas, 1996). The universalistic view implies that multicultural career counseling must take into account the unique needs and circumstances of *all* clients; therefore, interventions designed for career counseling must be flexible enough to address specific client issues while taking into account the systemic forces that influence people's career development.

Many career development theories define culture according to variables within the person and within identified cultural groups (Hartung, 2002). Person variables that are commonly addressed include personality traits, interests, and abilities. Recent conceptualizations of career theories and career counseling models are giving more emphasis to environmental and contextual variables such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and cultural values (Brown, 1996; Constantine & Erickson, 1998; Cook et al., 2002; Fouad & Bingham, 1995; Hartung, 2002; Young, Valach, & Collin, 1996). Three areas, however, require further examination in order to advance the application of career development theory to career counseling. First, although the environment is a cornerstone in matching people with occupations (e.g., Holland, 1997; Swanson, 1996), cultural influences have not been given sufficient attention in explanations about environmental forces that affect career development (Constantine & Erikson, 1998; Hartung, 2002), and few theories specify methods of intervening for environmental change (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). Second, it must also be recognized that career counseling does not occur as an isolated entity. The environmental and societal systems that envelop clients, counselors, and the practice of counseling are important considerations (Sue et al., 1998). Third, the interplay between cultural influences at individual, environmental, and societal levels has not been sufficiently examined to articulate recommendations for career counseling. Rather than treating each "cultural unit" as a separate entity, the field of multicultural career counseling would benefit from theoretical foundations that consider the interplay and relations between various systems of cultural influence.

## Overview of the STF of Career Development

The STF of career development (see Figure 1) provides such a foundation (McMahon, 2002; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999). Although the individual is central to the framework, it may be customized to accommodate clients whose career development occurs within either individualistic or collectivist cultures. The STF accommodates the aspects of culture that are relevant for each client, including



**FIGURE 1**

**Systems Theory Framework of Career Development**

*Note.* From *Career Development and Systems Theory: A New Relationship*, p. 164, by W. Patton & M. McMahon, 1999, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole. Copyright 1999 by W. Patton and M. McMahon. Reprinted with permission.

salient cultural dimensions and the intersections of cultural identities that are related to each client’s life roles. Essentially, the STF provides a map to guide career counselors, and clients are encouraged to fill in the details and reality of the map through telling their career stories. Furthermore, the STF provides a mechanism for engaging with clients from groups of people who have traditionally been ignored in career development theory and provides a mechanism for exploring the impact of traditionally overlooked influences. For example, its application to the career development of women (Patton, 1997b), Australian Aboriginal people (Sarra, 1997), Chinese students (Back, 1997), and persons with disabilities (Gillies & Knight, 2001) has been described. In addition, its application to contextual issues, such as rural location (Collett, 1997) and socioeconomic disadvantage (Taylor, 1997), and to particular settings, such as organizations (Dunn, 1997) and schools (Patton & McMahon, 1999), has been described.

## Systems of Influence on Career Development

The STF (McMahon, 2002; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999) presents a framework of influences on career development. The term *influence* was deliberately chosen by the developers of the STF as a dynamic term capable of reflecting both content and process components of career theory. The term *influence* also does not assume positive or negative connotations. Rather it affords individuals the opportunity of ascribing personal meaning to influences. For example, individuals may perceive influences as barriers to or as facilitative of their career development and may also perceive varying degrees of influence (e.g., minimal or major). Thus, individuals are encouraged to elaborate their personal meaning around culture in relation to their systems of influence.

*Content influences* include intrapersonal variables, such as personality and age, and contextual variables that comprise social influences, such as family, and environmental/societal influences, such as geographic location. *Process influences* include three important considerations for multicultural career counseling. The first of the process influences is the recursive interaction within the individual and the context as well as between the individual and the context. The second of the process influences emphasizes how recursive interaction contributes to the microprocess of career decision making and the macroprocess of change over time. The third of the process influences represented is chance. It is important to note that the content and process influences are located in the context of time, to incorporate past, present, and future considerations in clients' career development.

The content and process influences are represented in the STF as a circular depiction of the many complex and interconnected systems within and between which career development occurs (see Figure 1). At the heart of the STF is the individual system, comprising a range of intrapersonal influences such as gender, interests, age, abilities, personality, and sexual orientation. In terms of systems theory, the individual is a system in its own right, with the intrapersonal influences depicted representing its subsystems. Although some of the intrapersonal influences, such as personality, interests, and self-concept, have been afforded much attention in the career development literature, others, such as sexual orientation and disability, have not. The STF, by making such influences explicit, legitimizes them as influences and encourages them to be storied by individuals who, in the process, articulate their personal culture.

An individual as a system, however, does not live in isolation, but rather as part of a much larger contextual system. Thus, the individual is both a system and a subsystem. Consequently, career counselors need to consider the unique perspectives of clients and how cultural forces have influenced their career-related needs. Similarly, the broader contextual system comprises subsystems, specifically the social system and the environmental/societal system. The social system refers to the other people systems with which the individual interacts and is representative of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) "microsystem." For example, the social system, represented by small circles intersecting the individual system, comprises subsystems related to family, educational institutions, and peers. In addition, media are included as a social system, noting that they have traditionally received less attention in career development theories. In relation to adolescents,

Borow (1984) described social influences such as family, peers, and school as the principal agents of socialization. Social influences may contribute to the shaping of individuals' culture through the transmission of values, beliefs, and attitudes and also through membership in various groups. Furthermore, the nature of influence may be direct or indirect. Thus, although the STF depicts some of the more common social influences, it is important that individuals describe the range and nature of the social systems to which they belong.

The individual and the social system occur within the broader system of society and the environment, the environmental/societal system, which is representative of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) "exosystem" and "mesosystem." Depicted in Figure 1 as a circle surrounding the social and individual systems, the environmental/societal system and its subsystems, such as geographic location, historical influences, and globalization, may seem less directly related to the individual. However, there is increasing recognition at a macrolevel that the impact of global forces on people's career development can be profound (Young & Collin, 2000). For example, many organizations in the private and public sectors are "internationalizing" their products and services. This potentially influences the career development of individuals through opportunities for study and work exchanges between countries or demands to update employment competencies for the global marketplace (Arthur, 2000).

Also at a macrolevel, government policy related to issues such as social security, funding for education, and workplace restructuring may have profound influences on individuals. Furthermore, historical influences may contribute to the values, beliefs, and attitudes of age cohorts, such as individuals who grow up at times of high employment or recession. In this regard, terms such as *baby boomers* and *Generation X* have been coined, and particular qualities have been generalized to these cohorts. Historical oppression, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and so on, may also be relevant for career counseling. However, career counselors working from the perspective of the STF encourage individuals to elaborate their own stories and meaning around these environmental/societal influences. At a microlevel, influences such as geographic location may be influential. For example, some suburbs are better serviced than others, and, in rural locations, there may be more employment for young men than for young women. In addition, socioeconomic influences may affect values, opportunity, and availability of role models. Thus, it is important in career counseling that meanings associated with the environmental/societal system are explored as individuals articulate their culture.

### **Interactions Between Systems in Understanding People's Career Development**

The influence of one system or subsystem on another is illustrative of the STF's dynamic nature (McMahon, 2002; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999). Although the systems previously described (i.e., the individual system, the social system, and the environmental/societal system) account for the content influences of the STF, the dynamic interaction that occurs within and between systems is accounted for by the process influences of recursiveness, change over time, and chance.

Recursiveness, the recurring interaction between systems, is depicted in Figure 1 by broken lines that represent the permeability of the boundaries of the systems and subsystems. The broken lines identify them as open systems, that is, they are open to influence from outside. The construct of recursiveness encourages individuals to story not only their influences but also the recursiveness between such influences. In so doing, individuals elaborate their internalized culture (Ho, 1995). Thus, although the individual is located at the center of the system, the STF may be customized to accommodate clients whose career development occurs either in individualistic or collectivist cultures (Arthur & McMahon, 2004). Indeed, recursiveness also facilitates elaboration of the counselor's role within the individual's internalized culture.

Recursiveness incorporates some key aspects of systemic influences, such as their being nonlinear, acausal, mutual, and multidirectional. In keeping with these key aspects, it is important to note that recursiveness does not imply reciprocal interaction. A change in one part of the system will result in a change in another part of the system. Furthermore, the nature of the influences and the degree of influence change over time. Thus, at a given point in time, career counselors may enter the system of influence of the individual. This represents an important contribution of the STF in that it makes explicit the systemic nature of the relationship between client and counselor. In so doing, it affords career counselors a lens through which to view their role. The broader system of time is represented in the STF as a circular depiction outside that of the environmental/societal system that emphasizes the nonlinear nature of an individual's career development and the integral role of past, present, and future influences. The past is inextricably entwined with the present, and together past and present shape the future. Career counselors may have a role in assisting individuals to recognize the influence of past experience on present life and future ambition. For example, although not immediately obvious, an individual's inability to resign from a job and organization in which he or she is desperately unhappy may have been influenced by growing up in a family from a low socioeconomic background in a time of high unemployment. The construct of change over time reflects recursiveness between individuals and their systems of influence and draws attention to qualities such as adaptability, flexibility, and mobility that are inherent in career development. However, the nature of these qualities will be manifested differently in each individual. Given the complexity of influences depicted in the STF, an individual's career development will not always be planned, predictable, or logical. Unexpected or chance events, generated within the broader system but not anticipated by an individual, may profoundly influence career development and indeed identification with a particular culture, such as happens with disability as a result of an accident or immigration to another country.

## Contributions of the STF to Multicultural Career Counseling

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The STF shares many commonalities with other systems approaches in examining the multiple systems of influence that are necessary consider-

ations for understanding people's career development. There are several aspects of the STF that represent a conceptual move forward for multicultural career counseling. We briefly highlight the following advantages outlined by Patton and McMahon (1997, 1999).

- The STF is an integrative theory that recognizes the important contribution of all career theories. As researchers continue to examine the factors that affect people's career development, they need to be able to draw on multiple theoretical sources to provide depth to the examination of factors that influence clients from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- The STF is in essence a metatheoretical bridging framework that provides a theoretical overview while allowing the contributions of other theoretical frameworks to be represented and applied as relevant to the interests of clients. The metatheoretical framework supports flexibility in matching counseling theories and practices to ways of working that are meaningful for clients, an essential flexibility for multicultural counseling (Arthur & Collins, 2004).

- The STF is grounded in multidisciplinary perspectives (e.g., principles from family therapy, economics, sociology, and psychology) to enhance the understanding of influences on people's career development. Multidisciplinary perspectives support an expanded view of career issues, from *intrapersonal and interpersonal* sources to broader *contextual* influences. Although we believe that this supports sound career counseling practices with *all* clients, it is especially important for explicating the career development of individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- The STF offers a high level of congruence between theory and practice. The underlying principle of systems theory—that fostering change in one part of the system will bring about change in other parts of the system—is explicated in sufficient detail to support exploration of new approaches for the use of STF in multicultural career counseling.

- The STF places an emphasis on the individual's system in accounting for the unique combination of influences on client's career development. It also supports an examination of the common issues that affect groups of clients and ways to intervene that can have a positive impact on both individuals and groups. The STF particularly lends itself to multicultural applications in which the experiences of individuals are considered unique, whereas advocacy counseling may have great potential to improve educational and employment opportunities for clients with common needs.

- The STF also places emphasis on the system of the career counselor and on how personal culture influences professional values and roles. Most theories of career development that address culture focus on the culture of clients. The STF recognizes that career counselors are also cultural beings and that their socialization is an important influence on their professional roles. The domain of self-awareness has been named as a foundation for multicultural counseling competence (Arredondo et al., 1996; Arthur & Collins, 2004; Sue et al., 1998). A process of reflection has been outlined by Patton and McMahon (1999) to help career counselors reflect on their own experiences of career development and their personal values and attitudes toward others.

- The STF provides a means of analyzing the career counseling relationship, or therapeutic system, in which the interplay of cultural influ-

ences *between* counselor and client are taken into consideration. Career counselors enter the system of influence of their clients and need to reflect on their own pattern of career development and the complexity of the career counseling relationship.

- The STF has strong applications for organizational development, another domain that has been identified as important for multicultural counseling (Sue et al., 1998). For example, Arthur and McMahon (2004) described using the STF in a cultural audit of organizations where career counseling is practiced to examine barriers to and facilitators for transforming from a monocultural to a multicultural organization. The STF has wide applicability between organizational systems in which career counseling is practiced. Patton and McMahon (1999) detailed the applications of STF in considering the connections between schools and the larger social and environmental/societal systems. In addition, organizational systems that have an impact on career counseling, such as administrative and clinical systems, and the training of career counselors can be strengthened using the STF (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

Similar to other systems approaches, the STF is applicable at a macrolevel of analysis to examine larger social and environment/societal influences, such as government policy and funding decisions, or at a microlevel of individual application. These points underscore the additive features of the STF for application in multicultural career counseling.

## Expanding Levels of Intervention in Multicultural Career Counseling

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The position advocated in the STF discussion is that cultural influences must be incorporated into the ongoing assessment, case planning, interventions, and evaluation of practices with *all* clients. As evidenced in Figure 1, the STF of career development (McMahon, 2002; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999) is well positioned to accommodate specific cultural dimensions represented through a group specific (emic) view of cultural diversity as well as considering cultural influences more broadly through the universalistic (etic) view. The influence of culture resides both within the individual and between the individual and the broader contextual systems. The STF also incorporates the fluid nature of cultural identity as people interact in various life roles, relationships, and activities. Indeed, Patton and McMahon (1999) explained that rather than representing culture as a system that can be separately identified in the STF, it is an influence that pervades each of the systems and subsystems through the dynamic process of recursiveness. As a map to guide career counselors, the STF may be applicable to clients with individualist or collectivist worldviews (Williams, 2003), because counseling proceeds from the worldview represented by clients through the telling of their career stories.

### **Contextualizing Career Stories**

At the level of the individual system, clients may describe their experiences of culture related to influences such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation,

or the intersection of various dimensions of culture. Such accounts may be elaborated on in terms of the social system, for example, levels of support, encouragement, and obstacles from influences such as family, peers, and workplace. Furthermore, clients' stories may be set in the broader context of environmental/societal influences, such as geographical location, socioeconomic circumstances, and government policy that affect employment opportunities. Such stories may be told verbally, through writing, or diagrammatically, using a personalized version of the STF. Through any of these formats, career counselors may assist clients to present their own system of influences using shapes, colors, symbols, or text that is appropriate and meaningful to clients. Through these mediums, multicultural career counseling using the STF is a constructive process that allows clients to explore their contexts and to reach new levels of self-understandings about factors that influence their career development.

Career counselors need to be informed about the systems surrounding clients and the influence of those systems on clients' career development. Again, the focus of systems approaches is to offer the possibility of redefining client issues as more than individual problems. "Rather than recontextualize problems in terms of couples, families, past interpersonal interactions, or individual learning, multicultural approaches view them through the wide-angle lens of *social systems*" (Steenbarger & Pels, 1997, p. 115). Clients' presenting issues may be centered on systemic issues and cultural barriers that have an impact on their career development, for example, oppressive practices such as sexism, racism, or homophobia. Career counselors can help clients to examine their presenting issues in light of systemic influences. In either scenario, counselors need to be informed about systems approaches that support multicultural career counseling. The STF provides career counselors with a theoretical foundation from which to consider the salience of culture as experienced by clients in the context of their lives. It also provides direction for career counselors to design interventions that are grounded in the individual, contextual, and environmental/societal systems of clients. For example, career counselors may choose to work directly with clients to help them address elements of broader systems (e.g., family members, government or community agencies) or work on behalf of an individual client or group of clients to effect broader social change (e.g., serving on policy committees, lobbying for changes in legislation). These suggestions illustrate the need for expanded levels of intervention as well as examination of the possible roles adopted by career counselors.

### **Expanded Roles and Levels of Intervention**

The theoretical tenets of the STF suggest that career counselors need to examine their roles and methods of intervention to address cultural influences on career development. There is growing recognition by career counselors of the importance of changing environmental conditions that affect their clientele. From the STF perspective, career counselors view client issues as something experienced by clients as opposed to seeing the problem as internal to the client. Rather than working with clients to adapt to noxious social and employment conditions, there is greater opportunity to focus on the social conditions that contribute to the manifestation of the problems experienced by clients (Vera & Speight, 2003). This requires counselors to

move beyond a focus on individuals to a focus on addressing many of the organizational and systemic forces that have an impact on the career development of individuals (Patton & McMahon, 1999). From this perspective, multicultural career counseling expands not only the content of career counseling to consider multiple systems of influence but also incorporates multiple levels of interventions and multiple roles of career counselors. Consequently, multicultural career counseling approaches imply that career counselors take a stand on issues that adversely affect the development and growth of individuals and client groups. Advocacy to change adverse conditions at various levels of the system is more explicitly integrated into career counseling using systems approaches than many other career counseling modalities.

To illustrate, there are several ways to incorporate advocacy-based interventions into career counseling roles. A career counselor may use time in a session to coach a client about how to approach a manager about workplace conditions. Alternatively, a career counselor may approach an academic department on behalf of a student to advocate for learning accommodations. When a career counselor sees issues that have a common effect on several clients, advocacy-related intervention is best directed at larger environmental or social systems, for example, lobbying for expedited evaluations of foreign credentials or serving on a planning committee to shape the direction of a new program.

Examples are also offered in terms of the need for advocacy-based interventions to address common systemic influences that have an impact on nondominant populations in society. For example, Patton (1997a, 1997b) illustrated the importance of considering both environmental barriers and facilitators in women's career development, including the possibility of multiple oppressions that occur through the intersections of cultural variables such as gender, sexual orientation, and/or abilities. The STF can be used to appreciate the complexity of individual and environmental factors that are relevant for the career development of individuals from nondominant groups. It is important to remember that although groups may share common experiences such as oppression, the heterogeneity found within any group requires career intervention strategies that balance contextual influences with individual experiences. The STF offers the possibility of moving between multiple systems of influences while highlighting the unique needs of individual clients. Intervention strategies include acting as an advocate both within counseling sessions and in the social and environmental systems in which clients work (Patton, 1997a). Interventions such as educational programs that focus on consciousness-raising are a viable means for constructing supportive environments for client groups.

Sarra (1997) provided another example in a discussion of systems of influence and the Aboriginal career decision maker. Sarra noted,

[T]he concept of Aboriginal career development is vexed by the complexities that emerge as a result of the differences between contemporary Aboriginal culture and the culture of the dominant society in which Aboriginal people exist. The systems theory framework allows us to account for the many variables that we are likely to encounter when dealing with Aboriginal clients. In addition, it provides a mechanism for examining the interrelatedness of issues such as Aboriginal history, self-determination, the employment market, education, and a range of social and political forces which provide the background for Aboriginal career decision making. (p. 47)

The notion of the Aboriginal career decision maker is challenging, given the wide heterogeneity of populations, geographic locations, and cultural practices within Aboriginal communities. The STF is particularly useful for recognizing the important historical and political influences that have led to the current emphasis on self-determination. Career counselors may use the STF to examine common forces of influence and explore the various ways that an individual client may have retained original culture while simultaneously adopting practices from the dominant culture. Using the STF supports acknowledging and valuing a client's Aboriginal identity, through integrating important theoretical knowledge, such as acculturation and identity development, from the multicultural counseling field. Sarra also noted how career counselors using the STF can incorporate a number of proactive interventions such as linking clients with positive Aboriginal role models, lobbying for a watch by the media on stereotypes and images of Aboriginal people, and educational and employment initiatives that promote Aboriginal advancement.

As illustrated in the previous examples, the target of multicultural career counseling is defined by the needs of each client, including primary treatment, the remediation of individual client problems, efforts to prevent problems experienced by groups, working to enhance the career development of disenfranchised groups in our society, and bringing about organizational and systemic change. These applications expand the ways that culture is incorporated into clients' career development and expand the possibilities for designing interventions that target clients' surrounding systems of influence.

## Conclusion

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As evidenced in the previous discussion, the STF may be used as a theoretical foundation for multicultural career counseling because it accommodates both the group specific and universalistic views of cultural diversity. Furthermore, it advances previously neglected areas in the application of career theory to career counseling. Specifically, the STF encourages the examination of cultural influences in career development by locating clients within and between their systems of influence and recognizing the recursiveness between those systems. As a theoretical foundation for multicultural counseling, the STF suggests possibilities that career counselors can assume different roles, such as coach or advocate, within the system of influences and that they can interact with different influences within the system. As a relatively new formulation in the field of career development, the STF's application to multicultural career counseling at a theoretical level suggests that further investigation of its application to practice is warranted. We will elaborate on the practical applications of the STF in a second article.

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