"Theory's Cool, But Theory With No Practice Ain't Shit…": Critical Theories and Frameworks to Dismantle Racism in Social Work Education and Practice

Dale Dagar Maglalang
Smitha Rao

Abstract: *As it stands today, social work education falls short in providing critical theories and frameworks that reflect the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Such insufficiencies maintain racism and other forms of oppression that plague both social work pedagogy and praxis. To challenge and dismantle hegemonic curricula, social work education needs to do more to provide the knowledge and tools necessary for anti-racist social work. The purpose of this article is to present five critical theories and frameworks written by Indigenous and People of Color scholars that social work educators, researchers, and practitioners can integrate into their teaching and practice to raise the critical consciousness of social work students. These five postulations are Compa Love, Racial Triangulation Theory, Breath of Life Theory, kapwa, and cultural wealth. The article will also discuss implications for social work education and practice. Centering the voices of under-represented scholars whose epistemologies are rooted in the lived experiences and communities that the field of social work traverses provides a pathway for social work education and practice to be tailored towards self-determination for all.*

Keywords: *Social work, theory, education, critical pedagogies, anti-racism*

Scholarship and the news of the day point to continued hate crimes and worsening racial tensions in the United States (U.S.) in recent years (Horowitz et al., 2019), though racism has been an enduring presence in this country (Sweet, 1997). The September 2020 Presidential memorandum to federal agencies, vilifying and threatening to put an end to trainings and workshops that tackle issues of racism and sexism, is just the latest in a long line of institutional attempts to stymie any progress in advancing racial justice in the U.S. (Vought, 2020). Racism is deeply entrenched in all aspects of U.S. culture, society, and institutions that unjustly normalized inequities (Kendi, 2016). Among these institutions worth examining and catechizing is the field of social work, specifically social work education.

Social work education is guided by numerous theories and frameworks that inform critical analysis, research, and practice. These terminologies need to be defined distinctly from one another. A theory is a set of interrelated concepts that explain or predict a phenomenon, while a theoretical framework is a set of theories and concepts that one uses to conduct, analyze, and interpret the data in a research study (Kivunja, 2018). Social work, a multidisciplinary field, is inundated with varying information from different academic disciplines held together with the purpose of helping individuals, communities, and populations access their needs at micro and macro levels, and develop skills and tools to promote their overall well-being and self-determination (Parsons, 1991; Tower, 1994).

Dale Dagar Maglalang, PhD, MA, MSW, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, Brown University School of Public Health, Providence, RI. Smitha Rao, PhD, MSc., MSW, Visiting Assistant Professor, College of Social Work, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

Although this sense of benevolence is promulgated by social work, it would be remiss to ignore social work's history of racist actions through the establishment of settlement houses that refused to provide services to the Black and African American population (Berman-Rossi & Miller, 1994), and culpability in injustices against the internment of Japanese Americans (Park, 2008), as well as their role in the American eugenics movement (Park & Kemp, 2006), to name a few. Therefore, while known theories and tools can be helpful in social work education and practice, there have been contentions among social work scholars concerning the use of informed postulations.

Thyer (1994, 2001) has argued that teaching theories in social work education is unnecessary because classes are geared towards superficially exposing students to myriad theories rather than providing an extensive understanding of a select few. They further contend that the social work curriculum does not distinguish evidence-based versus non-evidence-based theories leading to ineffective practice, and that social work practice should be performed more inductively through observation rather than being guided by theory. However, other social work scholars challenge Thyer's claims. Gomory (2001) discussed that theory is a precursor to one's observations because theory is integrated among humans and other species biologically through identifying the information needed to uncover what biologically is limited to reveal and broaden what is not learned. Others also affirmed that theory is a foundation that imparts a tested explanation of how certain interventions and practices might transpire (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2007). Beyond the dispute of using theories and frameworks, scholars have also discussed their efficacy and applicability to various groups and populations.

Critics of social work education argue that the theories and frameworks used in social work education and training are irregular, individuated, and are derived primarily from psychology and psychotherapy (Herz & Johansson, 2011). This approach falls short of encompassing the critical structural, organizational, social, and cultural factors that social workers must be cognizant of (Herz & Johansson, 2011). The proliferation of neoliberal policies has and continues to shape and dictate social work education and practice, particularly in the U.S. (Singh, 2014; Specht & Courtney, 1994). Scholars argue that social work education and subsequently its potential application in the field have shortcomings such as a problematic binary and oscillating approach to cultural competence and multiculturalism (Constance-Huggins, 2012; Jani et al., 2011). Social workers are taught to have generalized and stereotypical perspectives on people's race, ethnic groups, gender, and other identities without having a firm grasp of the context and the complexities of power differentials once the intersections of identities are considered (Dominelli, 2018; Sue, 2006). These essentialist views are reified in social work's tendency to develop and promote specific methods and approaches that do not apply to individuals and groups that are not part of mainstream society – white, male, and middle-class (Herz & Johansson, 2012). A critical review of 1,168 articles in social work journals found that the majority primarily utilized theories from psychology and very few employed branches of race and feminist theories (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2007). Nevertheless, the evident paucity of critical theories and frameworks written by and for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and other underrepresented groups is indicative of the allegations that the

academic field of social work remains racist (Corley & Young, 2018; McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992).

Indeed, theories and frameworks can be oppressive; however, they can also be liberating particularly when written to center the experiences of BIPOC and authored by those with lived experiences in these communities (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Anti-racist social work education concretized in theories and frameworks exist (Allan et al., 2009; Dominelli, 2018) and have influenced anti-racist social work practice (Bhatti-Sinclair, 2011). Building on previous work that embodied critical theories and frameworks in social work (Allan et al., 2009) – anti-racist social work (Dominelli, 2018), Liberation Health Model (Martinez & Fleck-Henderson, 2014), and Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Nakaoka & Ortiz, 2018; Ortiz & Jani, 2010) – the purpose of this article is to discuss critical theories and frameworks written by Indigenous and People of Color scholars that social workers can integrate into their education and practice to address and dismantle racist pedagogy and praxis. We take a wide-ranging view of social work education encompassing pedagogical practice, theoretical content, as well as disrupting oppressive systems in the classroom and through social work practice. The five theories and frameworks discussed in this article are: Compa Love (Hannegan-Martinez, 2019), Racial Triangulation Theory (Kim, 1999), Breath of Life Theory (Blackstock, 2011), kapwa (David et al., 2017; Desai, 2016), and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Compa Love was chosen because it helps social work educators humanize their students, which is useful in teaching social work education. Racial Triangulation Theory illuminates racial power analysis in relation to whiteness. Breath of Life Theory provides a different way of understanding how First Nations view the world to ensure the safety of First Nations children that can be applied in other settings with a thorough assessment. Kapwa and cultural wealth are strength-based concepts derived from the experiences, culture, and traditions of Filipino and Latinx communities. These theories and frameworks consider the different aspects of social work education and practice that will assist educators and students in de-centering Eurocentric epistemologies of social work education. We submit that these theories and frameworks be approached with an intersectionality framework (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) to distinguish disparities and understand the complexities in which social constructs are entangled and imbricated. Uplifting and borrowing from Fred Hampton of the Black Panthers, "theory's cool, but theory with no practice ain't shit" (Malloy, 2017, p. 9), this article will also discuss implications for social work education and practice. Through these critical theories, we aim to raise the critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) of social workers to commit to true liberation and self-determination for all.

Theories and Their Social Work Application

This section will outline the basic tenets of the five theories advanced by Indigenous and POC scholars and examine how they have been operationalized in other settings to envisage their application to social work education and research with the goal of influencing and elevating anti-racist practice in the discipline. Table 1 summarizes the definitions and potential application of the five theories to social work education and practice.

Table 1. *Theory Definitions and Application to Social Work Education and Practice*

Theory	Definition	Translation	
		Education	**Practice**
Compa Love	A transformative re-framing of the self, rooted in radical love. Originating in education pedagogy, this can potentially extend into practice.	Demonstrate and engage in critical inquiry in the classroom to draw authentic relationships with students to inform classroom pedagogies.	Understanding experiences of compounded trauma among communities and clients to co-create spaces of solidarity. Social work practitioners can also locate their role in connecting communities to resources to help them achieve their life's potential.
Racial Triangulation Theory	Allows us to understand power differentials among racial/ethnic groups controlled by white supremacy.	This theory and its extension, the Racial Position Model, helps social work educators provide students with a critical understanding of power analysis and challenge stereotypes and ideologies about different racial/ethnic groups.	Practitioners can use the tenets within this theory to challenge their own and others' assumptions that their clients/ communities they work with fit prevalent stereotypes and understand heterogeneity within groups.
Breath of Life (BOL) Theory	Recommends a balance between relational worldview principles comprising cognitive, spiritual, and emotional domains to allay structural risk factors affecting the welfare and safety of First Nations people.	Introducing BOL as an extension of, and an indigenous alternative to, the person-in-environment principle of social work can expand social work students' grasp over professional values to incorporate emotional, spiritual, cognitive, and physical domains.	Practitioners can use BOL to integrate structural and systemic aspects of community work with a lens rooted in intergenerational knowledge and wisdom to achieve collective community actualization.
Kapwa	A way of understanding and interacting with one another that allows people to acknowledge each other's humanity and interconnectedness through humanization, unifying the physical, spiritual, and intellectual, and decolonization.	Kapwa provides students of social work a framework of relationality to appreciate connections within seemingly disparate living systems and complements a move toward culturally sustaining pedagogy in the classroom.	Keeping the universality of shared humanity at its core, practitioners can employ kapwa to adopt a culturally-rooted perspective to thinking in systems and understand system interdependencies.
Cultural Wealth	Communities of color have their own set of knowledge, skills, and tools to challenge racism and other forms of oppression.	Instructors can utilize this model to flip the dominant narrative rooted in the deficit framework to support first-generation or BIPOC students identify barriers in their everyday education and life to recognize resources and strengths.	Practitioners can use cultural wealth to situate racism and associated structural barriers and identify resources and assets within communities to challenge oppressive structures.

Compa Love

Compa Love, a shortened version of compañero/a/x, provides a transformative re-framing of being an educator and rooting oneself in radical love as the quintessential guide in teaching. With this understanding, Compa Love can be used to frame social work education and practice. Hannegan-Martinez (2019) argues that educators need to eliminate the practice of Punk Love, the practice in which an educator is cognizant of the issues affecting students but not actively engaging and addressing these inequities in their praxis, thus reproducing oppressive systems and behaviors. The three reifications of Punk Love are Colonial Love, Tough Love, and Conditional Love (Hannegan-Martinez, 2019). Colonial Love is the embodiment of performing as a savior of under-resourced groups to relieve their guilt rather than acknowledging the agency, assets, and wealth of their students. Tough Love is fostering high expectations and wielding punitive classroom practices when students are not able to meet set standards, rather than understanding the inequities that students are facing, which may affect their academic performance. Conditional Love is a deficit approach of educators only committing themselves to students who perform well academically and engage in the classroom while ignoring disengaged students.

Compa Love, on the other hand, challenges educators to recognize the humanity and interconnectedness of students and themselves through addressing the intellectual, emotional, and physical needs of their students (Hannegan-Martinez, 2019). Emotional Love is manifested through rituals rooted in the experiences of the students and sharing of their histories and backgrounds; spaces are created to allow students to be vulnerable to allow for empathy for one another, engendering healing. Students cannot be expected to thrive in the classrooms if their most basic material needs are not met. Tangible Love encourages educators to consider partnering with community organizations and other resources to provide students their most basic necessities. Finally, Intellectual Love embodies the praxis of a culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) that shifts from a deficit framework that often depicts BIPOC students as broken; instead, CSP equips students with skills and tools to develop critical consciousness and shows them that they are experts of their own experiences, cultivating transformational resistance.

Social Work Implications of Compa Love

Whereas Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed remains a central text for many social work educators, his treatise on the locus of love in pedagogical practice has been overlooked by most as an emancipatory political stance in the classroom (Darder, 2011). Compa Love expands this framework and can be a powerful tool, where to love is to commit to the lives and collective liberation of all (Hannegan-Martinez, 2019). While students have disparate life experiences that often include adversities leading to chronic and long-term trauma, BIPOC students, particularly in U.S. social work classrooms, often deal with the added trauma of living, witnessing, and navigating racist systems and institutions with an onus on themselves to learn the tools to dismantle these structures. Student social workers go on to be change agents in varying capacities in the real world,

which adds to their experience of compounded trauma. Compa Love can guide instructors to demonstrate and engage in a critical inquiry to draw authentic relationships with students as well as inform and influence pedagogical design. Departing from the more prevalent trauma-informed care, Compa Love provides the foundation for social workers to embrace a multifaceted discernable love that informs their practice. Emotional love can be woven into the classroom culture through rituals, activities, and creating shared spaces that foster a brave, healing solidarity among students toward common causes rooted in their identities and experiences. To operationalize intellectual love, social work instructors can take a cue from ethnic studies coursework and CSP to help students connect classroom learning with historical knowledge from their own and other linguistic, racial, and ethnic groups (California Department of Education, n.d.) to foster a pluralism in thought and practice. This can cultivate a shared connection with other cultures, a critical component of dismantling dominant hegemonies of knowledge, and lead to a true democratization of education (Paris, 2012). As evidenced in the case study by Hannegan-Martinez (2019), tangible love can at times be more challenging to achieve in the classroom. Conversely, in a social work context, tangible love ought to be a more instinctive measure actualized by connecting students to internal and external resources and organizations that can help meet their material needs when required. Compa Love provides tools for social work educators to showcase intellectual, tangible, and emotional love by encouraging students to be vulnerable in the classroom, connecting students to resources in the community, and highlighting BIPOC students' agency in resistance and societal transformations. This theory therefore demonstrates the need for and way toward a common liberatory praxis based on a recognition of the importance of lived experiences in transformative education.

Racial Triangulation Theory

The Racial Triangulation Theory asserts that Asian Americans serve an intermediary role in the U.S. that glorifies them as model minorities pitted against Black and African American people while simultaneously being ostracized as perpetual foreigners, denying them acceptance as Americans, in other words, white (Kim, 1999). Through the intricate and enmeshed methods conceptualized through ideologies, policies, and institutions that white society engages in, white supremacy endures. The valorization of Asian Americans has been enacted historically through such means as Asian Americans heralded to be academically successful despite the challenges of racism and other forms of discrimination, essentially chastising other communities of color for not being academically resilient (Wu, 2014). These generalizations overlook the inequities within Asian ethnic groups that show some Southeast Asian ethnic groups having one of the lowest educational attainment of any racial and ethnic group (López et al., 2017). This also does not ignore the fact that some Asian American groups have actively engaged in preserving this contradicting image that allows Asian Americans to be in proximity to whiteness through partaking in support of eradicating affirmative action through groups such as Students for Fair Admissions led by white conservative Edward Blum (Chuh, 2018). Nevertheless, such propinquity to whiteness but non-acceptance into whiteness is sanctioned through the ostracization of Asian Americans by being portrayed as perpetual foreigners. Asian Americans have been depicted historically overtime as not American by being a threat to the safety of the

American people as "yellow peril" and in the incarceration of Japanese Americans in internment camps (Lee, 2015), demonstrating that while Asian Americans may be in proximity to whiteness through their scholarship and being apolitical, they remain dubious and distrusted because of their physical appearance.

More recently, Racial Triangulation Theory has been extended to include Latinx Americans through the Racial Position Model. In this model, the framework posits that whites, Asian Americans, African Americans, and Latinx Americans are situated in four quadrants within the two axes of subordination: perceived inferiority and perceived cultural foreignness (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Within this model:

> …whites are treated and perceived as superior and American; African Americans as inferior and relatively American compared to Latinos and Asian Americans; Latinos as inferior and foreign; and Asian Americans as foreign and relatively superior compared to African Americans and Latinos. (Zou & Cheryan, 2017, p. 697)

Through these frameworks and models, perceptions of belonging and positionalities in proximity to whiteness allow certain racial groups to have access to some power and resources. However, it is important to note that heterogeneity within the numerous identities that people hold may place them in different parts of the model depending on the context, and Native Americans and mixed-race individuals who may pass as white or not are not considered in these models.

Social Work Implications of Racial Triangulation Theory

The occupational and social stereotyping of Asian Americans in the U.S. impacts knowledge and research on experiences of Asian Americans in the U.S. (Kiang et al., 2017) and this holds true within the social work profession as well. The proportion of Asian Americans in social work remains among the lowest. According to 2018 data from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Asian Americans constituted 3% of the total population of students enrolled for a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) in the US and 5% among all Master in Social Work (MSW) graduates in the country, and this classification includes Pacific Islanders (Salsberg et al., 2019). As the Racial Triangulation Theory posits, Asian Americans are not a monolithic group but are treated as such and often employed as a wedge by a white supremacist system to maintain a racist and unequal order. This comes to bear in social work classroom and field settings, where Asian Americans are either invisibilized, invalidated, stereotyped, or face other forms of microaggressions (Spencer, 2017). Social work syllabi tend to ignore or even uphold stereotypical representations of racial groups such as equating Asians with East Asians, and largely invisiblizing the diversity and differences within and among Asian groups. Further, classroom examples from social work research on socio-economic disparities either treat Asians as white adjacent, or disregard the demographic. The model minority myth lumps multiple Asian identities together and fails to recognize specific struggles and contexts of individual Asian American students or groups that social workers interface with. In the context of their field placements too, Asian American social work students experience a tussle between their ways of knowing and the dominant frameworks within social work

with care interventions such as culturally informed notions of kinship and interdependence often challenged and minimized by non-Asian instructors at school or at the field setting (Chung, 2006). An awareness and discussion of the Racial Triangulation Theory can help social work educators, students, and practitioners inquire into these inequities in and through their classroom, field, and practice settings. In fact, both the Racial Triangulation Theory and the Racial Position Model allows us to critically analyze racial power inequities to understand the positionalities of how white supremacy controls how different racial groups are perceived and pitted against each other. These frameworks challenge existing differentials in power structures and the status quo. Without this framework, social work education ignores this gap in the disparities in racial groups (e.g., Asian Americans) who are assumed to be model minorities and a monolith, but actually encounter inequities by ethnic groups. Understanding and employing a racial power analysis guided by this framework will help identify how perceptions of racialized minorities are influenced by white supremacy culture, and is a necessitous step toward culturally sustaining anti-racist social work practices.

Breath of Life (BOL) Theory

The Breath of Life (BOL) theory postulates that relational worldview principles must be in balance to assuage the structural risk factors affecting the welfare and safety of First Nations[1] children (Blackstock, 2011). The relational worldview principles are composed of four domains: cognitive (e.g., self & community actualization, role, etc.), physical (e.g., food, water, housing, etc.), spiritual (e.g., spirituality, purpose, etc.), and emotional (e.g., belonging, relationship, etc.) that are interconnected and exist in multiple realities and generations (Blackstock, 2011; Cross, 1997). The concept of balance across these principles pertains to the idea that the survival of individuals is intertwined with the health and well-being of people from different generations, realities, and the universe (Blackstock, 2019). These principles must be situated within the various cultures and contexts of First Nations. In addition, these principles must be enacted with the understanding that to fathom the experiences of children in First Nations, the experiences of the previous seven generations must be accounted to comprehend the child presently and how interventions and services might consequently affect the next seven generations, suggesting that behavior, trauma, and coping strategies are passed on through numerous generations (Blackstock, 2011). Finally, First Nations also recognize that alternate realities exist, meaning that these realities affect one another, and interventions can alleviate structural risk factors in alternate realities. Antithetical to Western perspectives, BOL encourages that the effects of structural factors be gauged beyond the individual and through the individual's family and community. Blackstock suggests that BOL can also be applied in other fields outside of child welfare and other cultural groups through critical cross-cultural assessments (Blackstock, 2011).

[1] Blackstock is based in Canada where the term "First Nations" denotes Indigenous peoples distinct from Métis and Inuit.

Social Work Implications of Breath of Life (BOL) Theory

As a First Nations theory, the BOL theory offers social workers an alternative to the Western theories they are used to engaging with, that are steeped in academic and social hegemony. Postulated as an Indigenous "theory of everything" (Blackstock, 2019, p. 857), BOL is a deeper dive into the interconnectedness of our world. It goes further beyond the "person-in- environment" principle that social workers learn that seeks to understand individuals and their behaviors within the context in which they live and act (Kondrat, 2013). Social workers accustomed to Western theories and ways of knowing might find the indefinite boundaries of the BOL confounding. However, in the spirit of how Blackstock intended it, social workers should recognize this as an invitation to explore how the BOL theory can strengthen and inform concepts integral to our profession, such as equity and non-discrimination in areas of public health, educational outcomes, gerontological social work, embedded within social, racial, and environmental justice. For instance, BOL may offer an alternative perspective to understanding needs and issues that older adults face as they deal with multiple challenges and stressors. BOL can turn to the valued knowledge of elders in the community to access the spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical domains and the connections therein to achieve the best potential outcomes. As Blackstock (2011) suggests, a multigenerational perspective is essential to understand and achieve community actualization and for a relational view of issues affecting individuals, households, and communities over time and interconnected realities. The BOL theory offers a way of integrating and examining structural aspects of issues, including and beyond those that First Nations communities and families face, with a lens rooted in the intergenerational knowledge and wisdom, and presents newer epistemes for social work researchers and practitioners to understand and alleviate the human experience.

Kapwa

Scholars argue that kapwa's etiology has been present since pre-colonial Philippines despite the colonization by Spain and the U.S. that attempted to transform its meaning through religion and the English language (Reyes, 2015). Kapwa is perceived as the core aspect of Filipino values, pertaining to being one with others (Enriquez, 1994). Kapwa is not constrained by the bounds of orthodox definitions of what constitutes relationships with people – blood, origin, social status – instead, it recognizes that an individual has a shared identity or inner self with others (David et al., 2017). This value challenges Western concepts that often individuates the person from others. While Kapwa is the center, it must be operationalized in partnership with other Filipino values such as *pakikiramdam* (being able to empathize with others), *hiya* (shame), *utang na loob* (gratitude), and *pakikisama* (companionship; David et al., 2017; Enriquez, 1994). These values shape the worldview of Filipinos and how they approach, interact, and be in community with one another. More recently, the concept of Kapwa has been extended in other iterations such as Critical Kapwa which provides a framework to healing from the intergenerational trauma passed on in Filipino families and communities because of colonization (Desai, 2016). Its three tenets are humanization, on becoming diwa(ta), and decolonizing epistemologies. Humanization allows individuals to critically perceive themselves and others operating in social systems and structures that are oppressive and capitalistic that value production over humanity. On

becoming diwa(ta), diwa meaning spirit and diwata meaning deity, encourages the unity of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual spheres through practicing spirituality that allows one to have a more in-depth comprehension of one's humanity. Finally, decolonizing epistemology refers to the use of indigenous spirituality and ideologies to serve as counter-narratives to Western beliefs and practices. Kapwa provides a different way of understanding and interacting with one another that allows people to acknowledge each other's humanity and interconnectedness.

Social Work Implications of Kapwa

An appreciation of kapwa can help social workers working with Filipino individuals and groups but also with other groups, given that the universality of shared humanity is central to common progress and action. At personal, community, and societal levels, this framework can help view and create a shared connection with others in the community and can also extend to the social and natural environments. Kapwa provides a culturally-rooted complement to the human security framing where human needs and human security are prioritized over national, religious, and prestige frameworks (Lagdameo-Santillan, 2018). For social workers, the embeddedness of the self within this larger shared space helps to situate Filipino client's and groups' life experiences within the context of their colonial history and post-colonial but racialized current being, while not essentializing this to all Filipino experience. Analogous to the BOL theory, critical kapwa harkens to indigenous spirituality and philosophies as a foil for dominant Western ideologies that have long focused on individuality, personal agency, and autonomy, ignoring the networks and kinship to family, community, and the systems we are nested in (David et al., 2017). This relationality can aid social workers to join the dots between interconnected but seemingly disparate living systems; by viewing the self in the other, kapwa helps us identify with communities and individuals that we work with.

Kapwa can be put into practice in the social work classroom by incorporating the research of Curammeng and colleagues (2016) that examined how the Ethnic Studies Praxis Story Plot (ESPSP) developed by Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) affected multiple aspects of student learning in K-college classrooms. The common goal in ESPSP is liberatory education and action for both instructors and students and it centers the realities of students, encouraging them to challenge dominant frameworks by channeling everyday lives and realities of the students. Five key aspects of this framework are exposing the problem, identifying oppressive action, identifying trauma/tension, moving toward action and resistance, to then reflect and find deeper connections with their world and lived experiences (Curammeng et al., 2016). Social work educators can use similar tools from community-responsive literacies to develop critical pedagogies in their classrooms and build kapwa. Cases and examples from non-dominant frameworks and communities can be a way of encouraging student social workers to reflect by relating and connecting them with their experience; teasing out parallels in stories of injustices as well as community triumphs while drawing connections to their own communities, and inquiring how the learning or story impacts themselves as social workers (Curammeng et al., 2016).

In social work practice, implementing one of the tenets of critical kapwa, humanization, can be integrated in a clinical and macro setting by acknowledging the

effects of colonization of the Philippines by Spain and the U.S. which has fostered colonial mentality among Filipinos, affecting their mental health and overall well-being (David et al., 2017). Scaffolding clients to locate their experiences and behaviors in the aftermath of colonization and arguably, current efforts of neo-colonization, social workers can help clients understand the systemic factors affecting their mental health and well-being. Thus, these issues are then not individualized and internalized.

Cultural Wealth

Cultural wealth argues that BIPOC communities have their own set of knowledge, skills, and tools to challenge racism and other forms of oppression (Yosso, 2005). Rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT), cultural wealth de-centers deficit notions of cultural capital – white and middle class – that allows for the social and economic mobility of certain groups. Cultural wealth is reified through its six tenets: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant. Yosso (2005) explains that people of color can use their cultural wealth to access resources that are relevant to their experiences through the ability of BIPOC to have hope despite systemic racism (aspirational capital), using their cultural language to access non-Eurocentric experiences (linguistic capital), rich familial history (familial capital), using their resources within their ethnic enclaves (social capital), learned strategies in navigating bureaucratic and racist institutions as a BIPOC (navigational capital), and learning and applying historical forms of resistance of BIPOC to challenge oppression (resistant capital). While cultural wealth can be considered as an iteration of the strengths-based approach through its principles of using an individual's experiences of adversities as a starting point in engendering transformation and realizing their resilience and access to protective factors within their family and community (Saleebey, 2008), they are distinct from one another. Scholars argued that the strengths-based perspective is a neoliberal approach, in that it focuses on the individual's autonomy and perspective of the world, leaves the responsibility to the community of the individual to fix the problem rather than holding the government accountable to provide services and ignores the intersectionalities of race, gender, and class as systemic barriers (Gray, 2011). Cultural wealth succeeds in explicitly naming racism and other forms of oppression, recognizing that barriers are present at all levels of the community, institutions, and systems, and derives its assets from a collective community with shared identity and culture that shifts away from individual responsibility.

Social Work Implications of Cultural Wealth

Social work educators can work with students to move beyond the six tenets identified in the model to uncover other forms of cultural assets. For instance, a study on the experiences of first-generation Latinx students at the University of Texas in San Antonio found that these students were often characterized within deficit frameworks and educators internalized these assumptions (Rendon et al., 2014). The research identifies and provides examples of strategies employed by students within the academic context and adds perseverance, ethnic consciousness, spirituality/faith, and pluriversality or multi-epistemic skills of operating in multiple different worlds (Rendon et al., 2014) to examples of cultural

wealth. In the social work classroom, the cultural wealth model can help BIPOC students identify and name resources that are available to them to realize their own goals and chart out their practice framework. For social work educators, researchers, and practitioners, this would mean privileging the lived experience of cultural minorities and not trying to recast their experiences within dominant narratives and systems of knowing. In social work education, this would also mean turning prevailing student success frameworks on their head to employ a cultural asset view of ensuring a successful and transformational college experience for BIPOC students in social work. To advance an anti-racist practice and research program, the aspirational capital in the cultural wealth model encourages students to keep pushing to achieve that goal in the face of roadblocks or antagonistic environments. It also provides a blueprint for social work educators to encourage students to bring their community or family knowledge, language, and experiences to the fore in articulating their role in creating systemic change in their place of work and communities.

Conclusion

Students of social work are exposed to a range of traditional theories to inform their work with clients and communities. However, these theories and the extant social work curriculum as a whole promotes and maintains institutional racism that shapes how social workers practice (de Silva et al., 2007). These general theories are inadequate to understand behaviors and contexts to work with clients and larger systems and processes because they do not do full justice to developing an understanding around nuances of varied lived experiences of individuals and communities that social workers work with. This is particularly important since in the coming decades U.S. society is projected to be older and more ethnically and racially pluralistic (Vespa et al., 2020). Teaching theories and frameworks that do not reflect the communities that social workers traverse will only sustain oppressive practices and inequities.

Multiple parallels exist between the theories presented in this article and various aspects can be borrowed from the theories to inform, build, and supplement social work theories for practice. These include a sense of interconnectedness, as seen in Compa Love, BOL, and kapwa; and a departure from the deficit framework as seen in the cultural wealth model and Compa Love. In the same vein, some of these theories also mirror the universal connectedness and harmony espoused within the Ubuntu philosophy (Ncube, 2010). Racial Triangulation Theory and Racial Position Model present tools in critically analyzing power relationships manifested in otherness and perceived superiority in proximity to whiteness that highlights how white supremacy has divided and disproportionately controlled access to resources for BIPOC communities.

While the theories and frameworks discussed provide critical understanding, we offer the following strategies for educators and practitioners to avoid pitfalls in misusing the aforementioned theories and concepts. First, to avoid misappropriating these epistemologies rooted in the experiences of specific groups and cultures, educators and practitioners must have a thorough assessment and analysis of the individuals and communities in which these theories and frameworks are being applied to, as suggested by BOL (Blackstock, 2011). Second, social workers must practice constant self-reflexivity

(Lynch, 2006; Pillow, 2003) to discern how their identities, positionalities, and knowledge might cause harm in attempting to apply these theories and frameworks that might be more damaging than beneficial to the communities they are working with. Third, social workers must constantly educate themselves through various methods such as books, articles, lectures, community events, webinars, documentaries, and podcasts written and created by BIPOC scholars and creatives to gain a deeper understanding of the historical and contemporary experiences of BIPOC populations. We argue that the work of educating must not come at the intellectual and emotional labor of BIPOC communities who are often relegated to perform this labor in social work classrooms and institutions where they are under-represented and not financially compensated. Fourth, social workers must have a critical understanding of power dynamics and analysis in relation to race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, economic, and immigration status among others in assessing social work literature and in practicing social work through some of the theories mentioned in this article and other theories in the extant literature. Finally, we encourage social work educators and practitioners to be present and support organizing and advocacy efforts led by BIPOC communities. These theories and frameworks are meant to engender active participation in challenging, transforming, and revolutionizing institutions and systems to ensure they are equitable and racially just.

There are numerous other theories and frameworks from the global South and those proposed by BIPOC scholars that can be employed within the social work classroom to contextualize student, client, and community experiences toward a critical liberatory anti-racist praxis. The theories outlined in this paper are an attempt to provide a pathway to offer social work educators, researchers, and practitioners, newer ways to unravel the complexities within which they operate while placing the learner, client, and community at the center. Scholars and practitioners of social work can use these theories or frameworks as a whole, or in parts to meet the needs of their education and practice that may be limited because of the Eurocentric and neoliberal curriculum that many social work classrooms may instruct. They may face potential resistance from traditionalists espousing normalized racist beliefs but we argue that in order for the field to move toward racial justice and equity, these brave and critical oppositions must be enacted. We hope that social workers will continue to disrupt and dismantle the ways in which we learn, build knowledge, and practice through intentionally seeking scholarly works that are written by BIPOC scholars with lived experiences and authentic commitment in the communities they live and work with. We deem that these will be critical in preparing anti-racist social workers committed to true liberation and self-determination for all.

References

Allan, J., Briskman, L., & Pease, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Critical social work: Theories and practices for a socially just world* (2nd ed.). Allen & Unwin. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003115304

Berman-Rossi, T., & Miller, I. (1994). African-Americans and the settlements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Social Work with Groups*, *17*(3), 77-95. https://doi.org/10.1300/J009v17n03_06

Bhatti-Sinclair, K. (2011). *Anti-racist practice in social work*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Blackstock, C. (2011). The emergence of Breath of Life Theory. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, *8*(1), 1-16. https://jswve.org/download/2011-1/spr11-blackstock-Emergence-breath-of-life-theory.pdf

Blackstock, C. (2019). Revisiting the Breath of Life Theory. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *49*(4), 854-859. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcz047

California Department of Education [CDE]. (n.d.). *Culturally sustaining pedagogy - Educator excellence (CDE)*. https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/culturallysustainingped.asp

Chuh, K. (2018). Asians are the new … What? In C. J. Schlund-Vials (Ed.), *Flashpoints for Asian American studies* (pp. 220-238). Fordham University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1xhr6h7.16

Chung, I. (2006). Bridging professional and cultural values and norms. A study of Asian American social work students. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, *26*(1-2), 223-233. https://doi.org/10.1300/J067v26n01_06

Constance-Huggins, M. (2012). Critical race theory in social work education: A Framework for addressing racial disparities. *Critical Social Work*, *13*(2), 1-16. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22329/csw.v13i2.5861

Corley, N. A., & Young, S. M. (2018). Is social work still racist? A content analysis of recent literature. *Social Work*, *63*(4), 317-326. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swy042

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-168. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500480-5

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *6*, 1241-1300. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Cross, T. (1997). Understanding the relational worldview in Indian families. *Pathways Practice Digest*, *12*(4), 1-3. https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/Relational-Worldview-Model.pdf

Curammeng, E. R., Lopez, D. D., & Tintiangco-Cubales, A. (2016). Community responsive literacies: The development of the ethnic studies praxis story plot. *English Teaching*, *15*(3), 411-429. https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-01-2016-0016

Darder, A. (2011). Teaching as an act of love: Reflections on Paulo Freire and his contributions to our lives and our work. *Counterpoints*, *418,* 497-510. https://www.darder.org/images/darder_teaching_act_love.pdf

David, E. J. R., Sharma, D. K. B., & Petalio, J. (2017). Losing Kapwa: Colonial legacies and the Filipino American family. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *8*(1), 43-55. https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000068

de Silva, E. C., Jackson, V., Oldman, V., Schacter, R., Wong, J., Lopez, L., & Richards,

D. (2007). *Institutional Racism & The Social Work Profession: A Call to Action*. https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=SWK1aR53FAk%3D&portalid=0

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York University Press.

Desai, M. R. (2016). Critical Kapwa: Possibilities of collective healing from colonial trauma. *Educational Perspectives*, *48*, 34-40. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1143600.pdf

Dominelli, L. (2018). *Anti-racist social work*. Red Globe Press.

Enriquez, V. G. (1994). *From colonial to liberation psychology: The Philippine experience*. De La Salle University Press.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.

Gentle-Genitty, C. S., Gregory, V., Pfahler, C., Thomas, M., Lewis, L., Campbell, K., Ballard, K., Compton, K., & Daley, J. G. (2007). A critical review of theory in social work journals: A replication study. *Advances in Social Work*, *8*(1), 62-80. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18060/132

Gomory, T. (2001). A fallibilistic response to Thyer's Theory of Theory-Free Empirical Research in Social Work Practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *37*(1), 26-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2001.10779035

Gray, M. (2011). Back to basics: A critique of the strengths perspective in social work. *Families in Society*, *92*(1), 5-11. https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.4054

Hannegan-Martinez, S. (2019). From punk love to Compa Love: A pedagogical paradigm to intervene on trauma. *The Urban Review*, *51*(4), 659-675. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00540-3

Herz, M., & Johansson, T. (2011). Critical social work - Considerations and suggestions. *Critical Social Work*, *12*(1), 28-45. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22329/csw.v12i1.5843

Herz, M., & Johansson, T. (2012). 'Doing' social work: Critical considerations on theory and practice in social work. *Advances in Social Work*, *13*(3), 527-540. https://doi.org/10.18060/1976

Horowitz, J. M., Brown, A., & Cox, K. (2019). *Race in America 2019*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/

Jani, J. S., Pierce, D., Ortiz, L., & Sowbel, L. (2011). Access to intersectionality, content to competence: Deconstructing social work education diversity standards. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *47*(2), 283-301. https://doi.org/10.5175/JSWE.2011.200900118

Kendi, I. X. (2016). *Stamped from the beginning*. Nation Books.

Kiang, L., Huynh, V. W., Cheah, C. S. L., Wang, Y., & Yoshikawa, H. (2017). Moving

beyond the model minority. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *8*(1), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000070

Kim, C. J. (1999). The racial triangulation of Asian Americans. *Politics & Society*, *27*(1), 105-138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329299027001005

Kivunja, C. (2018). Distinguishing between theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework: A systematic review of lessons from the field. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *7*(6), 44-53. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v7n6p44

Kondrat, M. E. (2013). Person-in-Environment. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, *September*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.285

Lagdameo-Santillan, K. (2018). Roots of Filipino Humanism (1)"Kapwa". *Pressenza, International Press Agency*. https://www.pressenza.com/2018/07/roots-of-filipino-humanism-1kapwa/

Lee, E. (2015). *The making of Asian America: A history*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

López, G., Ruiz, N. G., & Patten, E. (2017). *Key facts about Asian Americans, a diverse and growing population*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/08/key-facts-about-asian-americans/

Lynch, A. (2006). The place of structural-self reflexivity in our ongoing educational journey as social workers. *Social Work Review*, *18*(4), 78-89.

Malloy, S. L. (2017). *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party internationalism during the Cold War*. Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501712715

Martinez, D. B., & Fleck-Henderson, A. (2014). *Social Justice in Clinical Practice: A Liberation Health Framework for Social Work*. Routledge.

McMahon, A., & Allen-Meares, P. (1992). Is social work racist? A content analysis of recent literature. *Social Work*, *37*(6), 533-539. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/37.6.533

Nakaoka, S., & Ortiz, L. (2018). Examining racial microaggressions as a tool for transforming social work education: The case for critical race pedagogy. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *27*(1), 72-85. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2017.1417947

Ncube, L. B. (2010). Ubuntu: A transformative leadership philosophy. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, *4*(3), 77-82. https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.20182

Ortiz, L., & Jani, J. (2010). Critical race theory: A transformational model for teaching diversity. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *46*(2), 175-193. https://doi.org/10.5175/jswe.2010.200900070

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(3), 93-97. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Park, Y. (2008). Facilitating injustice: Tracing the role of social workers in the World War II Internment of Japanese Americans. *Social Service Review*, *82*(3), 447-483.

https://doi.org/10.1086/592361

Park, Y., & Kemp, S. P. (2006). "Little alien colonies": Representations of immigrants and their neighborhoods in social work discourse, 1875-1924. *Social Service Review*, *80*(4), 705-734. https://doi.org/10.1086/507934

Parsons, R. J. (1991). Empowerment: Purpose and practice principle in social work. *Social Work with Groups*, *14*(2), 7-21. https://doi.org/10.1300/J009v14n02_02

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *16*(2), 175-196. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635

Rendon, L. I., Nora, A., & Kanagala, V. (2014). *Ventajas/Assets y Conocimientos/Knowledge: Leveraging Latin@ strengths to foster student success*. https://www.utsa.edu/strategicplan/documents/2017_12%20Student%20Success%20_Ventajas_Assets_2014.pdf

Reyes, J. (2015). Loób and Kapwa: An introduction to a Filipino virtue ethics. *Asian Philosophy*, *25*(2), 148-171. https://doi.org/10.1080/09552367.2015.1043173

Saleebey, D. (2008). The strengths perspective: Putting possibility and hope to work in our practice. In B. W. White (Ed.), *Comprehensive handbook of social work and social welfare: The profession of social work* (pp. 123-142). John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470373705.chsw001011

Salsberg, E., Quigley, L., Richwine, C., Sliwa, S., Acquaviva, K., & Wyche, K. (2019). *From social work education to social work practice: Results of the 2018 social work graduates*. https://www.cswe.org/CSWE/media/Workforce-Study/2018-Social-Work-Workforce-Report-Final.pdf?_zs=aBMte1&_zl=O32h5

Singh, G. (2014). Rethinking anti-racist social work in a neoliberal age. In M. Lavalette & L. Penketh (Eds.), *Race, racism and social work* (1st ed., pp. 17-32). Bristol University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qgtg9.7

Solorzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a Critical Race and Latcrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, *36*(3), 308-342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085901363002

Specht, H., & Courtney, M. E. (1994). *Unfaithful angels: How social work has abandoned its mission*. The Free Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/40.1.134

Spencer, M. S. (2017). Microaggressions and social work practice, education, and research. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *26*(1-2), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2016.1268989

Sue, D. W. (2006). *Multicultural social work practice*. John Wiley & Sons.

Sweet, J. H. (1997). The Iberian roots of American racist thought. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, *54*(1), 143-166. https://doi.org/10.2307/2953315

Thyer, B. A. (1994). Are theories for practice necessary? No! *Journal of Social Work Education*, *30*(2), 148-152. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.1994.10672225

Thyer, B. A. (2001). What is the role of theory in research on social work practice? *Journal of Social Work Education*, *37*(1), 9-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2001.10779034

Tower, K. D. (1994). Consumer-centered social work practice: Restoring client self-determination. *Social Work*, *39*(2), 191-196. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/39.2.191

Vespa, J., Medina, L., & Armstrong, D. (2020). Demographic turning points for the United States: Population projections for 2020 to 2060. Current Population Reports, P25–1144. U.S. Census Bureau. census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1144.html

Vought, R. (2020). *Memorandum for the heads of executive department agencies*. Executive Office of the President of the United States. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/M-20-34.pdf

Wu, E. D. (2014). *The color of success*. Princeton University Press. http://www.jstor.org.proxy.bc.edu/stable/j.ctt5hhphr

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 69-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

Zou, L. X., & Cheryan, S. (2017). Two axes of subordination: A new model of racial position. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (Vol. 112, Issue 5, pp. 696-717). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000080

Author note: Address correspondence to Dale Dagar Maglalang, Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, Brown University, Box G-S121, Providence, RI 02912. Email: dale_maglalang@brown.edu