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An Analysis of Afrocentricity as Theory for Social Work Practice

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Abstract

Afrocentricity is developing rapidly within the social work profession as a theory for practice with African Americans. Afrocentric practitioners claim the theory provides a basis for understanding African Americans from an African perspective and cultural value system, and it is the most effective approach to address racial oppression. However, social work has not critically analyzed the merits of Afrocentricity as a source of knowledge to inform the profession. This article takes the initial step to determine whether Afrocentricity is in-fact a theory. Afrocentricity is described, discussed, and analyzed based on current and accepted definitions of theory. The analysis reveals Afrocentric epistemology lacks the rigor to be accepted as an empirically-based theory for practice. The author concludes that Afrocentricity is more accurately categorized as an ideology. Research and practice implications of this conclusion and the need for further critique are discussed.

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