EMPOWERMENT IN TERMS OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: EXPLORING A TYPOLOGY OF THE PROCESS AND COMPONENTS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

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A variety of studies on empowerment has been conducted, but there has been no overarching framework available for practitioners and researchers hoping to grasp the process and components of empowerment in a comprehensive manner. This study was designed to provide the overarching framework across theories and disciplines for both academics and practitioners in the field of empowerment. A method of theoretical synthesis was employed in this study. Studies were chosen for review in the article based on the two criteria. First, both books and articles were not limited as long as they included theories on the steps toward empowerment and the cognitive element of empowerment. Second, disciplines were not bounded as they provided ideas for the empowerment process and its cognitive elements. It was found that empowerment might be synthesized into five progressive stages and four cognitive elements in both personal and collective empowerment. © 2006 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

The origin of empowerment as a form of theory was traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator, Freire (1973), when he suggested a plan for liberating the oppressed people of the world through education. Empowerment was most commonly associated with alternative approaches to psychological or social development and the concern for local, grassroots community-based movements and initiatives (Parpart, Rai, & Staudt, 2003). The term has become a widely used word in the social sciences in the last decade across a broad

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variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, management, political theory, social work, education, women studies, and sociology (Lincoln, Travers, Ackers, & Wilkinson, 2002). Community psychology is one of the disciplines in which the word *empowerment* is most frequently used; it is often referenced in the field's journals, such as the *American Journal of Community Psychology* and the *Journal of Community Psychology.*

The concept of empowerment is conceived as the idea of power, because empowerment is closely related to changing power: gaining, expending, diminishing, and losing (Page & Czuba, 1999). Traditionally, power was understood as an isolated entity and a zero sum, as it is usually possessed at the expense of others (Lips, 1991; Weber, 1946). Recently, power has been understood as shared because it can actually strengthen while being shared with others (Kreisberg, 1992). Shared power is "the definition, as a process that occurs in relationships, that gives us the possibility of empowerment." It is conceived as "a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their lives" (Page & Czuba, 1999, p. 25).

There exist three issues basic to the understanding of empowerment. First, empowerment is multidimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, political, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Third, empowerment, by definition, is a social process because it occurs in relation to others (Page & Czuba, 1999; Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino & Schnider, 2005). Finally, empowerment is an outcome that can be enhanced and evaluated (Parpart et al., 2003). Empowerment as both a process and an outcome (Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) has been examined across a variety of disciplines. It is a process in that it is fluid, often unpredictable, and changeable over time and place. Empowerment can also be seen as an outcome because it can be measured against expected accomplishments (Parpart et al., 2003). The process can be more instructive than the outcome, however, because the former is more specific and analytic than is the latter characteristic. Despite these assertions, most studies on empowerment have focused on outcomes. Some studies (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Darlington & Michele, 2004) have focused on the process or path of empowerment, but their conclusions were more relevant to the outcome than to the actual ongoing process.

Other studies (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 2001; Doore, 1988; Friedmann, 1992; Marciniak, 2004; Parpart et al., 2003) show the path of empowerment from certain perspectives. Still, a "common" path that many academics and practitioners wish to utilize in their research and fieldwork has not yet been explored. A variety of studies on empowerment has been conducted, but there has been, to date, no overarching framework available for practitioners and researchers who want to grasp the process and cognitive elements of empowerment in a comprehensive manner (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). This study was designed to provide an overarching framework across the various theories and disciplines for both academics and practitioners in the field of empowerment by examining a variety of aspects of empowerment theories across a broad variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, management, political theory, social work, education, women's studies, health studies, management and community psychology and synthesizing them into a "well-organized" process and the "common" cognitive elements of empowerment.

RESEARCH METHOD

A method of theoretical synthesis was employed in this study. The concept of synthesis is traced back to Kant's "intellectual synthesis" and "figurative synthesis." The concept of

intellectual synthesis was employed in this analysis, because it is through synthesis that the categories are related through mere understanding to theoretical objects (Allison, 1986; Senderowicz, 2004) composed of empowerment theories and because the focus of this analysis is on the examination of the conceptual interrelations existing in the various theories of empowerment. The method is known for being especially useful when examining the overall body of related works (Kezar & Eckel, 2004) and when a field lacks a "common" theoretical base but plenty of literature.

A comprehensive search was conducted of all empowerment literature. Studies were chosen for review based on the two primary criteria. First, both books and articles were included as long as they included theories on the process and cognitive elements of empowerment. Second, disciplines were not bounded insofar as they provided ideas for the process and cognitive elements of empowerment. The studies chosen for review were synthesized to produce an "interrelated" theoretical framework on both process and cognitive elements by comparing and combining them in a comprehensive manner that could be utilized in a variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, politics, management, social work, education, women's studies, and sociology.

THEORIES ON THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT

A Search for Theories on the Process of Empowerment

The studies on empowerment were retrieved from a variety of disciplines, such as political science, management psychology, social work and social welfare, education, and management, but only a few sources that focused on the process of empowerment were actually found, as can be seen in Table 1.

Political Science. For political scientists, the process of giving power to the people (Angelique, Reischl, & Davidson, 2002; Nelson, 2002) was a major concern. They were especially interested in the progressive social position of the disadvantaged, including women (Gallway & Bernasek, 2004; Gerges, 2004), ethnic minorities (Weissberg, 1999), and the disabled (Kay, 1998). Weissberg (1999) criticized a specific type of empowerment, such as a "mobilizing" social movement, an approach that might be misunderstood as a denial to empowerment. However, in carefully reviewing his work, one may uncover that he presented the path of empowerment. He wrote that destitute people seeking a remedy for their poverty might be better served by learning a trade or taking classes in English literacy and mathematics than by joining a community organization and mobilizing themselves for control over welfare bureaucracies. Weissberg (1999) did not deny the effectiveness of empowerment; he simply emphasized the learning process as a stronger form of empowerment than the joining and mobilizing process. The criticism also revealed his thinking on the correct approach to the process of empowerment: learning physical and intellectual skills, joining community organizations, and mobilizing their skills for upgrading the social status of the disadvantaged over the advantaged. Banducci, Donovan, and Karp (2004) also found three components of the process of empowerment in their survey study: strengthening representational links, fostering positive attitudes, and encouraging political participation. de-Shalit (2004) also uncovered three steps in the process of empowerment in his philosophical speculation: strengthening intellectual capabilities, coping with difficulties and problems, and engaging in politics. These

Table 1. Process of Empowerment in Various Disciplines

Fields	Processes	Authors
Political Science	Learning, joining, and mobilizing	Weissberg (1999)
	Strengthening representational links, fostering positive attitudes, and encouraging political participation	Banducci, Donovan, & Karp (2004)
	Strengthening intellectual capabilities, coping with difficulties and problems, and engaging in politics	de-Shalit (2004)
Social Welfare	Mobilizing and transforming	Friedmann (1992)
Education & Women's Studies	Conscientizing, inspiring, and liberating	Freire (1973)
	Power within, power with, and power to	Parpart, Rai, & Staudt (2003)
Health Studies	Discovering reality, developing the necessary knowledge, fostering competence, and employing confidence for making their voice heard	Gibson (1995)
	Alienation, awareness, participation, and sense of community	Peterson & Reid (2003)
Management	Sharing information, setting up parameters, and developing teams	Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph (2001)
	Sharing information, creating autonomy through boundaries, and team-building	Terblanche (2003)
Community Psychology	Interpersonal sense (of empowerment), community connections, and social action for community building	Banyard & LaPlant (2002)
	Encouraging participation, integrating diversity, and fostering involvement	Goodkind & Foster-Fishman (2002)
	Social conflict and social support	Ibanez et al. (2003)
	Relationship building and community building	Rossing & Glowacki-Dudka (2001)

three works revealed that empowerment in the field of political science was initiated by strengthening physical and intellectual capacities and finally orienting those toward the gaining of power.

Social Welfare and Social Work. Empowerment has been a critical issue in social welfare and social work. Various studies on empowerment in these fields have been reported (Chronister & McWhirter, 2003; Secret, Rompf, & Ford, 2003), but studies on the processes leading to empowerment are rare. Cheater (1999) conducted case studies on a wide range of societies and discussed what is actually gained when people talk about empowering

others. Cheater (1999) argues that traditionally disempowered groups gain influence when power relates to economic development. However, he did not specify the actual path of empowerment. Friedmann (1992) argues that poverty should be seen not merely in material terms, but as social, political, and psychological powerlessness. He described the path of empowerment in terms of two steps: first mobilizing the poor and then transforming their social power to political power. According to Friedmann, people in need can alleviate their poverty by mobilizing themselves for political participation on a broader scale; poverty is seen here as a form of social, political, psychological disempowerment.

Education. In the field of education, empowerment was perceived as a means of liberating oppressed people. Freire (1973), one of the founding scholars of empowerment theory in education, presented three progressive steps of empowerment: "conscientizing," inspiring, and liberating. According to Freire, the oppressed or the disadvantaged can become empowered by learning about social inequality (i.e., conscientizing), encouraging others by making them feel confident about achieving social equality, and finally liberating them. His theory has been utilized in women's studies. In fact, the roots of the feminist pedagogy lie in his work (Freire, 1971; Weiler, 1991). Parpart et al. (2003, p. 4) argue that "empowerment must be understood as including both individual conscientization (*power within*) as well as the ability to work collectively which can lead to politicized *power with* others, which provides the *power to* bring about change." Their progressive steps of empowerment are identical to those of Freire. "Power within" is consistent with *conscientizing*; "power with" is compatible with *inspiring*; and "power to" is in accord with *liberating*.

Health Studies. In health studies, empowerment has represented a promising intervention target for substance abuse prevention activities, weight reduction, smoking cessation, and moderate drinking. Gibson (1995) conducted a fieldwork study to describe the process of empowerment as it pertains to mothers of chronically ill children. She found that four components of the process of empowerment emerged: discovering reality, developing necessary knowledge, fostering competence, and employing confidence to make their voices heard. Peterson and Reid (2003) conducted a path analysis to explore the process of empowerment in community. The target population of this study was a sample of randomly selected urban residents who participated in an evaluation of a Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Community Partnership. Peterson and Reid (2003) found four interrelated steps led to empowerment. They were alienation, awareness, participation, and a sense of community. This study included meaningful discussion on the process of empowerment; the authors used empirical research to explore the path of empowerment. Their findings explain the need for developing substance abuse prevention initiatives that "increase participation in substance abuse prevention activities, with particular emphasis on incorporating strategies designed to improve sense of community" (Peterson & Reid, 2003, p. 25). There exists, therefore, both similarity and difference in the two works. The similarity is that the first step toward empowerment is discovering realities, such as alienation and awareness of limited power. The difference is that the empowerment practices in Gibson's work (1995) are oriented toward employing the confidence for making their voices heard whereas those in the work of Peterson and Reid (2003) are oriented toward building a community.

Management. In the literature on management, employee empowerment has been a critical issue and has been generally perceived as one of those business-management buzzwords,

which authors say companies can use to navigate the demanding world of global competition (i.e., by empowering their employees) (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 2001; Terblanche, 2003). There does exist an argument that "the effectiveness of empowerment practices are contingent on the degree of operational uncertainty that prevails" (Wall, Cordery, & Clegg, 2002, p. 146). Most researchers in this field understand that empowerment programs can transform a stagnant organization into a vital one, if traps or misconceptions (e.g., managers view empowerment as a threat and employees mistake empowerment for discretionary authority) are avoided (Dover, 1999). Carson et al. (1999) conducted research on the relationship between employee empowerment and work attitudes; however, their concern was not with the path of empowerment, but the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitments on work-related outcomes. Other management theorists (Blanchard et al., 2001; Terblanche, 2003) describe the path toward empowerment as involving three steps. The first step is information, which managers must share liberally with employees to help create a sense of ownership. Next is setting up understandable boundaries that will make employees feel both comfortable and challenged. The third step is having managers develop teams that eventually replace the old hierarchical structure. They state that the empowerment process starts with information on managerial issues in organizations and ends with team-building.

Community Psychology. Literature on empowerment is most frequently reported in the field of community psychology. Since 2000, 12 individual articles appeared in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, and 51 were displayed in the *Journal of Community Psychology*, when the word "empowerment" was searched under the category of "Title and Abstract" on their Web sites. However, a few sources focusing on the processes of the components leading to empowerment were also found. Some authors describe the path toward empowerment as involving two steps, namely relationship building and community building (Rossing & Glowacki-Dudka, 2001) and social conflict and social support (Ibanez et al., 2003). Other authors describe the path as involving three steps (Banyard & LaPlant, 2002; Goodkind & Foster-Fishman, 2002). The first promotes an interpersonal sense (of empowerment), or encourages participation. The second step builds community connections or integrates diversity. The final step promotes social action for community building or fostering involvement in community. There exist a couple of common points in the processes of components leading to empowerment in the field of community psychology. The first is that empowerment practices in a community have led to changes from community diversity to community integration, and the second is that the intermediate step before community integration or community building is participation in or involvement with community activities.

Discussion Relative to a Synthesized Process of Empowerment

Path Toward Empowerment. The works reviewed previously can inform one of the general processes that are empowering, as can be seen in Figure 1. First, most authors worked on the premise that individual, managerial, social, or political disturbances do exist and are ongoing at the very first step of empowerment, whether specifically mentioned or not. Blanchard et al. (2001) and Terblanche (2003) mentioned sharing information on managerial problems in a roundabout way, while Freire (1973), Peterson and Reid (2003), and Weissberg (1999) specifically mentioned the existence of powerlessness or alienation. Doore (1988) gave an implicit message that empowerment starts with the existence of dis-

turbances by mentioning "healing illness." Second, empowerment goes a step further by letting the disadvantaged learn about social inequality (Weissberg 1999), "conscientize" themselves (Freire, 1973), and grow their power within their inner systems (Parpart et al., 2003). Third, the people having once gained an awareness of their limited power and the potential for change lead others to join their movement (Weissberg, 1999) and mobilize in collective action (Friedmann, 1992; Weissberg, 1999). Power grows through mobilizing such collective action or sharing power with others (Parpart et al., 2003). Fourth, some authors (Freire, 1973; Friedmann, 1992; Marciniak, 2004) assumed a turning point that transforms the process of mobilizing collective action into that of creating a new world. This step is like "the tipping point that little things can make a big difference" (Gladwell, 2000, p. 261). This "point" can be called the *maximizing step.* The final stage of the path was "transforming" (Friedmann, 1992) old institutions and structures into new ones, or "creating" a new world (Marciniak, 2004) or a new social order by "liberating" the disadvantaged (Freire, 1973). The final step was closely related to the "power to" bring about change (Parpart et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be said that the path of empowerment can be synthesized into five progressive steps, as seen in Figure 1: social disturbances existing, conscientizing, mobilizing, maximizing, and creating a new social order.

The existence of individual disturbances and/or social disturbances was the first step of empowerment. It can be said that the existence of a sense of powerlessness was the agreed upon premise that can cause social disturbances. The disturbances have usually risen to the surface as a group of empowerment agents recognized the disadvantaged and the oppressed. In the first step of empowerment, both the oppressed and the empowerment agents have discovered the reality (Gibson, 1995) surrounded by psychological and/or social pathologies, such as disadvantages, oppression, alienation, and stratification.

The second step of empowerment is described as the process of *conscientizing,* meaning that people have to gain an awareness of their limited power and the potential to change the circumstance (Robins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998, p. 91) or raising power within (Parpart et al., 2003). Conscientizing is the process of increasing awareness of how social and political structures affect individual and group experiences and contribute to personal or group powerlessness (Freire, 1973). In this process, the group and people in general conceptualize and understand the social stratification and oppression. They strengthen their "power within" (Parpart et al., 2003) by developing necessary knowledge and fostering confidence in the possibility of change (Gibson, 1995). Stratification refers to the way in which human groups in society are differentiated from one another and are placed in a hierarchical order. Powerlessness relates to the inability to manage emotions, skills, knowledge, and material resources in a way that will lead to effective performance of valued social roles and personal gratification (Solomon, 1976).

The third step of empowerment is the process where the people take initiatives in empowering the oppressed or the disadvantaged by asking them join their movement (Weissberg, 1999), and then mobilize collective action (Friedmann, 1992; Weissberg, 1999) to free the disadvantaged and oppressed from their social oppression and/or discrimination. At this stage, empowerment entails being assertive and taking more agressive action in the face of opposition and open conflict. People get to understand how to mobilize collective support and get down to action. This stage is characterized as the one of organizing collective action by sharing power with support groups (Parpart et al., 2003).

Empowerment does not stop at the third stage. It grows and becomes maximized by sharing power with the populace at the fourth stage. The Shaman's path (Doore, 1988) describes the maximization of power very well. The spiritual power reaches its maximum when shamans stand at the peak of ceremonies where spectators are no more outsiders,

and finally shamans, the sick person, and the spectators become one. Shamans, in terms of mobilizing collective action and maximizing power, are comparable to empowerment agents. Along the path of empowerment, the maximization of power appears and is shared with increasing numbers of people. The more power is shared, the greater the empowerment becomes circular in nature. At this point, empowerment reaches the point that the people feel able to utilize their confidence, desires, and abilities to bring about "real change."

Maximized human empowerment can be practiced at the final stage to overcome social oppression and achieve social justice. As evil spirits in the Shaman's path (Doore, 1988) are dramatically displaced at the peak of the ceremonies, societal aspects of oppression and stratification can be transformed into a new social system in which such pathologies can be effectively removed. A new social order is created in this final stage of empowerment.

THEORIES ON THE COMPONENTS OF EMPOWERMENT

Individual Empowerment and Collective Empowerment

Empowerment theories are not only concerned with the process of empowerment, but also with results that can produce greater access to resources and power for the disadvantaged (Freire, 1973; Parpart et al., 2003; Robins et al., 1998, p. 91). The analysis of the work reviewed thus far can be used to organize a theory of the cognitive elements of empowerment.

Although much of the empowerment research and literature deals with the individual in his immediate environment, there is clearly a branch that focuses more on the wider community (Itshaky & York, 2000). Empowerment is operative at various levels: personal or individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and collective. Boehm and Staples (2004) emphasized personal and collective dimensions, while Dodd and Gutierrez (1990), Lee (1994), and Gutierrez (1990) examined personal, interpersonal, and institutional or political dimensions. It can be said that the interpersonal dimension is included in the collective dimension because the term *interpersonal* has a connotation of collectiveness. The institutional or political dimensions can be represented as part of the collective dimension. Therefore, the components of empowerment can be examined in the context of both personal and collective aspects.

Personal empowerment relates to the way people think about themselves, as well as the knowledge, capacities, skills, and mastery they actually possess (Staples, 1990, p. 32). Collective empowerment refers to processes by which individuals join together to break their solitude and silence, help one another, learn together, and develop skills for collective action (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Fetterson, 2002). In a way, empowerment develops from individual and social conscientization or a critical consciousness to collective action (Boehm & Staples, 2004). In addition, the processes of the components leading to empowerment include both individual and social factors. Strengthening intellectual capabilities and the power within (Parpart et al., 2003) can be seen as individual factors in the process, whereas mobilizing collective action and maximizing power can be referred to as social factors. Personal empowerment sometimes conflicts with the development of collective empowerment, when empowerment is not effectively operating. Although individuals can become more empowered personally through the process of personal development, they cannot always become effective in helping to build their group's collective empower-

ment. Personal empowerment should be consistent with collective empowerment to improve the value of social and economic justice more effectively (Staples, 1999).

Components of Individual Empowerment

Individual empowerment develops when people attempt to develop the capabilities to overcome their psychological and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision-making abilities (Becker, Kovach, & Gronseth, 2004). Some authors conducted their research by viewing a single component, such as self-determination (Fetterman, 1996; Sprague & Hayes, 2000), self-confidence (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005), and the promotion of competence (Breton, 1994), as can be seen in Table 2. Other authors conducted their studies by viewing multiple components, such as academic success and bicultural identity (Diversi & Mecham, 2005), mastery and self-determination (Boehm & Staples, 2004), self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision-making ability (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, 2004; Kovach, Becker, & Worley, 2004), personal sense of control and efficacy (Speer, 2000), self-efficacy, critical consciousness, and development and cultivation (Lee, 1994), meaning, competence, self-determination, impact (Spreitzer et al., 1997), and advocacy and consciousness raising (Moreau, 1990).

Self-determination is most frequently reported in the literature and considered as a single and critical component of empowerment (Sprague & Hayes, 2000). Fetterman (1996) advocated that "self-determination, defined as the ability to chart one's own course in life, forms the theoretical foundations" of the components of individual empowerment (p. 92). To understand the meaning of self-determination more clearly, four dimensions of self-determination need to be considered: (a) consistency and perseverance in activities, (b) the courage to take risks, (c) initiative and proactivity, and (d) the ability to voice one's opinion. Mastery, in addition to self-determination, was also explored as a component of individual empowerment in an empirical study (Boehm & Staples, 2004).

Mastery is defined as full control over someone or something, and through in-depth understanding or greater skills, can be a variety of types, such as physical mastery, mastery of emotion and behavior, mastery of information and decision making, mastery of social system, efficient mastery of time, mastery as connected to autonomy and individual freedom, and planning mastery, thus enabling consumers to prevent negative situations and to actualize positive ones (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Mastery is ahead of self-determination. Mastery is associated with power within (Parpart et al., 2003), while self-determination is related to the aspects that enable individuals to meet the challenges of different situations. Specifically, the notion of mastery includes increased levels of the ability to understand reality and the capacity to make decisions that impact the conditions and quality of life. Self-determination refers to characteristics that can maintain a firm stand and give expression to one's inner voice to achieve personal rights (Boehm & Staples, 2004).

Two different, but interrelated, concepts are included in the notion of mastery: One is a *sense of meaning*; and the other is *competence,* according to the work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990). The authors derived four components of empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Their work was supported by Spreitzer et al. (1997) and became a theoretical base upon which to conduct "a dimensional analysis of the relationship between psychological empowerment and effectiveness, satisfaction, and strain." (p. 685) According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), *meaning*, as the gestalt of human cognitions, involves a fit between the needs of one's work role and one's val-

Table 2. Components of Individual Empowerment

Authors	Components
Diversi & Mecham (2005)	Academic success and bicultural identity
Larson, Walker, & Pearce (2005)	Self-confidence
Boehm & Staples (2004)	Mastery and self-determination
Becker, Kovach, & Gronseth, (2004); Kovach, Becker, & Worley (2004)	Self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision-making ability
Fetterman (1996); Sprague & Hayes (2000)	Self-determination
Speer (2000)	Personal sense of control and efficacy
Breton (1994)	Competence-promotion
Lee (1994)	Self-efficacy, critical consciousness, and development and cultivation
Thomas & Velthouse (1990); Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason (1997)	Meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact
Moreau (1990)	Advocacy and consciousness raising

ues, beliefs, and behavior (Brief & Node, 1990). *Competence* is a belief that one possesses the skills and abilities necessary to perform a job or task well (Gist, 1987) and is analogous to agency beliefs, personal mastery, or effort-performance expectancy (Bandura, 1977). *Self-determination* is the belief that one has autonomy or control over how one does his or her own work (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Wagner, 1995). Self-determination is consistent with notions of personal control (Greenberg & Strasser, 1991; Greenberg, Strasser, Commings, & Dunham, 1989). *Impact* is the perception that one has influenced strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work or in society to make a difference. Impact is different from self-determination; self-determination refers to an individual's sense of control over his or her own work, whereas impact refers to the individual's sense of control over organizational outcome.

The authors, cited in Table 2, presented the components of individual empowerment in their own way, but the components might be expressed along with the array of Thomas and Velthouse (1999) and Spreitzer et al. (1997). In carefully reviewing the conceptual interrelations between the components of individual empowerment, it can be said that the studies presented in Table 2 are not significantly different, but rather consistent with one another. First, the concept of a sense of meaning and competence mentioned by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) are included in the concept of mastery because both meaning and competence relate to one's ability. A sense of meaning, in a conceptual view, can become a greenhouse in which the concept of competence is generated, growing as a result. In addition, the notions of consciousness raising (Moreau, 1990), critical consciousness (Lee, 1994), and (bicultural) identity (Diversi & Mecham, 2005) can be said to be composed of a sense of meaning. Second, the notion of competence can be drawn from the literature as a single component of individual empowerment. Breton (1994), in addition to the work of Thomas and Velthouse (1990), conducted his own study with the view of competence-promotion. As mentioned previously, the notion of competence is different from that of mastery. Mastery includes the notion of sense of meaning, but competence does not include that notion. Third, self-determination was

conceived as one of the most critical factors in the components of empowerment because it was shown to be the case in 7 out of 13 studies. Fourth, the notion of impact is in between personal empowerment and collective empowerment, because impact is outcome oriented toward organizations or society as a whole. The concepts of both self-sufficiency and decision-making ability (Becker et al., 2004; Kovach et al., 2004) are included in the metaconcept of impact because the two have to be prerequisites for impact. Therefore, the components of personal empowerment can be summarized as four factors: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact.

Components of Collective Empowerment

Collective empowerment develops when people join in action to overcome obstacles and attain social change (Staples, 1990). Groups become empowered through collective action, but that action is enabled or constrained by the power structures that they encounter (Parpart et al., 2003). Not many studies were reported in the area of the components of collective empowerment. Some authors conducted their research in terms of a single component, such as social cohesion (Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino, & Schnider, 2005), community engagement (Baillie et al., 2004; Zaldin, 2004), and coalition building (Boydell & Volpe, 2004), as can be seen in Table 3. Other authors conducted their studies in view of multiple components, such as collective belonging and involvement in and control over organization in the community (Boehm & Staples, 2004); building community and culture building (Fetterson, 2002); intellectual understandings of power and social change (Speer, 2000); self-awareness, group support, and advocacy (Bellamy & Mowbray, 1999); identification with similar others, reducing self-blame for past events, and a sense of personal freedom (Gutierrez, 1990); and leadership competence and political control (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). The literature shares similarities regarding the following three issues.

First, the notion of collective belonging, namely referring to "belonging to the social networks of their peers, and an emphasis on autonomy while being part of the collective and social solidarity vis-à-vis establishment" (Boehm & Staples, 2004, p. 274)), was one of the most frequently reported components of collective empowerment in the literature. The notion was described as community belonging (Itzhaky & York, 2000) and identification with similar others (Gutierrez, 1990).

Second, Boehm and Staples (2004) presented three components: (a) collective belonging, (b) involvement in, and (c) control over organizations in the community. The authors examined empowerment from the consumer's and social worker's points of view. Twenty focus groups, composed of four different consumer populations and social workers serving them, were examined. Content analysis was conducted with data collected from the discussions among the 20 focus groups with three facilitators to explore the three components. The notion of collective belonging has already been described as a single component of collective empowerment. One of the other two components, the notion of involvement in the community, was also one of the most frequently reported components of empowerment. That notion means taking part in community activities or events that may lead to effecting change in /affecting the power structure in communities (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Involvement in the community was described as community engagement (Baillie et al., 2004; Zaldin, 2004) and coalition building (Boydell & Volpe, 2004). Control over organizations in community (Boehm & Staples, 2004) was considered as one of the critical components of collective empowerment. The notion

Table 3. Components of Collective Empowerment

Authors	Collective empowerment
Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino, & Schnider (2005)	Social cohesion
Boehm & Staples (2004)	Collective belonging, and involvement in and control over organization in the community
Ballie et al. (2004); Zaldin (2004)	Community engagement
Boydell & Volpe (2004)	Coalition building
Fetterson (2002)	Community building and culture building
Itzhaky & York (2000)	Leadership competence, political control, and community belonging
Speer (2000)	Intellectual understandings of power and social change
Bellamy & Mowbray (1999)	Self-awareness, group support, and advocacy
Gutierrez (1992)	Identification with similar others, reducing self-blame for past events, and a sense of personal freedom
Zimmerman & Zahniser (1991)	Leadership competence and political control

means a component of gaining forces to influence representative groups, plus efficacy of those organizations. Control of organizations in a community refers to group support and advocacy (Bellamy & Mowbray, 1999) and political control (Itzhaky & York, 2000; Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991).

Finally, the notion of community building was one of the critical components of collective empowerment. Community building refers to creating a sense of community among residents that will increase its ability to work together, problem solve, and make group decisions for social change (Fetterson, 2002; Mattessich & Monsey, 1997). The authors describe it as social cohesion (Peterson et al., 2005) and a sense of personal freedom (Gutierrez, 1990). According to Gutierrez (1990), the goal of collective empowerment practices is to help communities develop the ability to change negative situations and prevent the recurrence of the problems that created the situations. This goal cannot be accomplished without the establishment of community building.

In carefully reviewing the conceptual interrelations between the components of collective empowerment, the studies presented in Table 3 were not significantly different, but consistent with each other. First, "identification with similar others" (Gutierrez, 1990) has an alike connotation with collective belonging (Boehm & Staples, 2004) or community belonging (Itzhaky & York, 2000), as mentioned previously. Second, involvement in the community can be described as a component of collective empowerment. This component means involvement or participation in community activities or events that may lead to affecting the power structure in communities (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Third, control over organization in the community can be described as a component of collective empowerment, meaning a component of gaining forces to influence a variety of organizations in the community. Fourth, although leadership competence could be considered as a critical dimension of collective empowerment, the focus of this study was not on change agents, but on individuals and groups themselves. Therefore, leadership competence was removed from the components of collective empowerment. Finally, community building was conceived as the final component of collective empowerment. Therefore, it can be said that the components of collective empowerment consist of four factors: collective belonging, involvement in the community, control over organization in the community, and community building.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This analysis found that the process of empowerment can be synthesized into five progressive stages: an existing social disturbance, conscientizing, mobilizing, maximizing, and creating a new order, as can be seen in Figure 1. Empowerment had two interrelated aspects that can be summarized as personal empowerment and collective empowerment. Each aspect had its own components. A set of four components, including meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, were found in personal empowerment. A set of four components, including collective belonging, involvement in the community, control over organization in the community, and community building, were explored in collective empowerment. The goal of individual empowerment is to achieve a state of liberation strong enough to impact one's power in life, community, and society. The goal of collective empowerment is to establish community building, so that members of a given community can feel a sense of freedom, belonging, and power that can lead to constructive social change.

The empowerment process is not a constant, but rather a continuing, development that involves many changes and whereby an individual or group is able to strengthen and exercise the ability to act to gain control and mastery over life, community, and society. As long as empowerment is a process of both thought and action, it is dynamic and constantly evolving (Foster-Fishman et al., 1998; Staples, 1990, p. 39). Therefore, both the process and the components of empowerment, suggested in this article, will evolve by coping with each new type of powerlessness in a new environment in a new age. Individuals, regardless of the oppressed or the disadvantaged, will be able to learn to cope with new forms of difficulties and problems as they develop. The universal assumption, that empowerment is being promoted as a general recipe for enhancing the power of the oppressed and disadvantaged individuals, is flawed if empowerment practices are not contingent on the degree of operational uncertainty that will prevail in each new environment and each new age (Wall et al., 2002).

The two sets of components of empowerment are not separated from the process of empowerment. The components, regardless of personal and collective empowerment, have an effect on all five individual stages of empowerment. As both personal empowerment and collective empowerment are examined, the components of personal and collective empowerment are considered in each of the five stages of empowerment as well. To enhance the completeness of empowerment and its influence on organization, community, society, and even the world, practitioners, including social activists, social workers, and educators, have to consider all the components of personal and collective empowerment in every one of the five progressive stages of empowerment. To ensure the quality of research, academics in the fields of political science, social work, education, and management are encouraged to consider all the components relevant to personal and collective empowerment in every individual stage of empowerment. The components of individual empowerment are to be considered when the major concern is with individual empowerment, as those of collective empowerment are to be reviewed when the major concern is collective empowerment. Individual empowerment cannot be completely separated from collective empowerment in its practices. The goal of individual empowerment should be consistent with that of collective empowerment to avoid empowerment traps (Dover, 1999).

The typological approach to the study of empowerment is useful for a number of fields of study. First, it is useful in the study of empowerment evaluation. The focus of empowerment evaluation was to foster self-determination (Fetterson, 2002) for a while, when self-determination was considered as a critical component of empowerment (Secret et al.,
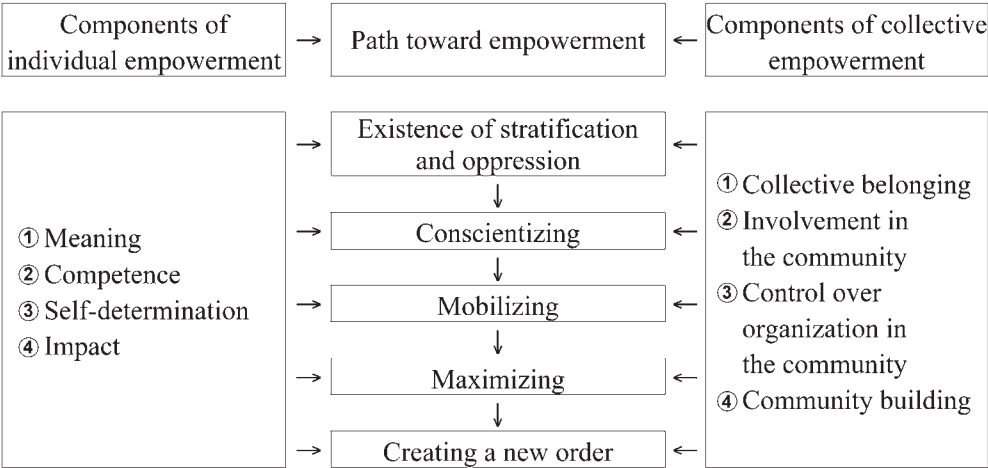
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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│   Components of      │  →   │ Path toward         │  ←   │ Components of       │
│ individual empowerment│     │ empowerment         │      │ collective          │
│                     │      │                     │      │ empowerment         │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
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Figure 1. Paths toward and components of empowerment.

1999). The factors of the study of empowerment evaluation have been expanded, however, from self-determination to mastery, self-determination, collective belonging, and involvement in and control over organization in the community since Boehm and Staples published their article in 2004 and tried to combine various dimensions of empowerment into four components: mastery and self-determination, and collective belonging and involvement in and control over organization in the community. Gutierrez (1990) found three components of collective empowerment that can be used in the evaluation of empowerment. His study was synthesized with the work of Boehm and Staples (2004) and showed that the four components of collective empowerment can be used in the evaluation of collective empowerment; however, the typology of the components of empowerment did not allow for effective use by academics and practitioners.

The typological approach to the study of empowerment is also useful for field workers, social workers, community psychologists, and educators who help the disadvantaged or oppressed. These people, including the oppressed, disadvantaged, the aged, and the young, can actualize the latent powers that an individual or group possesses,"or enable them and use their capacities and power more effectively (Weil & Kruzich, 1990, p. 1). The process and components can be guidelines for practitioners who hope to develop the latent power of the "have-nots," actualize their upward mobility, and finally establish a value of justice in a given society.

Empowerment is not a panacea for all individual and social illness. It has been criticized as "overly individualistic and conflict-oriented, resulting in an emphasis on mastery and control rather than cooperation and community" (Speer, 2000, p. 58). Although the practice of empowerment is effective for the removal of powerlessness, certain factors still exist that may inhibit empowerment. These factors include organizational aspects, such as an impersonal bureaucratic climate(s), supervisory styles described as authoritarianism and negativism, and arbitrary reward systems (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Darlington and Michele (2004) coined "reciprocal empowerment," so that the oppressed are better able to compete with the traditional power models of control, authority, and influence through applying a separate model of power that begins with personal authority and self-respect. This means that empowerment can be a remedy for individuals and groups with disadvantages and oppression by conscientizing themselves, mobilizing others with their

shared consciousness, and creating a new order or a system in society. Throughout history, there has not existed a society without problems. It is obvious that people are better off than in the past, and that empowerment has contributed to accelerate the speed of betterment. People at the margins are still in pain, but they "have greater autonomy today than they did a generation ago." Such empowerment can be a guideline that can "build a company of citizens" (Manville & Ober, 2003) in this society.

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