

Family Research and Where Goethe the William T. Grant Foundation?

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William T. Grant Foundation, www.wtgrantfoundation.org

Take Away Message:

Deeper understanding (and improvement) of how family-level processes affect youth outcomes



Guiding principle:

To *understand* and
improve the
proximal ***social settings***
of youth ages 8 – 25
in the United States



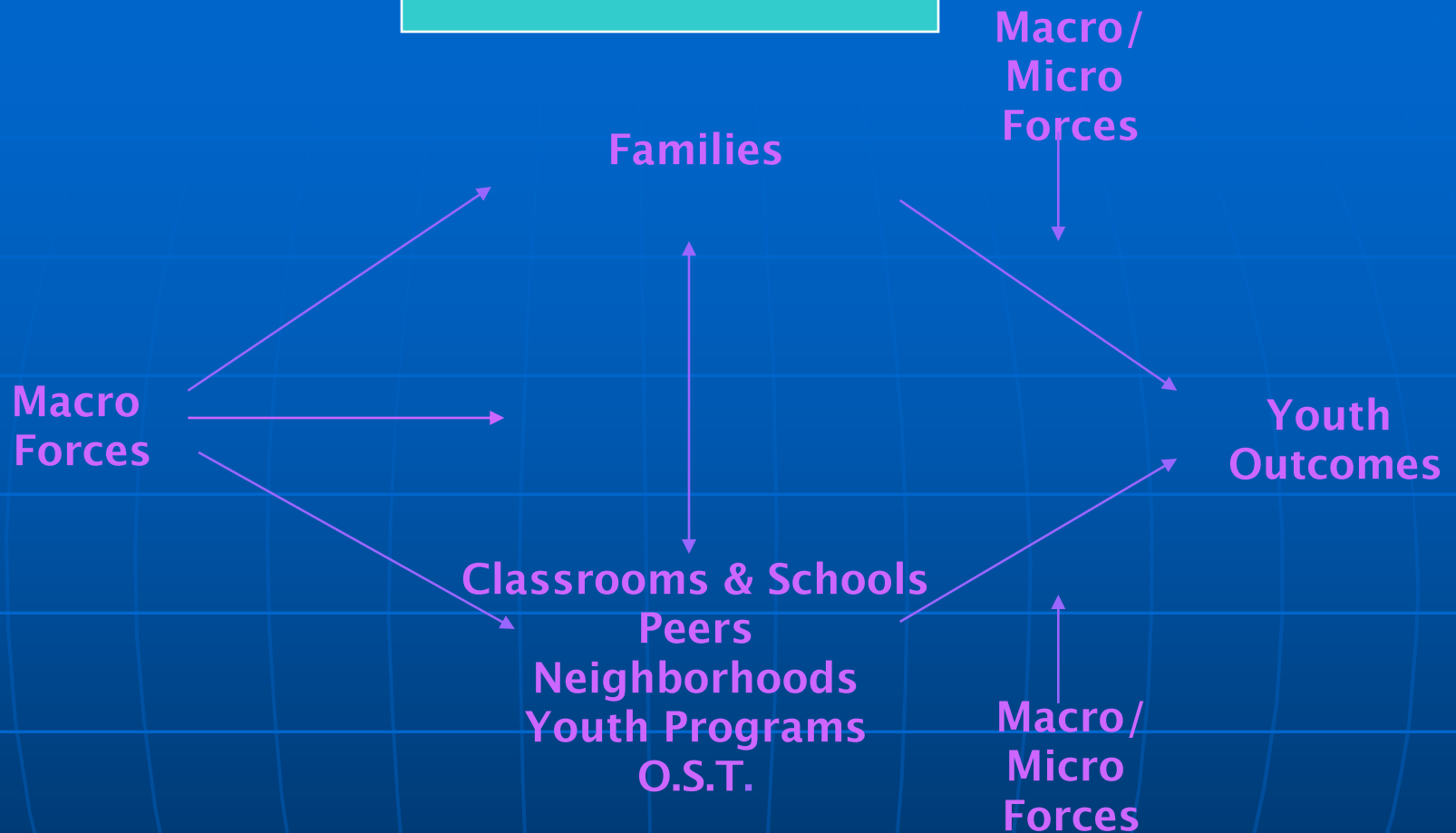
Proximal Settings

Proximal settings are the social environments in which youth experience daily life; they include:

- Families
- Peer Groups
- Classrooms and schools
- Youth-serving organizations
- Neighborhoods



The Big Picture



Macro forces are policies, the economy, the environment, secular trends in demography, and the like, while micro factors are genetic and biological.



Macro
Forces



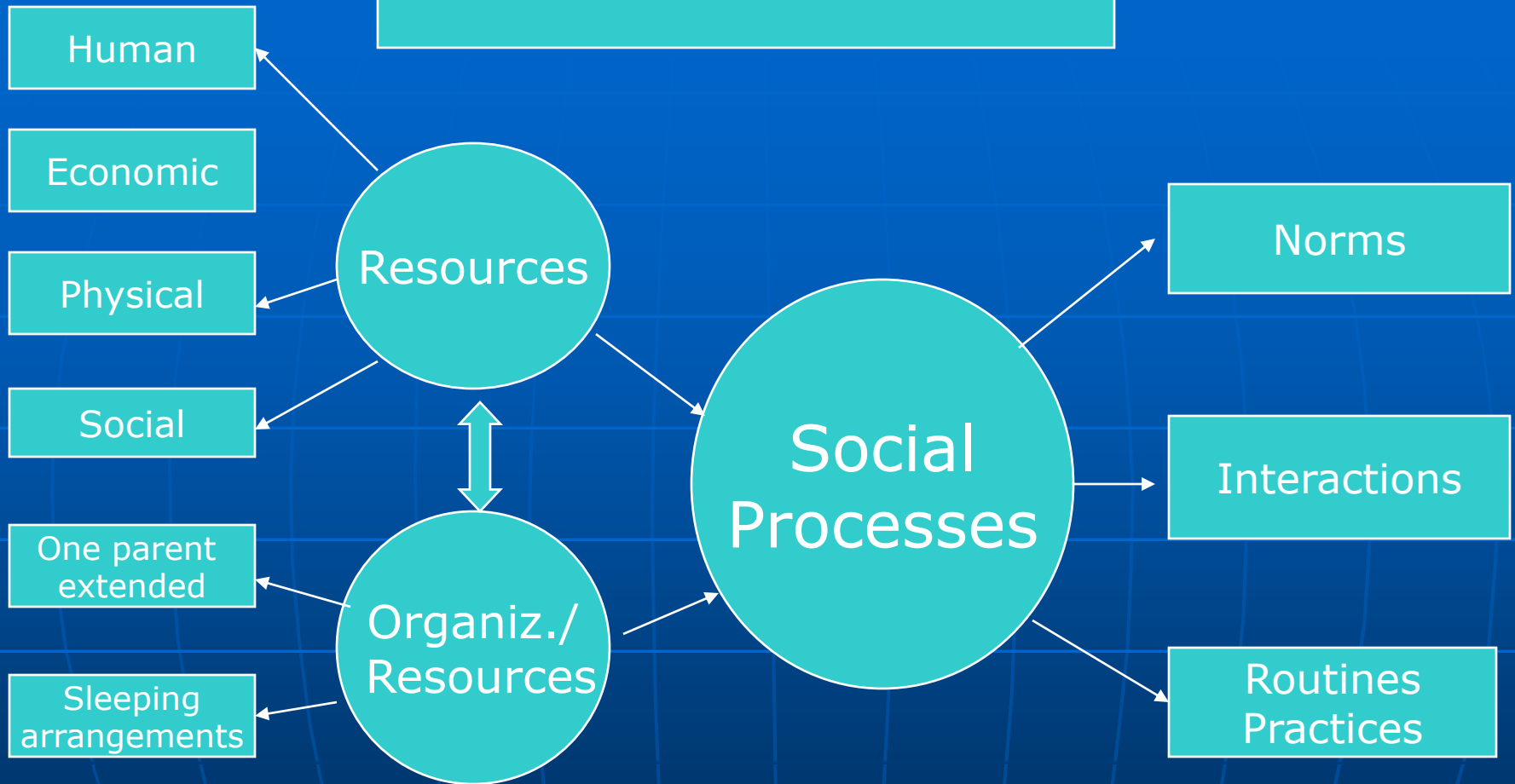
Macro/
Micro
Forces



Youth
Outcomes



A Heuristic Measurement Model of the Family Setting



Types of Research Questions:

- How do settings work?
- How do settings affect youth development?
- How can the measurement of setting' features and processes be improved?
- How can settings be improved?
- How is research evidence acquired, interpreted, and used in policy and practice settings to affect youth?



Types of Research and Exemplars

1. Descriptive Research (Survey, ethnographic, observational)

Unpacking parental structure and its impact on early adolescents (Grolnick & Espinade, Tufts)

2. Intervention Research (Randomized trials, natural experiments, interrupted time series, regression discontinuity)

Prevention of destructive family communication and conflict (Cummings, Notre Dame)

3. Setting Measurement

Generalizability of family daily diaries (Huseh, MDRC)

4. Add-on Research

Workplace family intervention (McHale et al., PSU)

5. Analytic

6. Secondary Analysis



Evolving Social Setting Measurement Challenges

1. Which setting-level processes should be measured and when (temporally)? > must be theory-driven
2. By which method and with what level of inference can we effectively (including cost-effective considerations) measure setting-level processes?
 - > Observations, daily diaries, time use logs, artifacts, etc?
 - > Multi-method, multi-source, multi-construct?
3. Number of instances to be sampled, at what intervals, and by how many raters, etc.
 - > Generalizability studies, e.g., daily diaries
4. How do we aggregate individual-level reports to tap setting-level phenomena?
 - > Norms: consensus measures?
5. Linking setting-level change to individual-level change



From Submission to Funding: The Investigator-Initiated Grant Process

- LOI
 - Reviewed 3 times per year
 - Reject/More Details/Full Proposal Invited
- Full Proposal
 - 2 deadlines per year
 - Reviewed by two external experts
 - Rejected or PI response to external review invited
 - Reviewed by Senior Program Team
 - Board Review and Decision



WTGF Scholars Program: Nature & Purpose

- For the development of promising scholars 0 to 7 years post-PhD or Medical Residency
- A developmental (“stretch”) award to new questions, literatures/disciplines, and/or methods
- Capacity Building Components of Program
 - Fall Workshops
 - Summer Retreat
 - Mentoring
 - Networking



WTGF Scholars Program: Review Process & Deadlines

- Full Proposals due ~ July 1
 - Screened for consistency with criteria
 - Evaluated by Selection Committee
 - ~10 Finalists chosen
 - Expert external reviews solicited
- Interviewed in NYC by Selection Committee (Feb.)
 - Five Scholars recommended to B of T
- Five Year Award @ 70,000/yr(\$350,000)
- Supplemental Scholar Awards to Mentor Junior Researchers of Color



The William T. Grant Foundation

- Check out our website at:
www.wtgrantfdn.org
 - It is chock full of information!
- Submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI), electronically
 - Instructions can also be found on our website
- We look forward to hearing from you!



Evolving Research Design & Analysis Challenges

- Designing Research for Place-Randomized Trials to increase precision (Raudenbush, Bloom, and colleagues): *Old issues in search of new answers*
 - N of nested unit – asymptotes quickly
 - N of randomly assigned units
 - Baseline covariates, pretests at individual- and school-level
 - Intra-class correlation coefficients
 - Matching of covariates
 - Reliability of setting measures
- Products:
 - Optimal Design Software
 - Consultation Service

