



---

## **A Theoretical Review on Sibling Violence and Child Welfare**

*Henock Alemu Nega\**

*Mangalore Univesity, Mangalore, Konaje, karnataka, India*

*PG Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Social Work. Corresponding Author: [henoke@gmail.com](mailto:henoke@gmail.com)*

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Sibling violence is a pervasive, yet poorly understood and substantially underreported phenomenon. Consequently, many young people in the child welfare system experience family situations that include abusive sibling violence, recent publications have requested child welfare adopting the belief that it is a form of child abuse. However, what constitutes physical or emotional abuse between siblings is not yet agreed upon by clinicians and policy makers, and the behaviour of young people with life experiences is largely absent for much of the researches. In this manuscript the researcher as a social work practitioner based this study on a critical realism, to understand how sibling violence manifests itself in child welfare, contributes to theory development, and to identify actions to protect children from harm. The researcher offers a polished definition of sibling violence and four family situations involving sibling violence in child welfare. The findings also supported a systems-based theory denoting four stable family member roles. Furthermore, recommendations seek to take advantage of the infrastructure of the child welfare system existent globally and taking into account the limitations imposed by neoliberal social and economic policy of our time.

---

Keywords: child welfare, coercion theory, conflict theory, critical realism, radical feminist theory, sibling violence, social learning theory, systems theory.

---

### **1. Introduction.**

Brotherhood violence is rampant, but it is not well understood and widely reported. Currently accepted as the most common form of domestic violence (Button & Gealt, 2010), various estimates suggest that 30 percent or more of children in the general population face serious acts of domestic violence each year (Caffaro, 2014; Finkelhor, Tuner, & Ormrod, 2006; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 2006; Tucker, Finkelhor, Shattuck, & Turner, 2013). Ordinary communication continues to reduce the problem (e.g., however, differences in size and body between siblings, growth spurts, and close daily interactions within the home may increase the frequency, intensity, and duration of contact with violent sibling. is a cause for concern given strong evidence of the many harmful effects of sibling violence throughout life (Button & Gealt, 2010; Caffaro, 2011; Caffaro, 2014; Feinberg, Solmeyer, & McHale, 2012; Finkelhor et al., 2006; Graham-Bermann, Cutler, Litzenberger, & Schwartz, 1994; Kramer & Bank, 2005; Straus et al., 2006; Tucker et al., 2013). (Shonkoff, Boyce, and McEwen, 2009; Finkelhor et al., 2006).

Experts in violence of the firstborn, workers, and researchers have tried to explain what causes physical and emotional violence between siblings. Wiehe (1997), one of the first authors and widely quoted on the topic of sibling violence, likened this practice to parent-child abuse by using the term "abuse" to describe violent interactions between siblings. Caffaro (2014), a psychologist and family clinician, has successfully distinguished healthy sibling conflicts (e.g. the time, and the role of caregivers. According to the author, the violence of abusive siblings is notable for the stable role of victims and offenders. Caffaro's emphasis on repetition is noteworthy, for even the lowest level of peer violence (i.e., occurring less than four times a year) is strongly linked to symptoms of abuse in young children (Finkelhor et al., 2006). Meyers builds on the work of Caffaro and others in quality education and adult survivors. He pointed out that a broad definition of physical and emotional abuse between siblings should include the victims / survivor's experience / perspective.

Despite the commendable progress made over the more than three decades of sibling violence research and bursaries, a clear and widely accepted definition of "sibling abuse" will still be developed. In a review of more than 100 magazine articles, books, chapters, and brochures published between 1977 and 2008, Perkins (2014) found 16 different labels used to discuss emotional and physical violence between siblings: sibling abuse, sibling abuse, sibling abuse, sibling conflict, sibling conflict, sibling conflict, sibling abuse, sibling abuse, sibling neglect, sibling abuse, sibling abuse, sibling abuse, sibling violence, sibling violence, sibling violence, and sibling violence (p. 34- 35). The described differences are problematic, limiting the interpretation of studies of domestic violence and the power of the field to compare between them.

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +918105870645.

E-mail address: [henoke@gmail.com](mailto:henoke@gmail.com)

### 1.1. Sibling Violence

Thinking about sibling violence is like emerging, transcending social standards from people to the world. Social learning theory lists sibling violence as a learned behaviour reinforced (Bandura, Ross, and Ross, 1963; Hoffman and Edwards, 2004). The higher feminist view states that the patriarchal movement and related, widespread acceptance of power and control to achieve the desired goals are the basis for this (Button & Gealt, 2010; Graham-Berman et al., 1994; Hoffman & Edwards, 2004; Hoffman, Kiecolt, & Edwards, 2005; Wiehe, 1997). With the roots of Marxism, the conflicting theory assumes that people are born with a desire for self-interest, and if found within the deficit, they will use whatever means are available to obtain the desired resources. Relative violence is called a response to a child's perception that the resources needed (e.g., basic needs, parental care) are scarce or inadequate (Hoffman et al., 2005; Smith & Hamon, 2012). While these theories point to possible causes of sibling violence, relying on mitigation models and the difference between violence and abuse is unclear.

Going over the line, working models, a small subset of books discusses ideas based on plans for sibling violence. systems theory (Milevsky, 2011), coercive theory (Granic & Patterson, 2006; Patterson, 1982; Smith, Dishion, Shaw, Wilson, Winter, & Patterson, 2014), and natural model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) use critical systems concepts involving solidarity, fertility, and non-compliance with the assessment of interpersonal violence as a complex and dynamic process that sets geographical boundaries worldwide for a society of organized violence (Gil, 1996). In a comprehensive review of the views of sibling relationships throughout life, Whiteman, McHale & Soli (2011) summarizes the current state of sibling violence, stating that: processes affecting sibling relationships operate at various levels, from internal processes, such as social attachment and comparison, to relationships, such as social learning and remote family power, such as social influences. (p. 135) while a small number of system-conscious scholars have examined these theories, much more effort is needed to understand the hypothesis. The current definition of child abuse, with the recent amendment to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) states: in the air... or an act or failure to act which indicates an imminent risk of serious injury" (Administration for Children and Families, Division of Health and Human Services, 2016, p. 7). Although not deliberately clear, CAPTA's definition of child abuse is inconsistent with the analysis of the violence of abusive siblings because it assumes that the perpetrator is a parent. The last part of the description, however, focuses on "the imminent danger of evil harm" can be used to provide strong evidence that sibling's physical and emotional violence produces negative effects throughout life (Button and Gealt, 2010; Caffaro, 2011; Caffaro, 2014; Feinberg et al., 2012; Finkelhor et al., 2006; Graham-Bermann et al., 1994; Kramer & Bank, 2005; Straus et al., 2006).

Ignorance of sibling violence in child welfare is about the fact that rates are likely to be very high for abused children. Family situations among children exposed to sibling violence include many that are common in children's well-being: physical or emotional absence of parents, lack of eye contact, children in the same family as fraud, unfair expectations of older children, parental acceptance of sibling violence as a normal part of parental intervention sibling violence, parental modelling of physically or emotionally abusive behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse in the home, chronic mental or physical illness of parents, difficulties in work or finances, and parental rejection (Caffaro & Con-Caffaro, 1998; Wiehe, 1997). In addition, research has shown that sibling violence is often associated with other forms of domestic violence (i.e., child abuse by adults, violence between caregivers) (Henning, Leitenberg, Coffey, Bennet, and Jankowski, 1997; Spaccarelli, Sandler, & Roosa, 1994; Wallace, 1999; Wiehe, 1997). A small number of studies support the view that abused children are more prone to sibling violence (Shields & Cincchetti, 1998). Linares found that 82 percent of foster parents reported acts of violence last year between siblings in their care; Fourteen percent of adopted children have been "beaten" by a sibling while caring for them.

While the root causes of sibling violence do not work, various interventions are designed to train both parents and children to be able to navigate productive children's issues peacefully and peacefully. By early 1967, physicians were exploring ways to reduce sibling violence and increase cooperation between standard samples (Kramer, 2004). The most recent interventions recommended a variety of individual, sibling, family, and group treatment and training sessions on topics such as mediation, sibling violence (Caffaro and Conn-Caffaro, 2005; Caspi, 2008; Feinberg, Sakuma, Hostetler and McHale, 2013; Kennedy & Kramer, 2008; Kiselica & Morrill-Richards, 2007; Reid & Donovan, 1990; Thomas & Roberts, 2009; Siddiqui & Ross, 2004; Smith & Ross, 2007). Two studies tested interventions designed for siblings affected by social work (Kothari et al., 2017). Both of these interventions use capacity building to help siblings develop management and self-management skills to enhance the quality of relationships. While the initial experiments produced statistically significant results, a study conducted by Linares et al. (2015) were less than a small sample size with Kothari et al. (2017) did not include a measure of sibling violence. More work is needed to develop and evaluate interventions to improve sibling violence within the context of child welfare and beyond.

The theory and development of child welfare interventions involving our siblings is promising, as given the recent invitation of social workers and mental health professionals to address your child's physical and emotional violence in their work with children and families and the "great challenge" of social work to prevent domestic violence; Meyers, 2014; Perkins & O'Connor, 2015; Perkins & Stoll, 2016; Shadik, Perkins, & Kovacs, 2013). However, without a full understanding of the underlying causes of sibling violence, the interventions of siblings affected by social issues may not include things or strategies that might work. In addition, the views of young people with living experiences and sibling violence are not found in the speculation and research of what happens in the context of child welfare. This lack of well-researched research and practice is not in line with a research organization that has shown that young people have a lot to offer when it comes to social issues that affect them. When asked to describe their experiences, share their ideas, and provide recommendations, young people can contribute significantly to efforts to analyse complex collaborative processes, develop explanations and precise steps, apply sustainability resources to interventions, and inform specific practice and policy-making (Horwath, Kalyva, & Spyru, 2012; Hyde & Kammerer, 2009; Riebschleger, Day, & Damashek, 2015; Strolin-Goltzman, Kollar, & Trinkle, 2010).

### 1.2. Critical Realism

Critical Realism (CR) emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a different way of doing good and building. CR opens up space to investigate ontological questions about causation through constructivist epistemologies and methods by dividing the truth into three domains: artistic, real, and causal. According to this CR-piece, the dynamic domain (where social science research is conducted) has a subset of all the events generated by the underlying cause. CR research incorporates both dynamic (i.e., in-depth translation data) and comprehensive (i.e., distributed trends data, compiled by quantitative data) methods to identify visual patterns of human behaviour and then be given by the researcher-led exercise to determine causal mechanisms (Lennox &

Jurdi-Hage, 2017; Sayer, 2010). CR is an appropriate philosophy to guide the current project because its purpose is to inform the act of liberation to eradicate the system structures that cause human suffering. The project, developed in the CR paradigm, aims to identify the root causes of abusive sibling violence as defined by caregiver farmers. The long-term goal is to inform specific practice, development interventions, and child welfare policies that effectively reduce their prevalence.

## 2. Literature Review

Wiehe (1997), one of the first authors and widely quoted on the topic of sibling violence, likened this practice to the abuse of children by adults by using the term "abuse" to describe violent interactions between siblings. According to the author, physical abuse includes "intentional conduct that leads to physical harm such as slapping, hitting, biting, kicking, or violent behaviour that may involve the use of a particular weapon, such as a stick, bat, gun or knife" (pages 14-18). Emotional abuse has been defined as "the expression of verbal abuse intended to mock, insult, intimidate or demean. Emotional abuse also includes the destruction of personal property, such as a sibling deliberately destroying a favourite property or one of your siblings" (Wiehe, 1997, pp. 33-34). In addition to giving various examples of actions that involve physical or emotional abuse, both definitions refer to the intent that your sibling harms another. Wiehe's definition of physical violence also stipulates that the injury must be the result of an act of violence in order to qualify for the assault. According to Caffaro (2011), sibling violence is defined as "a variety of behaviours including pushing, hitting, kicking, hitting, and using weapons to injure the body," and psychological abuse includes "exposing a sibling to violence perpetrated by peers or other siblings; threatening, intimidating, and degrading your sibling; refusing, degrading, and abusing your sibling, and, destroying your neighbour's property" (pp. 8-10). Time, and the role of caregivers. More importantly, the violence of abusive siblings is notable for the stable role of victims and offenders. The lack of Caffaro's list of symptoms that it neglects to define the symptoms of psychological abuse among siblings.

**Table 1 - Characteristics of Sibling Rivalry and Sibling Violence (Caffaro, 2011, p. 91)**

No	Sibling Rivalry
1	Conflict between siblings in which the reward is possession of something that the other also wants
2	Conflict between siblings that strengthens their relationship
3	Fierce but balanced comparisons between siblings with regard to achievement, attractiveness, and social relations with peers
4	A repeated pattern of physical aggression directed toward a sibling with the intent to inflict harm and motivated by an internal emotional need for power and control
5	Physical aggression directed toward a sibling that aims to leave the other feeling humiliated, defeated, and/or unsafe
6	An escalating pattern of sibling aggression and retaliation that parents seem unwilling or unable to stop
7	Role rigidity resulting in the solidification of victim and offender sibling roles

Recently, Meyers (2017) conducted a quality study using phenomenological methods and bases to collect survivor accounts to improve the effective definition of sibling abuse. Based on in-depth interviews with 19 survivors aged 25 to 65 years, the analysis identified an unpredictable traumatic event as a significant sign of sibling abuse. Survivors recount the violent reunions that took place over the years. In addition to the long-lasting and frequent abuse, the idea that they could not anticipate or avoid the attack led to a state of chronic fear accompanied by a state of powerlessness. Meyers' discovery also confirmed the purpose, duration, and power differences between siblings as key indicators of sibling abuse. The remarkable insight that can be gained from the investigation is that the broad definition of violence against abusive siblings should include the experience / perspective of the victim / survivor of what happened.

### 2.1. Sibling Violence and Child Welfare

While growing research has explored extensively the relationship between sibling placement and placement stability, emotional adjustment, and promoting children's perceptions of their status (Hegar and Rosenthal, 2011), abusive sibling violence is not discussed (PineI-Jacquemin, Cheron, Favart, Dayan, and Dayan, and Dayan, 2013). The policy of extreme placement in the absence of information about risky sibling relationships may exclude cases where co-ordination is not a good idea (Cohn, 2008). In a recent review of literature on sibling violence through collective bargaining, the authors recognized the need to refine methods and tools used to analyse sibling relationships throughout care continuity (PineI-Jacquemin et al., 2013). Linares et al. (2007) argue that isolating a stepchild from siblings can be helpful under certain circumstances (i.e., behavioural or behavioural problems). The need to increase attention to the violence of abusive siblings in the context of child welfare is exacerbated by studies that show high levels of exposure to other forms of domestic violence. Children who witness domestic violence between their parents are more likely to engage in violence with siblings and their peers (Button and Gealt, 2010; Spaccarelli et al., 1994; Wiehe, 1997). Noland, Liller, McDermott, Coulter, & Seraphine (2004) found mother-to-father violence, father-to-mother violence, mother-to-child violence, and father-to-child violence to be important predictors of foreign violence. . Regarding the effect of child abuse by adult caregivers, Straus et al. (2006) documented a positive relationship between adult violence against a child and that a child is more likely to abuse a sibling.

Children who were severely abused by their parents were more likely to be violent towards their brother or sister (National Family Violence Resurvey). Violence against women is also more prevalent in families where there is abuse of spouses and children (Wallace, 1999; Wiehe, 1997). Given these findings, it is possible that levels of sibling violence are significantly higher among adolescents provided with a child welfare program than among standard samples (Hamby & Grych, 2013). In support of this view, a recent study of adoptive teens found that acts of sibling violence were commonplace (Linares, 2008). Ignorance of abusive sibling violence in child welfare is due to the fact that, considering that frequent peer violence (i.e., less than four

times a year) has been strongly associated with symptoms of abuse in young children (Finkelhor et al., 2006). The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child has described the "toxic" stress as "a strong, normal, or long-term activation of the stress management system. These kinds of toxic stress responses" (2005/2014) as noted earlier, Caffaro's (2011) definition of sibling violence describes a recurring pattern, "increasing prevalence of sibling violence and retaliation against parents who appear unwilling or unable to stop "(p. 91). of siblings can cause toxic stress, linked to physical and mental illness later in life (Shonkoff et al., 2009) is twice as likely as others to show severe symptoms of trauma, anxiety and depression, including insomnia, suicidal ideation and fear of the dark "(Finkelhor et al., 2006).

## ***2.2. The Social Work Role in Child Welfare***

Acknowledging that this practice is often overlooked by social workers, a recent article on Social Work, a book by the National Association of Social Workers, promoted the "necessary role of social work" in dealing with physical and emotional sibling violence, arguing that "violence against children", regardless of who did it. Similarly, the state has an obligation to intervene in the event of violence against abusive siblings, and to ensure that its siblings are not harmed in the event of danger. These findings point to an important gap in the child welfare system, as published material contains little or nothing about sibling abuse. This is a new perspective on children's well-being. Clearly, little is being done at present, in policy or practice, to deal with abusive sibling violence. Recent publications have encouraged the inclusion of a discussion of sibling violence in child abuse and neglect in parental education (Shadik et al., 2013). This call for consideration of abusive sibling violence in family-based interventions is in line with Perkins and O'Connor's recommendations that "social workers should analyse and develop interventions aimed at preventing or enhancing physical and emotional violence between siblings". However, without a full understanding of the underlying causes of sibling violence, the interventions of siblings affected by social issues may not include things or strategies that might work. The sections to follow outline the compilation of documents on sibling violence and intervention. Two seminal, quality studies conducted in the late 1990s revealed many individual characteristics and family circumstances associated with sibling abuse including: physical or emotional absence of parents, lack of supervision, different treatment of children in the same family as fraud, improper expectations of older siblings (children), parental adoption sibling conflict as a normal part of family life, lack of parental intervention during acts of sibling violence, parental modelling of physically or emotionally abusive behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse in the home, chronic mental or physical illness of parents (parents), work or financial difficulties, and parental rejection (Caffaro) & Con-Caffaro, 1998; Wiehe, 1997).

In addition to parental traits or behaviours, those included by perpetrators and victims were also examined. According to Caffaro and Con-Caffaro (1998), offenders are prone to mental errors that reduce or distort their behaviour, suffer personally, and / or show a lack of control over stress, mental retardation, and development, or a lack of empathy. . Psychologists conducting a board-based investigation have similarly identified stable personality and a lack of cognitive processing among aggressive children such as anger, undesirable behaviour, non-emotion, narcissism, and the tendency to misinterpret social indicators (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Frickig & White, 2008; Stellwagen, 2009; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998). Significant growth, physical, or psychological differences between siblings were associated with similar sibling abuse (Caffaro and Con-Caffaro, 1998). Although it is emphasized that the characteristics of the victim should not be used in prosecution, Wiehe (1997) has shown that genetically and physically determined traits can make a child prone to abuse.

## ***2.3. Concept of Sibling Violence in Theories***

### ***2.3.1. Social Learning Theory***

Numerous studies have documented the combination of different forms of domestic violence, drawing a link between a child's exposure to violence and their tendency to commit acts of violence against others. Children who witness violence between individuals and their parents and / or who experience adult abuse are more likely to be involved in violent behaviour with siblings and their peers (Button & Gealt, 2010; Noland et al., 2004; Spaccarelli et al., 1994; Straus et al., 2006; Wallace, 1999; Wiehe, 1997). The concept of social learning, based on the modelling process or imitation in visual response, is presented as a descriptive theory of the transfer of various forms of violence to families (i.e., violence as a learned behaviour). In a seminal study on the simulation process, Bandura et al. (1963) showed that children who saw adults misbehaving with plastic violence Bobo later mimicked this behaviour in their own game, and a comparative group of children who did not experience the violent behaviour imitated by adults did not participate in the violent game in this doll. Parental displays of abuse can independently communicate with children that violence is an appropriate behaviour to resolve conflicts and achieve desired goals in relationships with family members (Caffaro & Con-Caffaro, 1998; Straus et al., 2006). Social learning theory also applies reinforcement principles where behaviour leads to earning the rewards you want. Among siblings, reinforcement can be achieved by gaining control of what you want, gaining parental attention, or by experiencing the thrilling experience of a sibling (Hoffman & Edwards, 2004). When morality is repeated without repetition or punishment, and continues to produce the desired results, violence becomes a tangible response (Walker, 1986). In terms of social learning theory, many researchers have suggested parental modelling as an important definition of sibling abuse (Hoffman and Edwards, 2004; Kiselica and Mororill-Richards, 2007; Straus et al., 2006).

### ***2.3.2. Radical Feminist Theory***

Abuse of small / small / low power to compensate for apparent lack of power or loss of power. For example, an older sibling who needs custody of his or her siblings may use excessive force to enforce sleep rules (Wiehe, 1997). The junction can create a tenuous force when the energy area is not clearly defined. In cases where older female siblings are independent of the status quo, younger brothers may challenge their power to greater power (Hoffman & Edwards, 2004). Regardless of the symptoms of the people involved, the dominant team within the opposing dyad gains a sense of control over the act of defeating the other. Research supports the integration of these women's perspectives as a definition of violence against abusive siblings. Limited analyses have shown that siblings of older siblings (and perhaps older / stronger) and younger sisters (i.e., younger / weaker) have been at greater risk of major conflicts (Graham-Berman et al., 1994).

### ***2.3.3. Conflict Theory***

Alternative therapies may view each other as competitors for tangible resources and parental attention (Hoffman et al., 2005). Caffaro and Con-Caffaro's (1998) determination that parental physical and emotional deprivation and the alternative treatment of children (e.g., coercion) were family circumstances associated with abusive sibling violence supported by a conflicting view. Hoffman and Edwards (2004) have proposed a model of the theory of violence

and abuse against siblings that includes social studies, women's theory, and conflict view, in addition to the risk factors discussed in existing literature (Hoffman and Edwards, 2004). Depending on the multi-line relationships, the model lists unidirectional lines of causation between parent and child symptoms, attitudes, and behaviours thought to produce physical violence and psychological trauma among siblings.

### 2.3.4. Systems Theory

Applying general systems theory to family behaviour, family systems theory posits that individual members can be accurately understood only within the context of the whole family, including past generations. Rather than targeting individual members as the source of dysfunction, the locus of family problems is viewed as a function of struggle among members. Numerous forces are seen as moving in many directions simultaneously, with positive and negative feedback loops guiding behaviour. Family members take on defined roles, repeatedly demonstrating a narrow set of behaviours across situations, resulting in a relative equilibrium of patterned rules of interaction (Smith & Hamon, 2012). The family is also considered to contain the inevitable boundary and nature (Crosbie-Burnett and Klein, 2009). The family system is seen as the link between structure and function (Zwick, 2015). The structure of the family system is an association of members; work is a complete family behaviour, including how it relates to its context. The family system is considered to be involved in stable patterns of behaviour over time. Coercion's theory was developed by scientists at the Oregon Social Learning Center and was the focus of many studies on child behaviour. In terms of working conditions and incorrect reinforcement, the theory of coercion states that learning occurs through human exchange. Family dysfunctional dyad members "train" each other in an ongoing process that strengthens a child's hard work including aggression (Granic & Patterson, 2006; Patterson, 1982). Compulsory theoretical research focuses primarily on parents and their children, studying a process in which caregivers reinforce child behaviour by repetitive behaviours, circulatory reactions to emotional withdrawal and donation (Smith et al., 2014). Children with a common behavioural disorder such as trauma (and therefore a major challenge for the parent) develop compulsive parenting practices that reinforce violence as the child grows older (Gran & Patterson, 2006).

### 2.3.5. Coercion Theory

Coercion's concept can be used throughout the family system to describe a compelling family process in which the pressures of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses are felt within and between multiple family members to generate more direct and harmonious trade. Incorporating theory in this way includes all sub-dyadic systems; just as marital conflict is associated with a broken sibling relationship, parental relationship, or relationship between caregivers and children, it can be difficult when there is ongoing conflict between siblings (Milevsky, 2011). In a coercive family system, violence between dyads (or triads, etc.) becomes a stable, family-wide pattern.

### 2.3.6. Socio ecological model of violence

Human behaviour is often discussed as a connection between personal factors and contexts, such as "natural man" directed at social work. One of the most widely used species is based on systems with a natural framework originally developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which organizes society into nest systems that come together in a coherent manner. In the context of violence, the values and actions of individuals, families, communities, and communities are seen as reflecting and producing each other. As nations use military tactics to protect global resources and criminal gangs commit acts of violence to control illicit drug trafficking in poor communities, family members and their siblings use force to resolve conflicts. The "second wave" of the study of violence in human society has begun to look at how mechanisms of violence occur in individuals and in certain programs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; Hamby & Grych, 2013). Recent preschool research has found that father-child violence is associated with social violence to predict violence between siblings (Miller, Grabell, Thomas, Bermann, and Graham-Bermann, 2012).

**Table 2 – Theory Description**

Theory Model	Description
Social Learning	Physical/emotional sibling violence is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learned through observation</li> <li>-Results in receipt of desired rewards</li> <li>-Not redirected/does not result in consequences</li> </ul>
Radical Feminist Theory	Physical/emotional sibling violence is described as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Justified means for the more powerful person in a dyad/situation to get what they want</li> <li>-Due to a power differential (i.e., physical strength, intellectual/emotional maturity, level of responsibility) between siblings</li> <li>-Giving a sibling a sense of control by overpowering another</li> </ul>
Conflict Theory	Sibling violence is described as occurring in a setting in which siblings experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Scarcity - lack of access to emotional or tangible resources</li> <li>-Competition - for parental attention</li> <li>-Parental favouritism - one sibling gets better tangible/emotional resources</li> </ul>
Coercive Theory	Sibling violence is described as occurring in a family system with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Multiple concurrent dynamics among 3+ members</li> <li>-Family members embody stable roles</li> <li>-Mutual training - repeated, cyclical interpersonal reactions reinforce violence</li> <li>-Feedback loops - emotional, behavioural, or cognitive responses perpetuate violence</li> </ul>

### 3. Materials and Methods

The theory review was based on critical validation (CR), a scientific philosophy from Bhaskar's work (1979, 1998) and was developed by Sayer (1992), Archer (1995), and others (Fletcher, 2017). Subsequent sections introduce two precursors to CR, positivism and constructivism, with a focus on their equilibrium in causal analysis. After setting their limitations as a focus on "the evils of corruption" (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 27), CR is discussed as a separate scientific philosophy that effectively distinguishes ontological and epistemological investigations and opens the study of the causative mechanisms. As a scientific philosophy, positivism relies on realist / objectivist ontology that assumes the existence of a reality that differs from our theories, ideas, and formulas (i.e., Nagle's argument that, in fact, "the idea that comes from nowhere" (1989)). Humean's causal, positivism uses mitigation methods to test an unknown, measurable reality of statistical analysis (Fletcher, 2017; Lennox & Jurdi-Hague, 2017). "Which can be prevented by external influences.

Studies of this type are designed to describe organizations or predict temporary deterioration, direct relationships (e.g., if event x, then event y), i, but the causative mechanisms of the relationship (i.e., how one flexibility affects the other) remain unresolved (Fletcher, 2017; Lennox & Jurdi-Hague, 2017). Constructivism followed positivism, a relativist / transilivist ontology that was able to increase the limitations of positivism by collecting explanations through oral and indirect signals systems, especially through a qualitative research method. Based on real-life social experiences, constructivism suggests that human experience is time-dependent- and contextual and can only be understood with humility (Morris, 2006); there are literally "various kinds of worlds" raised during the exchange of languages (Schwandt, 1994, p. 126). Emphasizing social characters, constructivism combines individual knowledge with the meaning of the doctrine, and as a result, greatly avoids the area of causation. According to a philosophy of construction science, child abuse is "more like a picture than a cough. It is a social device that reflects the values and ideas of a particular culture over a period of time" (The British Department of Health, 1995 as quoted by Houston, 2001, p. 848). Considering this example, the limitations of the construction of social science are obvious. The notion that many legitimate causes equally reflect the social context provided in the unlimited scenarios of unique circumstances makes the assumption of remedial action extremely difficult.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Critical realists are concerned with interpreting what happens in the real domain, using the connection between artistic data and existing descriptive theory. Through the strong involvement of concrete (empiricism) and abstract (theory), critical realists take beliefs from both scientific philosophers without allowing their corresponding limitations (Lennox & Jurdi-Hage, 2017). By not only explaining what is happening, but also how it is manifested (i.e., using the concept of more accurate and more accurate predictions), CR supports the analysis of social conditions that produce patterns of intensity of human suffering including social, political and economic causes (Fletcher, 2017; Houston, 2001; Wright, 2011). This CRI component is well aligned with Social Work ethical principles that are empowered to find solutions to relief from social ills (Danermark et al., 2002; Houston, 2001). The sections to be followed describe the research method, based on the CR philosophy of science.

Critical Realism does not provide a clear direction of approach, but rather, tends to promote a mix of accounting and quality methods (Danermark et al., 2002). Research questions should support the ability to investigate the application of existing theories, which cannot be denied, supported, or defined within a particular context (Fletcher, 2017). Specific and non-linear ideas explored in this project include: community learning theory, women's higher ideology, conflict theory, and coercive family process. Linear theories employ reductionist methods to parse a theoretically knowable reality into discrete, measurable variables. Based on Humean causal law, linear theories describe chains of temporally bound relationships (i.e., if event x, then event y). The three linear theories included in the inquiry were social learning theory, radical feminist theory, and conflict theory. After discussing the resonance of the three linear theories with participants' descriptions of sibling violence in the context of child welfare, I will present the study findings related to a non-linear (i.e., systems-oriented) theory of sibling violence, coercive family process. Applied to sibling violence, radical feminism argues that any power differential between siblings such as in physical strength, emotional maturity, or assigned level of responsibility could foment violence. Whatever the perspective of the older, bigger, or more powerful sibling, the younger, smaller, less powerful sibling(s) must follow suit or suffer violent consequences.

While conflict theory could prove useful in a general population study with more nuanced experiences of scarcity, it does little to extend understanding of the phenomenon among child welfare-involved youth. Coercive theory, rather than targeting an individual member as the source of family discord, the theory conceives interpersonal violence to be the product of interactions among every member in the family. Individuals are described as maintaining stable roles within the family system, repeatedly engaging in a narrow set of behaviours. This role stability creates a state of relative equilibrium, producing a family-wide pattern of interaction. The pattern is comprised of multiple coercive processes that produce physical and emotional violence between/among various dyads and triads. Sibling violence results from the collective influence of all members, who are both influenced and constrained by their context.

### 5. Conclusion

Child abuse is considered a well-established social problem and a public health concern, its reduction being "a moral obligation that is clearly in the best interests of children and in society" (Lundahl, Nimer, and Parsons, 2006, p. 251). Since the advent of public awareness in the 1970's, a decade-long process of radical change has shifted the focus of child abuse and critical infrastructure into protecting children from the ills of adults. While this progress is commendable, physical and emotional sibling violence continues in the shadows, largely unnoticed. Established as the most common form of joint violence, stressful studies have shown that children exposed to sibling violence have symptoms of trauma and experience adverse effects throughout life.

To create a decades-long line of research and multidisciplinary studies, a small number of books have recently appealed to social work, child welfare, and children's mental health to embrace the idea that sibling violence is a form of child abuse and to take action to protect children from harm (Meyers, 2014; Perkins & O'Connor, 2015; Perkins, 2016; Shadik, 2013). The parties have yet to reach an agreement on what constitutes physical or emotional abuse between siblings and to learn about their causes in the same way. To begin filling in the gaps with vision, practice and policy in the context of child welfare is the duty of social workers and the general community at large regardless of background.

## REFERENCES

- Button, D.M., & Gealt, R. (2010). High risk behaviors among victims of sibling violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 25*, 131-140.
- Caffaro, J.V. (2014). *Sibling abuse trauma: Assessment and intervention strategies for children, families, and adults*, Second Edition. New York, New York: Routledge.
- Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., & Ormrod, R. (2006). Kid's stuff: The nature and impact of peer and sibling violence on younger and older children. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 30*, 1401-1421.
- Gelles R.J. & Steinmetz, S.K. (2006). *Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.
- Tucker, C.J., Finkelhor, D., Shattuck, A.M., & Turner, H. (2013). Prevalence and correlates of sibling victimization types. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 37*, 213-223.
- Whiteman, S. D., McHale, S. M., & Soli, A. (2011). Theoretical perspectives on sibling relationships. *Journal of Family Theory and Review, 3*(2), 124-139.
- Schonkoff, J. P., Boyce, W. T., & McEwen, B. S. (2009). Neuroscience, molecular biology, and the childhood roots of health disparities: building a new framework for health promotion and disease prevention. *JAMA, 301*(21), 2252-2259.
- Wiehe, V. R. (1997). *Sibling abuse: Hidden physical, emotional, and sexual trauma*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Perkins, N.H. (2014). *Perceptions and experiences of physical and emotional violence between siblings: A mixed-methods, comparative case study* (Doctoral dissertation), Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.
- Bandura, A., Ross, D. & Ross, S. (1963). Vicarious reinforcement and imitative learning. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 63*, 575-582.
- Hoffman, K.L., & Edwards, J.N. (2004). An integrated theoretical model of sibling violence and abuse. *Journal of Family Violence, 19*(3), 185-200.
- Smith, S.R. & Hamon, R.R. (2012). *Exploring family theories (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Milevsky, A. (2011). *Sibling relationships in childhood and adolescence*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Granic, I. & Patterson, G.R. (2006). Toward a comprehensive model of antisocial development: A dynamic systems approach. *Psychological Review, 113*(1), 101-131.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gil, D.G. (1996). Preventing violence in a structurally violent society: Mission impossible. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 66*(1), 77-84.
- Kramer, L. & Bank, L. (2005). Sibling relationship contributions to individual and family well-being: Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19*(4), 483-485.
- Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Steinmetz, S. K. (2006). *Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family*. New York, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.
- Henning, K., Leitenberg, H., Coffey, P., Bennet, R., & Jankowski, M. (1997). Long-term psychological adjustment to witnessing interparental physical conflict during childhood. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 21*, 501-515.
- Spaccarelli, S., Sandler, I., and Roosa, M. (1994). History of spouse violence against mother: Correlated risks and unique effects in child mental health. *Journal of Family Violence, 9*, 79-95.
- Wallace, H. (1999). *Family violence: Legal, medical, and social perspectives*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Shields, A., & Cicchetti, D. (1998). Reactive aggression among maltreated children: The contributions of attention and emotion dysregulation. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 27*(4), 381-395.
- Kiselica, M.S., & Morrill-Richards, M. (2007). Sibling maltreatment: The forgotten abuse. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 85*, 148-160.
- Reid, W.J., & Donovan, T. (1990). Treating sibling violence. *Family Therapy, 17*(1), 49-59.
- Thomas, B.W. & Roberts, M.W. (2009). Sibling conflict resolution skills: Assessment and training. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 18*, 447-453.
- Siddiqui, A., & Ross, H. (2004). Mediation as a method of parent intervention in children's disputes. *Journal of Family Psychology, 18*(1), 147-159.
- Kothari, B.H., McBeath, B., Sorenson, P., Bank, L., Waid, J., Webb, S.J., & Steele, J. (2017). An intervention to improve sibling relationship quality among youth in foster care: Results of a randomized clinical trial. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 63*, 19-29.
- Linares, L.O., Jimenez, J., Nesci, C., Pearson, E., Beller, S., Edwards, N., & Levin-Rector, A. (2015). Reducing sibling conflict in maltreated children placed in foster homes. *Prevention Science, 16*, 211-221.
- Horwath, J., Kalyva, E., & Spyru, S. (2012). "I want my experiences to make a difference" promoting participation in policy-making and service development by young people who have experienced violence. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*, 155-162.
- Hyde, J. & Kammerer, N. (2009). Adolescents' perspectives on placement moves and congregate settings: Complex and cumulative instabilities in out-of-home care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*, 265-273.
- Riebschleger, J., Day, A., & Damashek, A. (2015). Foster care youth share stories of trauma before, during, and after placement: Youth voices for building trauma-informed systems of care. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma, 24*, 339-360.
- Strolin-Goltzman, J., Kollar, S., & Trinkel, J. (2010). Listening to the voices of children in foster care: Youths speak out about child welfare workforce turnover and selection. *Social Work, 55*(1), 47-53.
- Lennox, R. & Jurdi-Hage, R. (2017). Beyond the empirical and the discursive: The methodological implications of critical realism for street harassment research. *Women's Studies International Forum, 60*, 28-38.
- Sayer, A. (2010). *Method in social science: A realist approach, revised (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Routledge.
- Caffaro, J.V. (2011). Sibling violence and systems-oriented therapy. In J. Caspi (Ed.), *Sibling development: Implications for mental health practitioners* (pp. 245-272). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
- Hegar, R.L., & Rosenthal, J.A. (2011). Foster children placed with or separated from siblings: Outcomes based on a national sample. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(7), 1245-1253.
- Pinel-Jacquemin, S., Cheron, J., Favart, E., Dayan, C., & Scelles, R. (2013). Violence among siblings and joint placement: A review of the literature. *Early Child Development and Care, 183*(7), 963-980.
- Cohn, M. (2008). *Sibling placement: The importance of the sibling relationship for children in foster care*. National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections Information Packet, New York, New York.
- Hamby, S., & Grych, J. (2013). *The web of violence: Exploring connections among different forms of interpersonal violence and abuse*. New York, London: Springer.
- Shadik, J.A., Perkins, N.H., & Kovacs, P.J. (2013). Incorporating discussion of sibling violence in the curriculum of parent intervention programs for child abuse and neglect. *Health and Social Work, 38*(1), 53-57.
- Crick, N.R., & Dodge, K. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in children's social adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin, 115*(1), 74-101.
- Frick, P., & White, S.F. (2008). The importance of callous-unemotional traits for developmental models of aggressive and antisocial behavior. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 29*(4), 359-375.
- Kerig, P.K. & Stellwagen, K.K. (2009). Roles of callous-unemotional traits, narcissism, and Machiavellianism in childhood aggression. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 32*, 343-352.
- Loeber, R. & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1998). Development of juvenile aggression and violence. *American Psychologist, 53*(2), 242-259.
- Graham-Bermann, S.A., Cutler, S.E., Litzenger, B.W., & Schwartz, W.E. (1994). Perceived conflict and violence in childhood sibling relationships and later emotional adjustment. *Journal of Family Psychology, 8*(1), 85-97.
- Hoffman, K.L., Kiecolt, K.J., & Edwards, J.N. (2005). Physical violence between siblings: A theoretical and empirical analysis. *Journal of Family Issues, 26*(8), 1103-1130.

- Crosbie-Burnett, M., & Klein, D.M. (2009). The fascinating story of family theories. In Bray, J. H. and Stanton, M. (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of family psychology* (37-52). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Zwick, M. (2015). *Elements and relations: Aspects of a scientific metaphysics*.
- Patterson, G.R. (1982). *Coercive family process*. Eugene, OR: Castalia.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2014). *Connecting the dots: An overview of the links among multiple forms of violence*. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting\\_the\\_dots-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting_the_dots-a.pdf)
- Miller, L.E., Grabell, A., Thomas, A., Bermann, E., & Graham-Bermann, S.A. (2012, February 13). The associations between community violence, television violence, intimate partner violence, parent-child aggression, and aggression in sibling relationships of a sample of pre-schoolers. *Psychology of Violence*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0027254
- Bhaskar, R. (1979). *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.
- Bhaskar, R. (1998). Philosophy and scientific realism. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical realism: Essential readings* (pp.16-47). London: Routledge.
- Fletcher, A.J. (2017). Applying critical realism in qualitative research: methodology meets method. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 20(2), 181-194.
- Morris, T. (2006). *Social work research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T.A. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Houston, S. (2001). Beyond social constructionism: Critical realism and social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 845-861.
- Wright, K. (2011). Reality without scare quotes: Developing the case for critical realism in journalism research. *Journalism Studies*, 12(2), 156-171.
- Danermark, B., Ekström, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J.C. (2002). *Explaining society: An introduction to critical realism in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.