

Sue L. T. McGregor. (2010). Name changes and future-proofing the profession: Human sciences as a name? *International Journal of Home Economics*, 3(1), 20-37. (Penultimate version posted with permission)



### Abstract

This paper explores the implications of the trend towards naming the profession *Human Sciences*. After providing a history of the meaning of *the* human sciences, the discussion tentatively explores what it means for us and others if we choose *Human Sciences* (without the article *the*). A case is made that any name change, including this one, has the potential to impact our ability to influence and preserve the uniqueness of our professional and disciplinary contributions (along eight dimensions). The paper ends with a discussion of naming conventions and why a name matters as we future-proof the profession.

### Introduction - Factors Behind Name Changes

A name has power - hidden power (Pendergast & McGregor, 2007). People will draw conclusions and impressions of something when it is given a *name*, but they will not make these same inferences when the label is absent, even if the same features are present (Yamauchi & Markham, 2000). This finding has implications for home economics. Because concepts, including peoples' conceptualization of home economics, are embedded in their knowledge structures, their (in)experiences with home economics will affect the conclusions they draw when they hear the name, no matter what people do in the profession. For this reason, since assuming the name home economics at the 1899-1909 Lake Placid conferences, the profession has repeatedly engaged in contentious discussions of an appropriate name (Peterat, 2001).

Kerka (1996) identifies several forces that drive our penchant for changing the name and focus of the profession: (a) changes in women's roles and family structures; (b) poor image and struggles over professional identity; (c) a desire to increase the standing of the field in the academy; (d) the low priority accorded to home and family in a society predicated on the patriarchal ideology; (e) a desire to ensure gender equity by recruiting male students and practitioners; (f) a need to increase professional visibility, legitimacy status and prestige; (g) the intent to reflect the evolution and development of the professional field of study in higher education; and, (h) the trend toward integrated and holistic curricula and knowledge (see also Newman, 2003; Pendergast & McGregor, 2007; Pepall, 1998). Dr. Gwen Hay (Cornell University) recently described name changes in the profession as "an external symbol of an internal revolution" (Zheng, 2009, p. 1).

Peterat (2001) and Vaines (1997) explain that for many home economics professionals, *home economics* is a meaningful identity that they have actively constructed through their study, practice and reflection, doing so in a variety of professional communities throughout their careers. They are quite comfortable with the name. For them, any discussion of a name change is seen as a challenge to their hard-earned professional identity, one that holds deep meaning for them. For others, the name means nothing in itself; instead, these home economists ascribe meaning to the names through their practice, how others come to know them, and through actively constructing and reconstructing their identities through the names. They believe that names are "open for renewal" (Peterat, p. 30).

The foray into another name change - *Human Sciences* - is the most recent in a long line of likeminded activities. Kerka (1996) asserts that “what is happening in home economics reflects the overall restructuring taking place in many educational institutions” and should not be construed as “a field in crisis” (p.3). Instead, name changes should be taken as a sign that the discipline that was called home economics has evolved far beyond its original definition. The new name(s) should be seen as signs of esteemed change and forward development. What tends to happen, however, is that name changes create confused dilution of the long-standing intent of the profession, a situation that is exacerbated when different nations around the world adopt different monikers.

The following examples illustrate the proliferation of name changes at the international level. Claiming that the name home economics was becoming increasingly inaccurate in describing the work of the discipline with its many sub-specialities, United States opted to change the name of the profession to Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), at the 1993 Scottsdale Conference. The intent of the name change was to move beyond the stereotypic connotations of the term home economics so as to communicate a broader focus than the home (Vincenti, 1997) (see also <http://www.kon.org/scottsdale.html>). Several African nations followed suit, likely because many African home economics leaders studied in United States. Canada retained the name home economics, but many university programs changed their name to human ecology (in the early 1990s) (Pereria, 2008). The United Kingdom shifted from home economics to consumer sciences (Bailey, 2008). The Pan-Asian/Australian region uses the name home economics as does the Caribbean and Central and South America. In its 2008 Position Statement, the International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE) decided to retain the name home economics; yet, it described home economics as “a field of study and profession situated within *the* human sciences...” (p.1, emphasis added).

In keeping with our longstanding penchant to change our name (Newman, 2003), there is now a movement within the profession to use the name *Human Sciences*. Indeed, Kappa Omicron Nu (KON), one of the five professional organizations present at the US 1993 Scottsdale Conference, opted not to adopt the name FCS but to use *Human Sciences* instead (Vincenti, 1997). The premise of this paper is that this moniker is *already being used* by a collection of disciplines referred to as *the* human sciences. What are the implications of distinguishing a whole profession from a collection of other disciplines simply by leaving off the article *the*?

Home economics has evolved over 100 years by drawing insights from the natural, human and social sciences to develop its own body of knowledge, concepts and philosophy - it is proudly interdisciplinary. It has stood outside of these three spheres as a unique discipline and profession that focuses on the quality of daily life of individuals and families. Does adopting *Human Sciences* mean we are inadvertently seen as aligning with one of the dominant sciences and not others? Given our interdisciplinary approach, do we want to be seen as dissociating with particular sciences? To answer this and many other questions, the paper will first explain the notion of *the* human sciences, turning then to a discussion of what it might mean to the profession if we adopt the moniker *Human Sciences* (minus the article *the*). The paper ends with a collection of more questions and an overview of why a name matters at a time when we are attempting to future-proof the profession, defined as “anticipating future developments to minimize negative impacts and optimize opportunities” (IFHE, 2008, p. 2).

### ***The Human Sciences***

The label *the* human sciences arose out the transition from Pre-modern (Medieval) to Modern times. During Medieval times, the focus was on theology and divine studies. During Modern times, the focus shifted to humanities (as opposed to God) and human studies, as opposed to the study of divine and the word of God. Also, at this time, the Feudal system collapsed, replaced by the Mercantile system. When this happened, people were no longer slaves. The result was the formation of university liberal arts programs for the education of citizens who were *free* from slavery (liberal is from Latin *liber*, free). The courses originally designated as liberal arts included grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy (Steiner & Liberman, 2001).

During the 1800s, the physical sciences matured to the point that they had their own curriculum. When this happened, the humanities moved from being distinguished from divinity studies to being distinguished from natural sciences. The scientific method became so popular that the study of humans changed so it embraced the scientific method. This change led to a group of disciplines that became known as *the* human sciences. Society ended up with a collection of disciplines that studied the *nature of humans* and another collection of disciplines that studied *nature* and the material world (e.g., chemistry, biology, physics) (Steiner & Liberman, 2001).

Originally, *the* human sciences was the collective label for anything left over after the natural sciences had been accounted for. Today, *the* human sciences has evolved as a label that represents the combination of both the humanities and social sciences, which are still seen to be two different areas of study. Even though there is some fluidity in how these two areas are identified, the following is a safe enough distinction. Those practicing in the social sciences tend to use the scientific method to study humanity (e.g., sociology, psychology, political sciences, economics, history, anthropology and linguistics). Their goal is to quantify human interactions. On the other hand, those in *the* human sciences, the humanities, are committed to studying aspects of the human condition from a non-scientific approach (e.g., Classics and literature, philosophy, religious studies, women's studies, art, jurisprudence and law, and ethnic and cultural studies) (Amato, 2002; Bullock & Stallybrass, 1977; Machamer, 2008).

*The* human sciences (including social sciences) is now seen as a collection of disciplines that is oriented toward the interpretation of the human experience rather than an explanation of the human experience (as is natural science). Hermeneutics, which means interpretation, is thought to be the key to *the* human sciences (Machamer, 2008). The word hermeneutics derives from the Greek god *Hermes* in his role as patron of communication and human understanding. When someone interprets something, he or she examines it in order to determine the intent. Interpretation refers to making sense of something. Instead of just an explanation, it is a critical explanation or analysis of something to reveal the intentions, the underlying purpose, the goal for doing or saying something. Those engaged in *the* human sciences strive to offer an analysis of the human experience that moves thinking from what humans *are* (the nature of humans) to what enables them to know what *life is*. *The* human sciences constitute a body of discourse that addresses the gap between a human as an external, empirical object of study and a human as a subject who has internal perceptions and knowing (Foucault, 1970). von Wright (2004) concurs that *the* human sciences favour internal psychological experiences while the natural sciences respect insights gained from external sensory observations.

*The* human sciences study people as they really are, investigating into their human potential with the intent to reveal the human condition. It is a science of qualities not quantities

(Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center, 2009). In a discussion of the distinction between natural and human sciences, Cherniss and Hardy (2008) clarify that *the* human sciences study the world that human beings create for themselves and inhabit. It is concerned with understanding the particulars of human life in and of themselves. *The* human sciences are concerned with individuals, especially differences among individuals (compared to natural sciences' focus on regularities and similarities). *The* human sciences focus on understanding the uniqueness of specific human phenomena by creating knowledge of humanity, derived through direct experience, introspection and interaction with others.

### **Human Sciences as a Name for the Profession**

We now live in a time when boundaries between *the* human sciences are starting to breakdown (Association for Humanistic Psychology, 2009). It seems some home economists are taking advantage of this situation by choosing the name *Human Sciences*, dropping the article *the*, and crossing that blurring boundary. Barbara McFall (KON Research Fellow) goes so far as to suggest that perhaps *Human Sciences* (as a name for our discipline) could be construed as a subset of the broader *the* human sciences (personal communication, August 18, 2005). Given how the academy in general has come to understand *the* human sciences, as described in the previous section, what dynamics do we set up by calling home economics *Human Sciences*? How do home economists understand this term? Is this understanding the same as that held by the rest of the academy? Should we be concerned? Does it matter if we choose this name for the profession, given the power of names?

For example, even though the profession in the United States was renamed FCS, some university programs chose *Human Sciences* instead, as did KON, the leadership honour society. KON understands *Human Sciences* as an academic framework for the purpose of improving and enhancing quality of living. It signifies a commitment to improving social justice and developing relations for the benefit of all (see <http://www.kon.org/information.html>). Some university FCS programs changed their name to *Human Sciences* and joined another academic unit (especially health, education or agricultural units). The latter's name almost always comes first, followed by *Human Sciences* (e.g., Department of Education and Human Sciences). Sometimes, the home economics, FCS or human ecology department is housed within a College or Faculty containing the name *Human Sciences*. The same trends are followed at the international level.

Some of these FCS-related programs chose new language to reflect their shift in focus. Others continued to use the same program descriptor language; they simply call themselves *Human Sciences*, with no definition of how they understand the term. The list that follows is just a sampling of some program statements that specifically describe university home economics/FCS programs as Human Sciences (emphasis added in the quotes):

- “The common body of knowledge that comprises *human science* is drawn for [sic] the conceptual areas of nutrition, clothing shelter, human development, relationships, resource management and consumer economics. Emphasis is placed upon the development of leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and research skills” (Texas A&M);
- “The hallmark of *human sciences* is interdisciplinary scholarship with *human* well-being at its center” (Auburn University);
- “Our mission of improving and enhancing *the human condition*” (Texas Tech

- University);
- “Improve the lives, health and environments of individuals, families, and communities, address *human* needs, prevent and solve *human* problems, and improve lives and environments of all people, including the most vulnerable” (Oregon State University); and,
  - “Academic programs in *Human Sciences* prepare professionals who seek innovative solutions to the challenges of a contemporary society and of a changing world. The fundamental focus of the discipline is *on humankind and the human condition* throughout the life cycle” (Stephen F. Austin State University).

### ***Political or Philosophical Motives?***

Regarding the trend of university programs changing their name to *Human Sciences*, Pendergast and McGregor (2007) suggest that repositioning the discipline with(in) other disciplines is often done to gain legitimacy. Ironically, the end result often means further marginalization with deepened confusion about our identity. This line of thinking begs the question, “How much of the choice to rename units *Human Sciences* is political and how much is philosophical?” If units are just changing their name, but not the philosophy and program content, it could be argued they are doing the profession a disservice because there will a proliferation of programs doing the same old thing, just with a different name. Some would say this situation creates confusion for the profession. It would be too easy, when someone sees the name *Human Sciences*, to assume the program offers something different than family and consumer sciences or human ecology or home economics. This assumption could lead to a loss of identity and influence. Others say the name change reflects smart survival and future-insurance marketing for each individual program. What are we doing to ourselves as we struggle to remain viable in the short term?

Barbara McFall feels the moniker *Human Sciences* allows practitioners to embrace the totality of the human experience and enables us to take up the original 19<sup>th</sup> century Lake Placid conceptualization of the profession. The intent was to focus on the full human experience that favours (a) the immediate environments, not necessarily home and (b) the social being, not necessarily family (personal communication, August 18, 2005). This approach challenges our conventional approach to family and home, eliciting images of larger environments, the human family, even the commons. To play devil’s advocate, consider that home economics has evolved over 100 years by drawing insights from the natural, social and human sciences to develop its *own* body of knowledge, concepts and philosophy. As a unique discipline, we have stood outside these three sciences. Does it make sense to name the profession after one of these sciences (dropping the article *the* and saying *Human Sciences*)? Or, should we consider doing so, taking direction from KON and like-minded organizations who seem to be embracing a new conceptualization of *Human Sciences*. The latter views interdisciplinary work as transcending the arbitrary division between the arts and the sciences, involving the study of a number of disciplines in relation to a central problem - the human condition (e.g., University of Sussex, 2008). For this reason, the idea of the human condition and home economics warrants further exploration (McGregor, 2008b, 2010).

### ***Well-being Versus the Human Condition?***

The change in language used in the self-identifying program statements listed previously is very noticeable. Instead of saying family and individual well-being, the programs are now

choosing a different noun - *human*: human needs, human problems, human well-being, the human condition, humankind. Because little else is available on these particular web sites to determine anything deeper, it was difficult to determine if the orientation to preparing pre-professionals has changed or if just the words to describe the program have changed. If indeed the focus has shifted from individuals and families to humans, this is a profound shift in professional and disciplinary focus.

*The human sciences* is devoted to society, the practical needs of society, and it has socio-historical reality as its subject matter. It is concerned with forces that rule society, and with society's resources for promoting healthy progress (Dilthey, 1883). *The human sciences* study people as they really are, investigating into their human potential with the intent to reveal the human condition (Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center, 2009). Home economics (now called FCS, human ecology, human development or consumer sciences) has always said it is about individual and familial well-being within the context of community and society, but it has not yet collectively, unanimously, embraced the idea of the human condition, the focus of *the human sciences* (McGregor, 2008b, 2010; McGregor, Pendergast, Seniuk, Eghan and Engberg, 2008). Are we misleading people if we use the moniker *Human Sciences*, especially if we have not collectively decided that our focus is the human condition?

There is a difference between a focus on well-being and the human condition (McGregor, 2009b, 2010). Well-being is usually used in conjunction with individuals and families (and communities), meaning home economics used appropriate rhetoric. Traditionally, home economics has focused on family well-being and quality of life (McGregor & Goldsmith, 1998). On the other hand, the notion of *condition* is usually associated with all of humanity. This usage occurs because the word condition means existing circumstances. The human condition refers to the past or current lived experiences, the current state of affairs of a collective people - the human family (McGregor, 2001).

Only a few home economics practitioners have begun to call for a shift away from well-being toward the human condition. McFall (2007) coins the phrase *qualities of living* to replace well-being and wellness. Brown and Paolucci (1979) reference the human condition numerous times. In particular, they characterize the types of problems home economists should address as practical, perennial problems that are “manifestations of a pervasive quality of the human condition which carries across epochs in history” (p.33). Brown (1993) asks us to engage in “in depth analysis of the human condition of modern society... of human life and a human world” (p.250). To do this, she advocates we adopt a normative approach to well-being. This means that instead of *describing* the economic, social, physical and emotional states or conditions of families and individuals (dimensions of well-being), we would go further and *interpret* those *conditions* using concepts such as: justice, equity, fairness, freedom, human rights, human security, resiliency, participation, power, responsibility, and interests.

East (1979) characterizes home economics as a focus on the home and family for the betterment and improvement of humanity and society. She asserts, “home economics ... applies rational thought to home life for improving that matrix for human development” (p. 141). East clarifies that rational thought includes each of: (a) *power* from intellectual thinking that searches for alternatives while perceiving relationships and connections; (b) *richness* from awareness, sensitivity, compassion and sensuality; and, (c) *clarity* from asking and answering philosophical questions about the meaning of life.

A group of home economists in Japan is re-framing their practice with a focus on the human condition (Fusa, 2004). They propose that protecting the home, the domain where families live, from the rampant incursion of the ills of an industrial society, will promote the complete actualization of the true human nature and the soundness of human life. McGregor (2008b, 2009b, 2010) is actively lobbying for such a shift in focus and professional philosophy (see also McGregor et al., 2008). Home economics pre-professional training has traditionally been grounded in the social and natural sciences, not the humanities (Twyla, 1971). Does changing our name to *Human Sciences* (embracing the humanities) serve as a catalyst for a shift to a focus on the human condition? Would it impact (augment or compromise) our continued uniqueness as a discipline? The next section explores this idea.

### Preserving Our Uniqueness

Being subsumed into *the* human sciences is a real possibility if we choose the name *Human Sciences*. To be subsumed means being incorporated into a more comprehensive category within the academy, further contributing to a crucial loss of identity. Carefully crafted messaging will be necessary to ensure we do not lose our academic presence and professional influence. Would choosing the name *Human Sciences* impact our ability to preserve the uniqueness of our profession and discipline? Because... home economics *is* unique from other disciplines. To be unique is to be incomparable to anything else. It means one-of-a-kind, without equal, a separate category all on its own. If a profession is unique, it has no rival because it is radically distinct from all other professions. The Latin root is *unicus*, only (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). The following text identifies eight enduring, unique aspects of our academic and professional contributions (see Figure 1) (see as well McGregor et al., 2008).

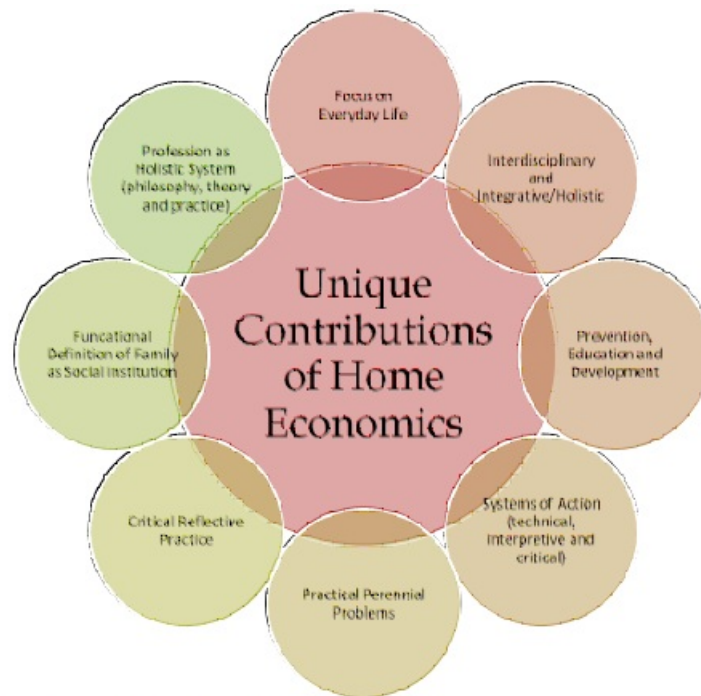


Figure 1: Unique contributions of Home Economics

### ***Focus on Everyday Life***

The most fundamental uniqueness of home economics is its focus on the everyday life of people. *Everyday* pertains to routines and practices found in the ordinary course of events. Home economists deeply believe that managing everyday life is not easy. It presupposes cognitive, social, emotional and practical skills and dispositions that are locked away in people's consciousness and need to be revealed, articulated, respected, and studied. Everyday life, the culture and quality of day-to-day activities, is paramount to humanity (Tuomi-Gröhn, 2008). However, focusing on something as mundane as day-to-day life is unique and risky in a time when the home and family are not valued except for their role as laborers and consumers. Home economics also faces the challenging reality that lay people think it is easy to provide services for individuals and families, so easy that no special training is needed. Everyone lives in a home and in a family, right? To address this perception, we are uniquely socialized to believe that we are a profession (Brown & Paolucci, 1979) that should meet this deep challenge by helping families help themselves become empowered as contributing world citizens (McGregor, 2005, 2008a,b, 2009a).

### ***Integrative Interdisciplinarity***

Another unique aspect of home economics is its long standing commitment to integrative, holistic, interdisciplinary practice (McGregor, 2009b; McGregor et al., 2008; McGregor & MacCleave, 2007). Unlike other professions, the knowledge appropriate to home economics is not unique. What *is* unique is that members of the profession pay attention to the problems families encounter daily, from one generation to another (perennial problems, see below), and then draw information and insights from a number of disciplines to address these problems. After critically examining this information, they weave it together into a knowledge base that is used for the current accepted social end of the profession: well-being and quality of daily life (Brown, 1980). This approach to practice is profound, and very different from the common understanding of what we do. Home economists are often told that they problem-solve totally differently than others (McGregor, 2008b). We have always brought this unique approach to our work. In the 1902 Lake Placid Conference proceedings, founders of the profession in North America noted that home economics is a philosophical subject involving the study of *relations* while the subjects/disciplines upon which it depends for its interdisciplinary inquiry are empirical in nature, focused on *events and phenomena*. It is imperative that the profession bind these two notions together - relations with events and phenomena - because that is what makes us unique (as cited in Brown and Paolucci, 1979, p.11). This obligation suggests we need all three sciences.

### ***Prevention, Education and Development***

Contributing to its uniqueness is the professions' focus on the trilogy of prevention, education and development (PED). The PED approach contrasts with other professions' concentration on facts and information out of context, intervention, and remedial measures to mitigate a crisis or maintain the status quo. Using the PED approach to practice, home economists work with families to: (a) ensure the acquisition of skills and modes of thinking essential for functioning in society (education); (b) instill a preventative approach to living day-to-day; and, (c) develop a focus on evolution and progress, especially as regards the improvement of the range and critique of choices available for everyday life (development) (McGregor et al., 2008; McGregor & MacCleave, 2007).



### ***Systems of Action***

The profession has developed a unique approach to practice called *systems of action*. We assume that people can draw upon their inner potential, network and lived experiences as they learn to: (a) cope with change by learning new skills and techniques; (b) adapt to change by gaining deeper understandings and insights into values, attitudes and meanings, leading to stronger familial relationships; and/or, (c) engage in social action and change power relationships to improve the human condition for everyone. Each of these *actions*, respectively technical, interpretive and critical, refers to a way to think about something before acting. We approach people experiencing problems and work with them to determine which combination of coping, adapting and affecting change is appropriate for them given their current situation and future inclinations and possibilities (Brown, 1980; Brown & Paolucci, 1979; McGregor, 2007; McGregor et al., 2008).

### ***Practical Perennial Problems***

Our profession is also unique in that it focuses on problems that families encounter every generation (perennial), but with the assumption that the approaches to solving these problems have to change because the context has changed (these are called *practical, perennial problems*). For example, after World War II, housing issues dealt with a need for many new homes due to an increase in marriages and children. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, housing and shelter issues are still with us but they look different - homelessness, gentrification, problems with excessive urbanization and isolated rural communities. These are called *practical* problems because there is a question about which action should be taken. In this usage, *practical* means voluntary, intentional reflection before taking any action, called *reasoned action* - think before you act (Brown, 1980; Brown & Paolucci, 1979). Members of our profession assume that things happen in *context* thereby preventing us from taking for granted that what once worked will automatically work again (Brown, 1980; Vaines & Wilson, 1986).

### ***Critical Reflective Practice***

As we apply these approaches to practice, we are socialized to engage in morally defensive, ethical practice guided by critical, personal reflection. We are encouraged to engage in dialogue in communities of practice. We are expected to manage and cultivate our knowledge base and critique the current social and political context leading to insights into pervasive power relationships that serve a few elite while making life hard for many others. We call this *critical, reflective practice*. Values informing our work include security, equality, justice, rights, and peace, among many others (Brown, 1980; Brown & Paolucci, 1979; Kieren, Vaines & Badir, 1984; McGregor, 2006, 2007).

### ***Functional Definition of Families as Social Institution***

We are champions of the idea that families can be defined both by what they look like (a structural definition: nuclear, single parent, co-habitation, divorced, et cetera) and by the functions they fulfil as the key democratic unit in society (a functional definition): (a) love, nurturance and morale; (b) physical maintenance and care of family members, (c) household maintenance and support; (d) social control and teaching of positive values; (e) addition of new family members and their relinquishment when mature; (f) socialization of children for their adult roles; and, (g) production (work and labour) and consumption. McGregor (2009a) tunders the idea of *becoming family literate* to advance our unique approach to working with and for families. She reinforces the unique home economics perspective that families are the basic

democratic institution underpinning society - the cornerstone of civilizations, deserving of support.

### ***Profession as a Holistic System***

Furthermore, home economics is unique in that its members conceptualize the profession as a *holistic system* (Kieren et al., 1984). Using a Venn diagram, they propose that intersecting circles represent three sub-systems: (a) philosophy, mission, goals and principles; (b) knowledge, content and theory; and, (c) competencies and practice. There is considerable overlap at the center where all three sub-systems conjoin. Leadership happens at the core of the system (see also McGregor, 1998; McGregor & MacCleave, 2007). For this reason, Kieren et al. advocate that we should lead from this integrative core: the intersection of philosophy, theory/knowledge and practice. The integrity of our practice is insured using this unique, ethically responsible approach (McGregor & Gentzler, 2009; McGregor et al., 2008).

### ***Emergent New Directions***

Aside from the enduring eight dimensions of home economics practice set out in Figure 1 and the previous text, readers are invited to explore emerging suggestions for potentially unique lines of practice, as proffered by Benn (2009), McGregor (2006, 2008b, 2009a,b, 2010), Pendergast (2001, 2006) and Turkki (2005, 2006). These new dimensions to our practice include, but are not limited to: transdisciplinarity, transformative practice, integral leadership and practice, sustaining the life energy of the profession, authentic pedagogies, fostering intellectual curiosity and skeptical thinking, and positioning the profession beyond patriarchy. Other vanguard notions include home economics as carnivalesque, home economics at a convergent moment in conjunction with generational dynamics, home economists as expert novices who are new kinds of specialists, and home economists who have a respect for chaos and complexity and a different conception of time. Home economists have to trust that new insights will appear in this chaotic state and believe that they are self-organizing beings able to be stable while being open to change. New directions also include a focus on practical wisdom and on understanding of coherence (consequences), both leading to caring and responsible participants in life.

### **Questions and More Questions**

The paper opened with three basic questions. What are the implications of distinguishing a whole profession from a collection of other humanities-related disciplines simply by leaving off the word *the*, and calling ourselves *Human Sciences*? Do we compromise or enhance the visibility and integrity of our professional and academic identity by using this name? Does choosing this name impact our ability to preserve the uniqueness of our profession and discipline? Many more questions emerged during the writing of the paper. Does using the name *Human Sciences* serve as a catalyst to move us towards a focus on the human condition? Does it help us return to the Lake Placid conceptualization of the profession as one with a focus on the full human experience, one that favours immediate environments and the social being (rather than just home and family)? By excluding natural sciences, is our clarion call for an interdisciplinary, holistic, integrative focus affected by the use of this name? Or, does the label open the door to a new conceptualization of *Human Sciences*, one that assumes interdisciplinarity can transcend the arbitrary division between the arts and the sciences and embrace the study a number of disciplines in relation to a central problem - the human condition?

Should we be concerned that we might be subsumed into *the* human sciences, meaning we could be incorporated into a more comprehensive category within the academy, already

evidenced by the collection of program descriptors shared earlier in the paper? Is there a risk that home economists who value insights gained from all sciences will be alienated if they perceive the profession as aligned with just *the* human sciences? How does seeing ourselves aligned with one of the major sciences reflect our rhetoric that our practice involves three ways of knowing and acting (thinking): empirical (technical), interpretive and critical (see Vincenti & Smith, 2004)? If human problems can be best addressed with a balance of science, aesthetics (arts and meaning) and morals (Wilber, 2001), what message is sent when we intimate we are aligned with just *the* human sciences and not natural sciences? How do we bind relations with events and phenomena, as recommended at one of the founding meetings (in 1902), if our name conveys a disconnect from the sciences that empirically explore events and phenomena?

### **Implications of A Name and Future-Proofing the Profession**

Any discussion of the import of a name ends up being richly philosophical as well as deeply pragmatic. Regarding the latter, most of the important interactions that people have are with others who know them well. If people are well known, others have better signals than a name. This reality means that when the name of our profession comes up in situations where people do not know much about us, they draw inferences from our name. This characterization happens for ideological reasons (Pendergast & McGregor, 2007). We have to be pragmatically cognizant of the inferences people draw from our name when they are seeking information about our university programs, our research, our policy influence and the like. Our academic and professional name truly matters.

#### ***Naming Conventions- Names Matter***

There are conventions that should be followed as we choose a name for ourselves. Brown and Paolucci (1979) explain that a substantive definition of home economics is a specification of its intellectual and ethical base. This argument could be extended to the name of the field. Any name we choose should establish a clear identity that is acceptable to those within the profession and intelligible to those outside (Bennett, 1978). As well, “the problems home economists choose to address should be ones where their solution makes a contribution to the future” (Brown & Paolucci, p.34). From this perspective, our name should infer a deep concern for the human condition, which is a temporal concept. Embracing such an enormous responsibility - improving the human condition - means our name should inspire confidence within ourselves and in others, and our name should make us better prepared to become future-oriented (Turkki, 2005).

Names speak to people. They have power. Mentioning the name of the profession to strangers always evokes a reaction that deeply shapes future relationships with them. A shrewdly chosen name can convey to people the impression that the profession is serious and weighty. A well-chosen name can embody the premier contribution(s) the profession offers to the world (see Figure 1). An ill-chosen name can lead to public relations issues and needlessly alienate others from our purpose and the integrative mission of the profession. The right name will spark opportunities to offer persuasive descriptions of the work of the profession and its practitioners. A well-chosen name will be evocative, remaining in people’s minds. Although a challenge for us, the right name will be free of negative associations. Right now, our conundrum is that family and home are not valued in today’s society; consequently, neither are we. Not surprisingly, the name affects how practitioners in the field feel about their profession. If they love to say the name, if it resonates with them, they will readily name themselves and willingly associate with the profession, addressing, head on, any confusing and negative connotations (extrapolated from

Yudkin, 2009). People who experience deep professional pride will be more inclined to see themselves as ambassadors of the profession (McGregor, 2007, 2008b).

As superficial as it sounds, names matter. Brown (1993), writing explicitly about the appropriateness of the name Human Ecology for the profession, suggests our name should reflect: (a) intellectual integrity, (b) a justifiable conceptual orientation to the field, (c) the agreed-to purpose of the field, and (d) what those in the field mutually understand and rationally agree to be their appropriate domain among other fields of study. The profession has embraced several names, including home economics, human ecology, consumer sciences, human development, family and consumer sciences, and recently, *Human Sciences*. Our professional conversations need to address whether these names, including the most recent label, meet Brown's criteria. Can people identify with, and proudly, unanimously proclaim out loud, "I am a Human Scientist", and know in their hearts that others will intuitively know what we are about - our unique contribution and approach to practice?

The profession has the potential to "develop as a solid, necessary structure - a weight-bearing pillar that undergirds society" (Horn, 1981, p. 21). The name of the profession will contribute to the ability of the profession to reach this potential. Bringing the issue of our name to the level of consciousness opens it to continuous, critical examination, a necessary development given the implications of changing the name again, this time to *Human Sciences*. "Home economics is subject to a continuous process of change and redefinition" (Wahlen, Posti-Ahokas & Collins, 2009, p. 34). Davis (2008) calls for a systematic, constructive dialogue to ensure a clear understanding of the field and its name. Names matter as we future-proof our future-oriented profession.

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