> **CALL for SUBMISSIONS/Special issue of *Journal of Family Communication:*
> *Relational Dialectics Theory***
> **Publication Date: October 2024 (Volume 24, Issue 4)**

The purpose of this special issue of the *Journal of Family Communication* (Volume 24, Issue 4 in 2024)*,* co-edited by Elizabeth Suter, Erin Sahlstein Parcell, and Comfort Tosin Adebayo, is to spotlight family communication scholarship using relational dialectics theory (RDT). An extension of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism to the study of relationships, RDT (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) was a radical departure from previous approaches to studying relating and inspired researchers to approach relationships in fundamentally new ways. The wave of scholarship that followed transformed thinking and research on relationships and families. While primarily focused within interpersonal and family communication, RDT informed research across the discipline and beyond its borders. Fifteen years later, Baxter published *Voicing Relationships: A Dialogic Perspective* (2011) where she rearticulated the theory to bring greater conceptual and methodological clarity on central concepts introduced in the first iteration. In particular, Baxter focused on RDT's central premise—that the meaning of phenomena transpires in the moment through struggles of competing possibilities of meaning—discourses. In the last decade, family communication has seen a new wave of scholarship guided by Baxter (2011). And yet, despite RDT's significance and impact developing over 25 years, no special issue has reflected on its history and place in family communication nor specifically promoted its cutting-edge research.

For this issue, we call on scholars to submit manuscripts that use and/or critically reflect on RDT. Specifically, we invite scholars who are pushing the RDT scholarship forward in one or more of the following ways:

1. Examines discursive power struggles at the relational level (i.e., the proximal links on the utterance chain), focusing on the conversations between individuals in their primary relationships that have relational histories and expectant futures
2. Analyzes talk outside the research study context, gathers conversations in situ, such as recorded face-to-face turns of talk, naturally occurring conversations/enacted talk
3. Examines genres understudied in RDT research to date (e.g., the carnivalesque)
4. Includes data from or about understudied and marginalized family forms
5. Examines the fractured, unstable nature of identity categories
6. Engages discourses of class, race, and social inequity in which families are (re)constituted
7. Presents findings that extend conversations around inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA)
8. Integrates RDT with other dialogic and/or critical theoretical developments.

We seek two types of papers: data-based and critical reflections.

Data-based manuscripts should be theoretically grounded and methodologically robust. Broadly, these manuscripts should focus on communication and use RDT. We welcome a wide array of data sources, but authors must (a) specify their semantic object(s). A semantic object refers to the referential object under study, the central analytic question asked of any utterance or set of utterances: "What is the meaning of a particular semantic object of interest (e.g., 'family'), and how is it that this meaning rather than alternative meanings emerged in this communicative moment?" (Baxter et al., 2021, p. 2). Authors must also (b) use contrapuntal analysis, RDT's companion method, to analyze their data.

In line with the editorial policy of the *Journal of Family Communication,* we solicit data-based research that utilizes qualitative, quantitative, or critical methods from a broad range of fields (e.g., communication studies, ethnic studies, women's and gender studies, family studies, health prevention and promotion, and social psychology) in any context in which communication within or about families is the central focus of the study. All manuscripts should include a practical implications section, which should be placed toward the end of the Discussion section. This translational section should provide several practical or social contributions or implications for audiences outside academia (e.g., PreK-12 instruction, counselors, and social service agencies). Manuscripts should be prepared according to the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and should be no longer than 8,000 words, excluding references, tables, and figures. Author names and affiliations should not appear on the title page or elsewhere in the manuscript.

Critical reflections manuscripts should center on a pedagogical, theoretical, methodological, practical, or ethical problem or issue relevant to RDT. Critical reflections should be as data-driven as possible, describe the problem or issue, and provide resolution to the problem or issue.

Manuscripts should be prepared according to the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and should be no longer than 3,000 words, excluding references, tables, and figures. Author names and affiliations should not appear on the title page or elsewhere in the manuscript.

Authors should submit manuscripts to the journal's electronic submission website, which is https://rp.tandfonline.com/submission/login. Each manuscript submission must include (a) a title page letter file that contains all authors' contact information (including phone and e-mail addresses) and indicates clearly that the manuscript is submitted for consideration in the RDT special issue; (b) a manuscript file that is submitted in Word and contains the entire text of the article, including the title page with authorship omitted, the abstract, five keywords, all text, references, footnotes, and appendices; and (c) any figure or table files, with each figure or table submitted in its own file. It is expected that the manuscript is not under review in any other journal.

Deadline for submissions is January 2, 2024. Inquiries regarding this call should be sent to Elizabeth Suter (elizabeth.suter@du.edu), Erin Sahlstein Parcell (eparcell@uwm.edu) and/or Comfort Tosin Adebayo (adebayo@towson.edu).