REFLECTIONS

NARRATIVES of PROFESSIONAL HELPING

General Submissions
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AND

Special Section on Southern African Reflections
on Social Work and Social Justice
Otrude Nontobeko Moyo, Editor

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Reflections from the Editors

Michael A. Dover

Abstract: This serves as the reflections from the editors to Volume 22, Number 2.

Keywords: race, translinguistic, assessments, gender, totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorism, nativism, xenophobia, international social work, social development

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Reflections has a long tradition of publishing international authors, articles about international social work, and special issues focused on various regions of the world. I cut my *Reflections* teeth on the Special Issue on Social Work and War in the Balkans (2000, Volume 6, Number 2), which was co-edited by myself, Charles Garvin, Sara Amy Goodkind, Marilyn Moch and Michael Reisch.

Reflections has also published special issues on Africa (2011, Volume 17, Number 1), Israel (2011, Volume 17, Number 4); Ghana (2011, Volume 17, Number 3), Southeast Asian Diaspora (2006, Volume 12, Number 3), and Social Work in a Global Setting (2007, Volume 13, Number 4). You can easily find them by scrolling through the Archives, where these special issues are all now clearly titled.

Volume 1, Number 2 of *Reflections* had already included the first internationally oriented article, "SEEING CAMBODIA: A new view of the research process," (Rozee & Boemel, 1995). If you go to www.rnoph.org and search in all categories for international or global and press the Search button (return doesn't do the trick), you will see that a dozen other articles have this in the title or abstract. There are many others. They can be searched both in our somewhat clunky search engine and in EBSCO SocIndex, which has published all current and previous issues.

The present issue publishes a very Special Section on Southern African Reflections on Social Work and Social Justice. Under arrangement with the editor, Otrude Moyo of University of Michigan - Flint, the section is published as one composite PDF file to facilitate distribution. However the articles and the authors are listed in the table of contents found in the full-text PDF of this entire issue.

The special section contributors include Lauren Rose Caldie, Otrude N. Moyo, Zandile P. Nkabinde, Vuyelwa Langelihle Sibindi, Martin Moyo, Nenekazi Melody Gxashe, and Thandi S. Tshabangu-Soko.

Is Our Thinking Circumscribed?

As I read these articles, I realized how much my own thinking about the world has been constrained by the standpoint of the U.S. approach to social work and social welfare. This special section deserves to be read as part of our efforts to un-circumscribe our thinking.

What do I mean by that? Our thinking may be *circumscribed* when we limit our outlook on social work to that which has its intellectual origins in the West in general and the United States of America. This is something which Otrude suggested in a recent conversation. She pointed out to me that she finds her own thinking can be "circumscribed" by such outlooks. This made me think about how my own thinking is circumscribed.

For instance, take our conceptualizations of social justice. In their excellent recent book, *Social work and social justice: Concepts, challenges, and strategies,* Reisch and Garvin (2016) show how conceptualizations of social justice have arisen historically and cross-culturally in unique ways. This affects the nature of social struggles for social justice.

At the same time as we recognize cross-national differences in conceptualizations of social justice, we should also recognize cross-national and cross-cultural similarities. This is facilitated by drawing on the growing theoretical and intellectual recognition of the nature of universal human needs and the culturally specific manner in which they are addressed (Balyejjusa, 2015; Gough, 2015, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

As *Reflections* continues to develop as a journal, we clearly need to strive to become even more international in focus and more interdisciplinary as

well. The present special section deserves emulation as part of ongoing efforts to ensure *Reflections* remains an international interdisciplinary double-blind peer-reviewed journal for the helping professions.

In this Reflection from the Editors, I will consider how future narratives in this journal might help us "uncircumscribe" our thinking. As globalization continues – with all of its pitfalls and promises – our world views and cognitive and affective outlooks will be transformed, but how will they be transformed? Will we overcome the extent to which our thinking is circumscribed or will we remain entrenched in our thinking?

Today, nativism and xenophobia are growing forces in a number of the world's capitalist democracies. Helping professionals are not immune from the effects of such ways of thinking. Such views have had a profound impact on recent elections in the U.S., Britain and France, and this is likely just the start. It behooves us to consider the implications of this for narratives which can reflect upon these matters. Below I will be issuing a call for narratives related to this. But I would like to explain what I consider to be the reflective foundation for this call for narratives.

I for one found this to be the most difficult academic year in recent memory, and I've had to consider why this seems to have been the case. I began to discuss this in the Reflections from the Editors in Volume 22, Number 1 earlier this year, when I called for narratives specifically about our personal, professional and political response to the election of Donald Trump. Such narratives remain welcome.

However, as the academic year continued, although I felt as if I and many others were now doing what we could in a changing political environment, something was missing. I felt the need to compare notes with others. Accordingly, in conversations and correspondence with academic and clinical colleagues around the U.S. and abroad, I've come to the conclusion that this has been the most difficult academic year in years for those of us who are in academia. That includes faculty, staff and students. But based on anecdotal data, it also includes the clients of our colleagues working as helping professionals. I suspect that social research will soon demonstrate the strong emotional and health impact of recent historical developments, including the election of Donald Trump, the British Brexit, and the growing fear in France that should the Macron government fail, Le Pen could win the next French presidential election.

A Personal and Professional Retrospective

The more I thought about it, the more I concluded that these recent historical developments can't be understood without reference to the events of the academic year which began just before September 11, 2001. The impact of that event was so strong for me that I went back into therapy. I consulted Dr. Frank Ochberg, a pioneer of the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress syndrome. I realized that I and many other anti-war activists of the late 1960s and early 1970s had experienced major disruptions in our lives, as we seemingly turned against our country (or at least strenuously rejected the war conducted by Presidents Johnson and Nixon.)

We came to see how the war was related to repression against the black liberation movement and to violations of civil liberties. We were radicalized in ways that broke our hearts and mad us so angry that we lost touch with much of our love of country. In therapy, I came to realize that my reaction to 9/11 was linked to my earlier reaction to the war in Vietnam and to the April 1968 assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy.

Something loosened up for me after 9/11, once I realized this. Amongst other things, I finished my dissertation within two years. I graduated from the University of Michigan's Doctoral Program in Social Work and Social Science thirty-six years after having dropped out of Michigan's undergraduate program to join the Peace Torch Marathon on its walk to Washington DC for the October 1967 Pentagon protest. My dissertation included a chapter written about Toledo, the very place I had been arrested in May 1967, while taking notes as a reporter, as protesters disrupted a mock Armed Forces Day demonstration by the Ohio National Guard of how to "liberate" a Vietnamese hamlet. After 9/11, with the help of a therapist, I was able to draw connections between my reactions to two significant historical periods. Looking back helped me to move forward.

Looking Back In Order to Move Forward

The attack on the World Trade Center and its aftermath were the subject of a special issue of Reflections (see the archives for the September 11 Memorial Issues, published as in 2002 as Volume 8, Number 3). The attack on the World Trade Center required us to begin to re-think our view of the world. *Reflections* narratives were one way we made sense of what happened.

Perhaps there are important and unapparent connections between the election of Donald Trump and the attack on the World Trade Center, just as there were connections – for me at least – between 9/11 and the months from May 1967 to April 1968. Now, almost 16 years later, the United States and many other nations are still coming to grips with the impact of the attack on the World Trade Center and the seemingly endless wars and terrorism which continue today.

A continued lack of clarity about 9/11 may have driven the Islamophobia and the anti-immigrant prejudice which profoundly affected the 2016 Presidential election and elections in Britain, France and elsewhere. Since 9/11/2001, many have debated how to refer to the ideology which was behind 9/11, behind subsequent acts of terror, and behind ongoing organized efforts to use terror to control space in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Nigeria and elsewhere.

One of the major issues in the 2016 presidential election in the United States concerned debates between those who insisted on blaming this on "Islamism" or "radical Islamic terrorism" and those such as President Obama and Senator Clinton who followed the advice of national security advisors not to refer to it in this manner. However, the way they did refer to it failed to characterize it convincingly.

Totalitarian Theocratic Patriarchal Terrorism

In my opinion, the ideology should be called *totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorism of the pseudo-religious variety*. I call the ideology *totalitarian* because the attack was part of an effort to justify imposing on territory under its control the world view and behavioral prescriptions of what have been called international terrorist gangs

(Morales, Sheafor & Scott, 2007), which aspire to control territory and ultimately gain state power. They use force and terror to exercise totalitarian powers to the extent they can do so. One writer has contended that such organizations operate in ways similar to cults, using media persuasion to attract recruits (Perloff, 2017).

There are many forms of totalitarian ideology. One of the first extended efforts to understand totalitarianism at first did not link totalitarianism to the use of terror (Arendt, 1951). But by 1953, Hannah Arendt had begun to do so (Weisman, 2014). The second edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* replaced her previous concluding remarks with a chapter, "Ideology and Terror" (Arendt, 1968[1958], cited by Weisman, 2014). Arendt concluded that with totalitarianism, law and power were replaced by ideology and terror.

I refer to totalitarian *theocratic* patriarchal terrorism because the specific form of totalitarian control aspired to is pseudo-religious in character. The goal is to establish a theocracy in which pseudo-religious authority is supreme or – short of an established theocratic territory – to oppress and exclude those of other religions. There are many historical and contemporary examples of totalitarian theocratic terrorism of the pseudo-religious variety.

One notable example is totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorism of the pseudo-Buddhist variety. In Myanmar, on many occasions in recent years, a small percentage of all Buddhist monks have instigated violence against Muslims and attacks on mosques. I provide this example to emphasize that even a religion such as Buddhism – whose central precepts embrace pacifism – can be twisted to justify hatred, violence, discrimination, and terrorism, including ethnic cleansing directed at Rohingya people, a Muslim Indo-Aryan culture (UN News Center, 2017).

I refer to totalitarian theocratic *patriarchal* terrorism because in nearly every instance of which I am aware, the ethnic and/or religious groups against whom terror was used had in the years preceding the onset of terror increasingly intermingled and intermarried with the very group from which totalitarian theocratic patriarchal pseudo-religious elites arose. These male misogynist elites seek to prohibit such romantic contact, even to the point of breaking up previous

marriages and punishing new relationships severely.

For instance, there was growing intermarriage between Buddhists and Rohingya people in Myanmar, between Shia and Sunni in Iraq under the Baathist regime, between Christians and Muslims and between Croats and Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, and so forth. This is not the place to try to document this. However, this journal is a place and this is a time when we may need to un-circumscribe our thinking about the historical events which have lead up to recent political developments.

The ideology which was behind the attack on the World Trade Center was totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorism of the pseudo-Islamic variety. Posing it this way provides an historically accurate alternative to approaches which come dangerously close to contending there is something inherent in Islam that produces terrorism. This is no more the case than the contention that there is something inherent in Christianity which has produced totalitarian theocratic terrorism of the pseudo-Christian variety.

Right here in Cleveland, one practitioner of that form of terrorism, the Ku Klux Klan, would hold parades down Detroit Avenue in the 1920s. My grandmother and other members of her Pentacostal congregation felt this was un-Christian. Their denomination had both black and white bishops and held occasional integrated tent revivals. She explained this to me when I took her during the 1970s to visit our relatives in Memphis. Like she, they had grown up as sharecroppers in the cotton belt, from which hundreds of thousands of black and white families headed north in the great migration.

As much as Klan members might claim they were Christian, they hated Catholics as well as Jews, and they especially hated African-Americans, despite their predominant Christianity. They sought the totalitarian power to impose on society their own twisted system of belief. In particular, these totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorists sought to prohibit romantic relationships between members of "their" imagined community – both men and women – and those outside it.

Without further belaboring the point, many other historical and contemporary examples can be found

of totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorism that is falsely justified by mis-applied precepts from nearly every major world religion.

Also Understanding Nativism and Xenophobia

In addition to our needing to come to grips with the nature of totalitarian theocratic patriarchal terrorism of a pseudo-religious variety, we also need to understand the rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant prejudice in the advanced industrial countries. Blaming the latest wave of immigrants for economic woes as well as for terrorism and extremism is nothing new. Nor is it new to see actual incidents of terrorism and extremism arise from within recent immigrant populations in the United States and elsewhere. Similar patterns were seen among small segments of first and second generation Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants, and later among migrants from Puerto Rico and the Black Belt to northern cities.

Nearly every wave of immigration and migration has produced rare instances of terrorism and some degree of political extremism. There is a need for historical sociological examination of the relationship between discrimination, prejudice and violence expressed *towards* immigrant groups and the extremism and terrorism which has arisen *from* a very small segment of such groups.

The rare incidents of terrorism and the rare expressions of support for extremism found, for instance, among a small proportion of Muslim-Americans are, in this sense, as American as apple pie. These too will pass, as was the case with previous immigrant groups. But this will require a more concerted effort on the part of those of us who recognize the need to be more welcoming of recent immigrants. Perhaps we should remind ourselves of the well-known expression from the Pogo comic strip: "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

In many ways, our failure in the United States and in Europe to place immigration and terrorism in historical perspective has poisoned our political discourse. Levels of distrust and misunderstanding are by all accounts at historically unprecedented levels. The atmosphere in our communities and our universities remains at this date very tense.

A Call for Narratives

At the same time, I see hope for reconciliation. It seems to me that as we strive to journal and to write about what we are and have been going through, we can and should strive for a new kind of open-mindedness. We need to link open-mindedness to critical thinking, as I have recently asked my students to do (Dover et al, 2017). We also need to link open-mindedness to our efforts to embrace cultural diversity.

We need to carefully explore how we have reacted to the emotionally powerful historical event represented by the election of President Donald Trump and how it may be related to the seemingly endless war and terrorism which began on September 11, 2001. We need to seek to carefully understand how our feelings and our actions have been affected by both of those emotionally powerful events. There is no better way to do so than to write narratives for a journal like *Reflections*.

As editor, I am issuing a call for narratives about our personal, political and professional reactions to the election of Donald Trump and how these can be placed in the longer historical trajectory of our lives, going back to September 11, 2001. As part of this, as was done before with the Special Issue on Dismantling Social and Racial Injustice (2015, Volume 21, Number 3), we might reflect on our reaction to the events of April 1968.

How has our practice been impacted by these historical events? How have the lives of our clients and the people in our communities been affected? How have we responded politically, as part of our professional obligations to engage in social and political action? How has our practice, our research, and our teaching taken questions of immigration and of terrorism seriously? And, finally, how has all of this affected our personal and professional relationships? As editor, I would welcome such narratives. Feel free to contact me with initial ideas by writing me at reflections@csuohio.edu.

Thanks and Plans for Reflections

As this issue goes to press, I would like to take the chance to once again thank the staff of *Reflections* here at Cleveland State University. Kailie Johnson, our Editorial Associate, has completed three years as a work-study student assigned to the journal. She has been invaluable in her dedication to the journal. She graduates this May with a B.S.W. degree. Elisabeth Weems was here only one year as Copy Editor, but during these last eight months has raised our consciousness about the principle of no issue before its time. Our copy editing and proof reading have been significantly improved during her tenure, we hope, although this has forced us to delay a number of issues, including this one, as we learn how to do this better. Elisabeth graduates with a B.A. and has been admitted to the top-notch School of Journalism at Ohio University. Both Kailie and Elisabeth will be missed. But perhaps one day we will see a narrative from them appear among our new submissions!

Maureen O'Connor, M.A., has been our graduate assistant now for two years. Already trained in humanistic psychology, she graduates this month with her M.S.W. degree. She has been immensely helpful the entire time. She understands the spirit of the journal and I regularly called on her to advise me on editorial decisions about manuscripts. She has regularly provided summaries of articles for editorial introductions, including in this issue. We hope to find a way to continue to include her as a part of the ongoing editing and publishing of the journal. We hope she can be of continued assistance for the remainder of my term as editor. My term as editor was to end in May 2015, and was extended until May 2017. I have now been asked by our Director, Dr. Cathleen Lewandowski, to remain as editor until we complete a process of editorial succession.

During May 2017, three long-awaited issues will be published, including this one. The journal will publish Volume 22, Number 3, a Special Issue on Learning and Teaching, edited by the editors of our permanent special section, Carol Langer and Arlene Reilly-Sandoval. And we will also publish Volume 22, Number 4, completing the 2016 volume.

Two issues of Volume 23 (2017) will also be published this coming Summer. These include a Special Issue on Librarians as Helping Professionals, edited by Laura Habat, and the Special Issue on the Interconnections on Micro and Macro Practices, edited by Darlyne Bailey and Melissa Emmerson. This will bring the journal up to date and ready for the Summer and Fall 2017 issues, to be published in September and

December.

Other Narratives in this Issue

In this issue, in addition to the Special Section on Southern African Reflections on Social Work and Social Justice, Carol Leung, in Translinguistic Practice with Chinese Immigrants, discusses the challenges in providing therapy in a second language. Leung worked as a masters level social worker in New York City, where she conducted psychosocial assessments and psychotherapy with Chinese immigrants whose first language was often Mandarin or Cantonese. Leung, who grew up speaking Cantonese and English, finds that she still encountered both linguistic and cultural challenges in providing psychotherapy to her clients. Through her clinical interviews, observations and reflective supervision, she uncovers four main elements consistent in her work with her Chinese patients. She observes the language barrier she faced with her patients; at times she had difficulty communicating to the patient, and the patient had difficulty understanding her. Secondly, she notes that it was important in her psychotherapy sessions to educate the patient on what mental health means. This was a way to encourage the patient to express emotions and to understand the purpose of mental health. Often, other cultures may associate shame and embarrassment with mental health issues. Leung notes that some of her patients were reluctant to talk about their past, and how she had to be respectful of their privacy. Also, Leung found that normalizing the client's difficulty and inhibition with speaking in a language other than their own was important in establishing safety and rapport with the client.

Jenny A. Piazza and Pamela A. Richmond write about their journey to academia and the challenges they encountered along the way. Written in the form of a letter, this narrative describes the process of becoming a tenured professor, and the challenges of navigating the hierarchies and power structure in the academic world. Drawing upon research of bullying in academia as well as their own experiences, Piazza and Richmond find similar themes. These themes related to bullying in higher education are: "positionality, differences, jealousy, clandestine decision-making, accountability/leadership and blame the victim." Piazza and Richmond use these themes as a framework for their narrative and describe how they are manifested. Piazza and Richmond's letter is written to raise awareness of the power hierarchies and oppression that exist in the academic world, such as how gender and race affect the way one is treated by peers and superiors. It presents as a realistic portrayal of both the highlights and challenges of entering an academic career.

Mental health social workers may become accustomed to focusing on an individual's problem symptoms and diagnosis. Jane McPherson, a social worker with a mental health background, describes how she reframed the problems of her clients through a human rights lens, instead of a mental health one. McPherson shares how discovering Article 25 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) helped to shift her perspective. The declaration states that access to food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education and other resources are a human right. Its emphasis on special care for mothers and children was especially relevant to McPherson's work with at risk mothers and children. Often, their mental health issues seemed secondary to their more urgent needs of housing, baby supplies, food and jobs. Within the current mental health system, we may overlook that an individual's presentation is more likely due to, or greatly impacted by, insufficient resources than organic mental illness. McPherson points out that according to Article 25 of the declaration, not having access to these important resources is a violation of basic human rights. McPherson cautions that solely relying on a mental health framework to understand our clients' problems is not adequate, as it places the blame on the client. This perspective is relevant to the field of social work, as much of our education includes how systemic injustices set individuals up for a lifetime of poverty and mental health struggles.

Amie Thurber's narrative addresses an issue that affects many regions of the country, especially those with a higher rate of poverty and homelessness. As the director of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) in Missoula, Montana, she describes how she and her team helped to address a major disagreement over a proposal to relocate and expand a homeless shelter from a downtown location to one closer to a residential community. Thurber describes how her team utilized a deliberative democratic framework to carry out a four-step process of conflict resolution with shelter staff and residents, city officials, local business leaders, and concerned neighbors invested in the

relocation of the shelter. Thurber's case study demonstrates how it is possible to help a community reach a democratic decision normally made by a few stakeholders. Thurber and the NCBI worked to create a space in which community members could voice their concerns as well as learn about the issue of homelessness in their community and why there was a need for improved housing for the homeless. Principles of Restorative Justice and Just Practice helped to guide the four phases of the deliberation process. Thurber notes that while this case study was not without some disappointments (there were some power differentials that affected the community dynamics), but overall it enabled the community to arrive at a democratic decision that ultimately improve services and housing for the homeless.

Published in the Historical Reflections Section, John Tropman pays homage to Wilbur J. Cohen and Cohen's significant contributions to the creation of Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare during the Great Society Era. An influential figure during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Cohen was known for his advocacy for social programs that benefitted the poor and disadvantaged. Tropman describes Cohen's 'incrementalist' approach in working towards change. He believed that small, yet steady efforts towards social justice would eventually yield substantial results. Tropman outlines Cohen's accomplishments and shares accolades given to him by his contemporaries. Both an academic and activist/politician, Cohen was known for the passage of major policies (Social Security and Medicare). As the title of this piece suggests, Cohen's original proposal for the Medicare Act of 1965 was to include a second health coverage plan, "Pediacare," for children under age 5. He envisioned these children being able to carry their coverage to the next year of life. He also envisioned, for each year the Medicare Act was in effect, the age of eligible seniors lowering by one year. Eventually, Pediacare and Medicare coverage would meet and the end result would be a national health care plan. Tropman's piece is timely as we face possible changes to the current Medicaid and Affordable Health Care Act policies.

Race, as we know, impacts all areas of one's life. As social workers, we study how race and privilege impact an individual's interaction with the environment, as well as their access to career opportunities, education, healthcare and other resources. In the Research Reflections Section, Stefan Battle writes of how profoundly he experienced racism from a young age as an elementary student, and throughout his career as a school social worker. He candidly shares how the reactions and expectations of his teachers shaped his own self perception about his academic capabilities. In one instance, Battle explains how very few African American students were expected to perform well in school, and on at least one occasion, a teacher accused him of plagiarizing his work. Using autoethnography as a tool to write about these early memories, Battle finds that it is an important tool for processing painful emotions. Battle's narrative is an excellent example of how racism can shape one's self perception, self-esteem and sense of competency. Battle notes that while writing these narratives bring up painful memories, he finds it is healing in helping him to revisit and process old hurts, anger and sadness. Autoethnography is a tool he shares with his students as a means for processing their pain, whether from racism or any other trauma.

Published in the Teaching and Learning Section, Itzhak Lander and Stefan Köngeter collaborate as transnational professors – one from Israel, one from Germany – to teach a course on youth migration to students in three different countries. Their narrative highlights their transformative journey of co-teaching and interacting transnationally. The program, TEMPUS, is established to build interaction and collaboration between particular areas within the EU, such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean area. Their project through TEMPUS, TACHYwe (Transnational Academic Careers in Child and Youth Welfare), ran from 2012-2016. This story tells the growth they experienced as professors, how they were influenced by one another's culture, and how this joint project impacted their students. Border crossing is a relevant issue for European youth, and likely an issue these social work students will encounter throughout their careers. Learning how to work transnationally and fostering self awareness as how it relates to one's interactions with other cultures is certainly an important social work skill.

As you read this issue, please consider asking yourself, as did one colleague who has just read it, does this issue speak to you? One dear colleague just told me

that it spoke to her. I hope it speaks to you.

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Translinguistic Practice with Chinese Immigrants in New York:
My Social Work Experience in Mental Health

Carol A. Leung

Abstract: A second-generation Chinese American describes and analyzes her experience as a psychiatric social worker in New York City. Her two-year clinical experience as a licensed master social worker (LMSW) with an average caseload of 150 patients who primarily speak Chinese has provided her with four major reflective findings. First, mental illness is strongly connected to the clients' perception of guilt, shame, and/or perceived wrongdoing. Second, healing is a culturally defined process during the course of therapy, not a final product after therapy. Third, language barrier is a two-way challenge for both the social worker and an immigrant client. Fourth, Asian clients who are present and future-oriented may be less willing to share past experiences. These clinical reflections address the importance of two "translinguistic skills:" overcoming the clinician's own fear of speaking the patient's language and helping the clinician hear the patient's familiar language about life challenges.

I consider myself a bilingual social worker because I speak both Chinese and English. I was born in the United States speaking English fluently, and grew up within a family of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, speaking Cantonese from early childhood. After taking Mandarin in high school and college, I also learned how to speak and read in Mandarin and write Chinese characters. However, doubts about my bilingual competency crept in, particularly during the first month of my career as a psychiatric social worker in New York City, because I often compared my L2 (second language) Mandarin to my native tongue: English. Fortunately, I later learned to accept my doubts. My transcultural skills are enriched through this process of stepping into the shoes of my non-English speaking clients. Since I worked in a hospital setting, I will use "patient" to represent the primary client and "clients" to represent the patient and the patient's family. This paper aims to analyze my clinical reflections on the experiences I have while working at an outpatient psychiatric unit of a major hospital in New York City with primarily Chinese immigrant clients.

Collecting Evidence in a Clinical World

The data collection method is based on direct observations and documentation, which is a self-reflection approach to gather thoughts and ideas to share with fellow practitioners and my supervisors who are Chinese-speaking psychiatrists. Swenson (1998) calls this self-reflection approach a practitioner's privilege. My experience is unique and more than a privilege because I have gained a transcultural perspective, more specifically-a translinguistic approach, from receiving feedback from my clients. Added to McBeath, Briggs, and Aisenberg's (2010) definition of a transcultural approach-developing social work interventions that respond to the needs of clients across diverse cultural groups with proven clinical efficacy, the translinguistic approach which is built on the social worker's skill set aims to help both clients and the social worker break through their linguistic interaction awareness during the initial help-seeking stage.

To be linguistically aware, as an American-born Chinese practicing clinical social work with Chinese immigrants who do not speak English, I use a translation system with three languages, English, Cantonese and Mandarin to transition between each therapeutic moment. In other words, my clients hear me speak their language, but I am hearing, thinking, and feeling with different languages. Moving fluidly among these three languages is essential to strengthen the therapeutic relationship with the client.

In this experience, most of my patients were referred to my hospital by their primary physicians (58%) and from a psychiatric inpatient hospital (36%), to receive psychiatric outpatient treatment. The remaining (6%) are either self-referral or referred by another agency (e.g., Visiting Nurse Service of New

York). On a daily basis, I interviewed patients to assess their psychosocial functioning and then refer them to see a psychiatrist for their medication regimen. It is this hospital's policy that all psychiatric patients must see a social worker at least once a month while in treatment with a psychiatrist. In these past 20 months, the majority (90%) of my patients were Chinese immigrants from mainland China (Fujian and Wenzhou provinces), mostly from rural areas, and they spoke Mandarin and sometime with an ascent of their own dialect. Those who came from Hong Kong (6%), a special administration region (SAR) of China, spoke Cantonese and a little English. They saw me first before I arranged their psychiatric session with our Chinese-speaking psychiatrist. As their assigned psychotherapist, I monitored treatment progress on an average from six to twenty-four months.

Among my former patients, most (75%) were female who were employed in restaurants or other service business with low income eligibility for Medicaid. Seventy-seven percent were adults 18 to 69 years of age, 8 percent were 70 years and older, and 15 percent were children and adolescents below 18 of age. A typical female patient had been living in the U.S. for five years, married, and had children ages 3 to 6 years old. On the other hand, a typical male patient had either been divorced or never been married, and was referred by a psychiatric inpatient hospital facility. The male patients who were married had no or very little family support and disconnected from their children. Their illnesses included schizophrenia, adjustment disorder with either anxiety or depression, major depression, and schizoaffective disorder.

My reflections were recorded based on my clinical observations, peer reviews through weekly reflections, and supervision sessions. My direct supervisor was one of two Chinese-speaking psychiatrists in this hospital who provided me with guidance, mostly in areas of how to use the patient's cultural information to build rapport, work with patient's families, and pronounce medical terms that I have not learned in my Chinese classes, or my DSM courses. He also role played with me to help me understand how difficult expressing the symptoms in English were. The supervisory process involved case reviews, testing of theoretical assumptions, and case management reports. I also

joined a weekly staffing meeting to report case progresses and identified skills used with the patients that had shown effectiveness. During these two years of practice, I used open-ended therapeutic questions focused for immigrant clients that were effective when counseling my Chinese clients, including factors associated with immigration decisions, cultural adjustments, securing work, accessing services, obtaining housing, and understanding the transportation system. There are four groups of clinical reflections I used, which can serve as helpful hints for clinicians who with immigrant clients from various ethnic backgrounds. These include validating the positive aspects of mental health, treating the clients as the expert, maintaining transcultural understanding, and focusing on future-oriented language.

REFLECTIONS

In line with the social work ethics to protect client confidentiality (Bennett, 2011), my clinical reflections are reported without any specific demographic information about these patients, such as age and gender of the patient when the patient's specific disorder is described. Direct quotes are used only when the disclosure of information would not be linked to the patient's identity. Quotations from my patients, if used in supporting these reflections, were translated from Chinese. Treatment consents signed by these patients including use of information for publications and professional presentations were obtained at intake.

Reflection 1: Validating the Positive Aspects of Mental Health

Although I was uncertain about my linguistic competency at the beginning of my career development, I learned from my clients that a clinician's competency is more than knowing the client's language. Competency must include genuinely appreciating the patient's culture, understanding the difficulties of using the language to express emotions and life issues, and providing a two-way means of communication for both the patient and the social worker or clinician to process concerns and solutions. Spano, Koenig, Judson, and Leiste (2010) report that this competency is an integrative and nonlinear perspective of cultural harmony, especially when both clients and clinicians

stand together at the "east meets west" juncture. During my first twelve months of intensively working with Chinese immigrant patients and their families in this outpatient psychiatric unit, my practice skill was enriched by the therapeutic connections made with these patients during as many as 50 one-on-one sessions per week. My patients found it difficult to attend group therapy, fearing that their issues would be publicly disclosed. This fear was exacerbated by the perception that the Chinese community is small, although the New York metropolitan area had the largest Chinese population – 695,000 – in the United States (U.S. Census, 2012).

Setting up a therapeutic goal that focuses on positive aspects of therapy has helped my patients disclose their concerns. For example, a male patient from mainland China who moved to the United States to re-unite with his son was reluctant to disclose his problem. I first highlighted his courage to seek medical help. After sensing that he became more comfortable with talking to me, I then encouraged him to share anything that would come to his mind. He said, "The United States does not seem to recognize my marriage nor believe that I am married to [my wife]." She was still living in China and was waiting to join the family in the United States. After having an opportunity to express his anger toward his current immigration issues, he opened up by expressing emotionally, "I feel interrogated like I am a communist even though I say nothing but the truth." Helping him focus on the positive goal of maintaining good mental health, he responded and ventilated his feelings. After I used a positive strategy to stress my patient's strength, over 80 percent of my patients began sharing their personal issues within the first two sessions.

Reflection 2: Healing is a Culturally Relevant Process-based Outcome

Healing is culturally defined as a journey, not solely a final product or expectation. The word "healing" in Chinese means the return to nature through reduction of worries and external dependencies. When my Chinese patients heard the word healing, they told me they automatically thought their physicians could recommend natural supplements or herbs to cure their illness. Prior to psychiatric

treatment, many had been taking supplements that did not seem to work. These patients tended to seek medication for a quick-fix. However, they might have had a misconception that medication dosage could be a personal choice. Although the psychiatrists' recommendations were set for specific dosages, patients often asked how they could reduce their medication, especially at the start of treatment. More often than not, patients decided on their own to alter their medication dosage by cutting the pill in half or taking the pill only when they wanted to. As a result, many faced a higher chance of decomposition that brought them into the emergency room or psychiatric inpatient unit.

Psychoeducation around medicine management is important for immigrants who have been focusing on how they can "heal" faster. My finding is similar to another medical study about Chinese patients' medical noncompliance, which reported that older patients tend to have a higher level of medication compliance if their medication is covered by insurance or Medicaid and their illness contains chronic comorbidities. Meanwhile, younger patients tend to switch and discontinue their medication when they do not "feel" improvement (Lin, Jiang, Wang, & Luo, 2012).

Reflection 3: Accepting the Clinician's Own Language Barrier

Although speaking Chinese in daily conversations comes naturally to me, especially when I talked to my parents who were first-generation immigrants, I found that expressing my thoughts in a therapeutic setting with my Chinese clients was more difficult than expected. I experienced six major challenges:

First, Chinese is my second language. Because of my Chinese ethnicity, my Chinese patients make an assumption that I can speak fluently in Mandarin. As a result, my clients usually spoke very fast without thinking that I might not understand what they tried to convey. Nevertheless, since I grew up hearing my parents' Cantonese conversations, I found myself at ease when listening to my Cantonese-speaking patients.

Second, social workers are expected to show a full understanding of cultural diversity. However, my experience has shown me that I do not know all of

the cultural elements within the Chinese context since there are 56 Chinese ethnicities and over 2,000 distinctive languages, dialects and sub-dialects (Feng & Cheung, 2008; Gao, 2012). Chinese clients come from many regions of China. I respect cultural diversity, and I thought that I *must* use my emerging Mandarin skills in addition to my active listening skills. I thought I could receive and process sensitive information before responding to my clients' thinking pattern. However, when they used unique idioms or slang terms to illustrate their points, they could be lost in translation. As I am improving my language skills, I continue to appreciate how difficult it is for my Chinese-speaking patients to learn English as a second language during their adulthood. I learned that it is not shameful to disclose the fact that I have difficulty understanding my clients' conversations. With this disclosure, they often speak slower for me.

Third, I experienced barriers validating feelings in Chinese – whether in Cantonese or Mandarin. Throughout my childhood I learned to use academic or proper words in conversations; rarely do I express emotions in Chinese. Thus, as a clinician, I understand my clients also have difficulty expressing how they feel, especially when they tried to use English in a counseling session. When the question about feelings is asked, such as "What are some emotions/feelings you have after you shared your story with me?" my Chinese-speaking clients usually gave me a blank stare and did not know how to answer. The typical response was, "I'm good." To encourage their feelings, I created a feelings chart translated into the Chinese language: first, I asked my patient to engage in a matching game that involved matching facial and verbal expressions together, and then connecting that matched pair with their recent experiences or current emotions. The purpose of this game was to help patients understand the various emotions they might have. Give that many patients are not familiar with expressing their inner emotions with others, these game strategies have frequently eased my patients into opening up and expressing their emotions with me.

Fourth, many of my immigrant clients look for something quick and solution-focused. They would respond to me when I could provide them with concrete examples or goals. In order for my patients to "solve" their problems, I communicate with them

that they must take smaller steps to achieve a long-term goal. The therapist would ask the patients to provide examples of how they achieved accomplished goals in the past. Specifically with working with Chinese immigrants, many would say "I want my (or my relative's) mental illness to go away now." Many times my patients' goals, especially patients with severe mental illness, are unattainable within a short time frame. Being honest and informing them about a more reasonable goal, and that the illness may never completely go away but can be stabilized, is a message I convey to my patients. At this stage, the clinician must develop working hypotheses to understand the patient's thinking and preference. After I have tested that my patients want to establish certain concrete goals (such as cutting down on medication use) during the first meeting, I work with them to design a plan of their cultural and individual strengths (such as emphasizing self-actualization through the immersion of their cultural beliefs) without forcing them to immediately disclose their problems.

Fifth, psychotherapy is not within the vocabularies used by my immigrant clients. When speaking about their problems, my clients usually avoided using terms that describe a mental illness. In Chinese, many translated terms have negative connotations such as *bing mo* (devil's illness) and *zhi bi zhen* ("mind shut-down disorder" referring to autism). Beyond modifying these translations, it is also important to educate the patients about being mentally healthy.

Sixth, language barrier affects not only the client, but also the clinician. I initially learned Chinese through my parents. I spoke Cantonese, not Mandarin, at home. When talking with my Mandarin-speaking patients, I have a translating process that goes through my mind. Initially, I translate the Mandarin spoken into Cantonese. These two languages are similar, except that Mandarin has five tones and Cantonese has nine, meaning that speaking a different tone changes the entire meaning of the word. Immediately after, I search for phrases in Cantonese because this language is more comforting for me. Within a second, I translate the Cantonese to English. Since I learned my clinical skills in English, it comes more naturally for me to reflect, validate and paraphrase in English. Once this translation process is complete, I can quickly gather

my thoughts in English, translate them back to Cantonese, and then to Mandarin so my clients can understand me. I call this an L3 (three-language) translation process. I do not use it in conversations with my Mandarin-speaking friends because casual talks do not require professional translations. Nevertheless, I learned how this language barrier has affected my confidence in my role as a bilingual psychotherapist. As I excel in my bilingual skills, I must also learn from my clients about what they have gone through as new immigrants so that I can become their bridge for analyzing their life stressors. In translinguistic counseling, I become more aware of using transference skills to fulfill my role as a therapist who speaks the client's language, or the "transitional object," and helps the client explore the link between the past and the present, or between the past and the future (Kitron, 1992, p. 235). Through this process, I have been learning more about a culturally sensitive meaning of empathy; a client's language adaptation can guide a clinician in understanding more about a professional's own limitations and strengths. This challenge has helped me refine my clinical skills.

Reflection 4: Focusing on Future-Oriented Language

Narrative techniques have been proven as effective when they are used to assist clients to disclosing their past, specifically unresolved issues that have carried guilt and shame and have affected their current behaviors (Miller, Cardona, & Hardin, 2006). By sharing their past stories or rewriting the past to lead to a hopeful future, many clients begin to gain insight on resolving their current difficulties (Hester, 2004). When I was a graduate student learning clinical skills, I learned from research-based literature that supports the act of revealing childhood experiences, such as the use of interpersonal intervention described in Lemma, Target and Fonagy (2011) and the time-limited intermittent therapy described in Smith (2005). My English-speaking patients are usually ready to share their childhood experiences and happy or sad moments with their families, friends or schoolmates. However, I found that most of my Chinese immigrant clients do not respond to this technique starting with "tell me about your childhood." Patients born and raised in the United States could usually describe their relationships with family

members, their feelings toward their caretakers, experiences in school, or other traumatic experiences such as the death of a primary caretaker. These disclosures seem to come naturally as the content is culturally or contextually relevant to them. However, in my psychiatric unit, using this past-present transmission technique or any childhood-focused technique has not been viewed as an effective ice-breaker tool. For example, my immigrant patients were reluctant to disclose anything about their lifestyle in China, fearing that I might judge them in a negative way. Although they might hold the belief that their past is irrelevant to their present or future, many of them are ready to share recent changes to their lives, such as transitioning into a new country and voicing their concerns about the difficulties of their immigration journey. A middle-age patient who was diagnosed with major depressive disorder reported in a follow-up session, "I didn't want to talk about my childhood because it was sad. *Shuan la* (Just forget it)! I don't want to remember those horrific times." Instead of discussing the past, which might have caused too much pain, this patient expressed that addressing her current immigration situation was much more helpful.

In my experience, some Chinese immigrants refused to go into detail about their past, particularly those who went through cultural revolution in China due to unwanted memory or trauma related to their migration experiences. Although it's not uncommon for patients with traumatic experiences to refuse or even dissociate from their memories, my patients' pasts were compounded by social, political and economic injustice, in addition to their current family problems. It is more important to establish rapport with a focus on emotional security, as this grounding work helps patients understand their habitual use of "emotional reactivity and maladaptive coping strategies" to deal with memories that may cause further trauma (Regambal & Alden, 2009, p. 155). When my patients saw their past as irrelevant to current problems, or when they said that their health had been affected mainly by post-immigration issues such as cultural shock and their double-identity between being Chinese and American, I could help them find a way to reestablish their emotional stability. The past-oriented technique may generate a resistant response, such as "I don't know what you want me

to say," or "I have nothing to say about my childhood," or even "I don't want to talk about my childhood, just let me see my psychiatrist." Relating to these responses, my focus could not be on exploring their past, but instead on asking about their present issues or challenges that have been perceived negatively by others. Combining this present-future focus with a strength-based approach, I have gained trust from my clients while they were finding ways to reach a concrete and achievable therapeutic goal.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

Learning from Clients to Develop Clinical Skills

A recent study has tested that the effort to match the client with a same-ethnic clinician may not be the sole factor that makes treatment effective. Farsimadan, Draghi-Lorenz and Ellis (2007) found in a random assignment experiment of 100 ethnic minority clients that those who had expressed their matching preference showed better outcomes than those who did not express a preference. My supervisor shared with me that my reflections would help other clinicians learn to be a good listener, as my experiences have also led me to use better empathic skills. The act of helping my clients reveal their problems and strengths is a great way to reflect upon my own limitations. From this reflection, I have adjusted my clinical skills in six ways:

1) Focus on present and future instead of the past: Instead of "Tell me about your childhood," ask, "Tell me what made you decide to move to this country," or "Who made this decision?" "What influenced your decision to move here?" "What did you do to prepare for this immigration journey?"

2) Identify the clinician's own language strengths and limitations: I have asked the clients to speak slowly on numerous occasions. To validate the client because of our language barrier, I often say, "I too have an accent when I speak Chinese because I am an ABC (American-Born Chinese). Chinese is my second language so please let me know if you need me to repeat something for you."

3) Encourage clients to talk more: Social workers

are good at talking, but when their clients are reticent, they must remember how to use skills to motivate clients to express feelings and thoughts at their own pace. Instead of asking more questions after an intake interview, for example, a competent worker may say, "I've been asking you some questions. Now, it is your turn." If the client remains silent, then use prompting techniques such as "tell me a word that comes to mind" or "describe yourself as a Chinese in a non-Chinese environment" or "name someone in your family who you would like to talk with."

4) Dispute negative associations to mental health: Frequently I provide psychoeducation to my patients around their illness. Many patients tend to feel stigmatized and negatively labeled when diagnosed with a mental health issue. By normalizing the situation and providing statistical evidence to my patients about the characteristics of people who have been affected by mental health issues, they begin to feel hopeful about treating their illness and not feel negatively labeled. Since many mental health diagnoses do have a negative connotation, social workers should ask their clients to reframe these terms into positive ones. These translated terms must be modified to relate to the "positive health" perspective. However, it is difficult to change the scientific terms even though they are negatively impacting my patients' psychological well-being. They may have a perception that seeing a psychotherapist means that they have been chi xian (insane in the mind). In this process, I usually say, "The Chinese translation of this illness is X. It actually means you are feeling Y or acting Z." Using concrete measures can help clients understand the illness and find ways to heal.

5) Remove labels: Hear the client's perspective first, analyze the situation, and contextualize the problem as it is related to the client's current situation, such as how an illness may be a response to adjustment or coping. Sometimes, I inform the clients that we may use a medical term to represent this adjustment issue simply for insurance purposes but we will focus on the solution, not putting a label on the problem.

6) Use creative means to make the client's

translation process easier: As I develop more skills to work with my patients, I find that when they do not feel like talking, they can write down thoughts in their own language, as the expression is therapeutic to them without external judgment. By means of these writing exercises, many patients disclose their difficulties and shame, and use culturally appropriate terms to translate the illness to fit their definition or experience of the situation.

CONCLUSION

As a bilingual social worker, I found that the so-called "language barrier" is labeled as a problem faced by new immigrants, which is only a one-sided view; the other side of this "barrier" is actually the social worker's main challenge. Language barriers are indeed a clinician's issue. There are key issues to keep in mind when working with the Chinese-speaking population, specifically with mental health illness. First, a clinician should be aware of the client's boundary limits relating to the past, and especially sensitive to the client who may not want to reveal their childhood or warfare experiences. Secondly, the clinician can address and normalize the difficulty of the language barrier so that the patient is not alone with having language difficulty, as the clinician may also be experiencing similar challenges. Lastly, since mental illness is a taboo subject among many Chinese-speaking patients, it is critical to provide psychoeducation to emphasize the positive aspects or the achievement of good mental health for these patients. It is also essential to validate and praise the patients for taking steps to seek help from mental health professionals. All of these findings point to the use of two translinguistic skills that bilingual clinicians must deal with: overcoming the clinician's own fear of speaking the patient's language and empowering the patient to use his/her own language to address life challenges.

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Velvet Sleeves: A Letter of Lessons Learned in the Ivory Tower

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Abstract: The manuscript is a narrative letter of reflective examination of lived experiences in academia. The letter is a qualitative approach using narrative writing to represent the lived experiences of two female professors from different disciplines and varied institutions as they learned to navigate working in higher education, with all its promises and compromises. It explains and describes events, conflicts and results of navigating the system in a letter format using the framework of a previously published qualitative study on bullying behavior in academia, and offers insightful analysis and critique of the system while explaining the unique benefits of working in academia. The letter opens up a reflective dialogue about academia as it exists in the proverbial ivory tower while demonstrating why the career is valued.

Keywords: relationships, bullying, ivory tower, assistant professor

Velvet Sleeves: A Letter of Lessons Learned in the Ivory Tower

The authors of this letter collectively have 35 years of experience within tenure-track positions in academia. These academic positions were geographically diverse at six, four-year institutions where tenure was earned. Both authors hold and have held varied positions on campus, within respective departments, or within the professional community. That includes, but is not limited to the following: teaching, advising, management of programs, supervision of student internships, shared governance, mentoring, mediation, and advisory boards. This narrative of the combined author experiences reflects the lived experiences of many academicians who entered before us, those who entered with us, and those currently joining us. Thematic findings from a phenomenological study of bullying among and between academicians in higher education (Sedivy-Benton, Strohschen, Cavazos & Boden-McGill, 2014) frame the authors' lived experiences. The six thematic findings italicized in the letter below include: "positionality, differences, jealousy, clandestine decision-making, accountability/leadership [leadership accountability] and blame the victim (Sedivy-Benton, et al, 2014, pp. 37-38). These six categories of experience highlight bullying tactics within academia upon which our letter is based.

Pithouse-Morgan, Khau, Masinga & van de Ruit (2012) state that "letter writing has been used as a qualitative method for self-reflexive, collaborative research by a number of scholars to generate data through which to reexamine their selves and their lived experience" (p. 43). The authors chose a letter

format in order "to strike a balance between acknowledging and honouring the problem, and highlighting the initiatives the person has taken in their efforts to free themselves from the effects of the problem" (Whittaker, 2009, p. 53). The following reflective letter aids in providing a balanced description of lived experiences in academia, the problems, responses to those problems, what should be known to help navigate the environment and what keeps academicians here. The hope is that this letter will open up a reflective dialogue about academia as it exists in the proverbial ivory tower.

Dear Future Colleagues:

So, you want to be a professor? We did too! With butterflies of excitement, we entered a doctoral program, seeking the knowledge and the freedom to independently think and choose our pedagogical path. We demonstrated our expertise through our dissertations and defenses, proving to ourselves that we had the freedom to think independently and assist with promoting critical thinking during formal and informal engagement with students. Ready to create risk-free classroom environments conducive to the development of professionals in our respective fields, there was eagerness to begin. We must admit the perks of faculty parking closer to the building, keys to our own offices, a plaque on the door and flexible scheduling made us feel like we had *arrived* at the threshold we worked so hard to cross.

Confident we were equipped to collaborate with our colleagues, students and the community, we entered the ivory tower of velvet sleeves. Quickly, we were submersed in the culture and emotional reality of academic status. **Positionality** slapped us in the face

with a covert hierarchical structure, where assistant professors were seen and not heard. We wish we could tell you how many times as assistant professors we were told, or heard another junior colleague being instructed overtly, to "learn the ropes" by observing and emulating colleagues with tenure. More than once, one of us was told "you have a lot of nerve speaking out as you do as a junior faculty member." Or as a new faculty member, you may passively be told that "once you have been doing this as long as we have, you will understand." We write to tell you this happened to us so that you may be forewarned that this may happen to you…will most likely happen to you, as this underground hierarchical system is still in place. We tell you this in hopes that you do not spend the emotional energy we did in trying to figure out the system existed.

While at the same time a young faculty voice is squelched as impertinent, if you do not speak up, you may be perceived as not asserting yourself in a manner worthy of tenure and promotion. We sat on promotion and tenure committees where a promotion was denied not on the person's performance, rather on the basis of a bad fit for the campus. In actuality, the faculty member denied was passively avoiding political situations in an effort to remain neutral, believing this would result in job protection. We have more to say about promotion and tenure in a later section of this letter. Our example here is to illustrate what might happen to those who do not speak up.

The level of participation and speaking your truth as a junior faculty member is a Catch 22, yet an even riskier third layer of professorial status was uncovered in our early time as professors. We wish we had been warned to watch out when we were placed on committees in which we found ourselves in the middle of a power struggle between tenured faculty. For instance, you could find yourself honored to be voted onto an executive committee by the esteemed faculty only to awaken to the realization that your ideas (which they all complimented you for having) were not the reason you made the committee. No, rather, a few faculty believed they had you in their pocket and could convince you to do their bidding. A great deal of time and energy can be wasted putting effort into something for which others do not believe you have

yet earned an opinion.

We could have saved ourselves so much time, shame and anguish if we had known our position within the ivory tower, that velvet sleeves do not earn you academic freedom; rather, time and possibly someone's retirement will help you gain the status you need to be respected and heard. If you plan to become a professor, navigate your *positionality* carefully, friends. Find others whom you might trust and align with so that your agenda is carried in numbers. This might be your mentor, a respected senior faculty member taking you under their wing or a large group of new faculty banned together. Be resourceful and back yourself with sound research you can share in the moment.

While fumbling to uncover the issue we faced regarding our position within the system, we also learned quickly that *differences* matter, and there are some things, well, some things you just shouldn't do or be. Even though, for years in your masters and doctoral studies, you have been learning how to treat others equitably, the very people you are learning this from are carving distinct differences for their faculty interactions, and you just shouldn't. People's *differences*...your differences…spawn inequities within the program, department and university settings, and drive wedges between collegiality.

After teaching a full load for two semesters, one of us took one week to complete our dissertation. After the dissertation defense, she learned she was pregnant. Pregnancy matters in higher education. When she told her chair she was pregnant, the chair said, "Is that what you did with the week I gave you to work on your dissertation?" This faculty member was also assigned to teach courses off campus; these classes were reassigned to another less qualified professor because "the university cannot be responsible for anything that might happen to the fetus if there were to be a car accident." You just shouldn't get pregnant.

Gender matters, again and again. Being hired All But Dissertation (ABD), one of us contractually understood that the dissertation had to be completed prior to receiving any raises. There were five new ABD hires, four women and one man. Of the five, only one (a woman) completed the requirements within the first year. When raises were awarded, the male that had not completed his dissertation was also

awarded. The explanation given by the administration for this breech in the contractual agreement was "he has a family to support." Incidentally, the female was the sole supporter of a family of four. You just shouldn't expect gender decisions to be fair.

What's race got to do with it? Well, pretty much everything. In examination of racial differences, we have experienced discrimination used to covertly and overtly bully members of academia. We have witnessed or experienced a number of atrocities in this area. Both of us came into contact with new inexperienced hires being offered thousands of dollars more than we currently made at the time of their employment. In one case, administration falsely believed paying more for unseasoned faculty was acceptable; at risk of being held liable for reverse discrimination, the institution did rectify the situation. Conversely, we have witnessed colleagues of color struggle to be heard. In our experience, this is compounded when gender, religion, sexual orientation, size and age are an added characteristic difference. You just shouldn't be different from the perceived norm.

Any one of us may find ourselves disabled at any point in our career. A colleague, C. Woodyard, (personal communication, August, 2014) specializing in the American Disabilities Act, said that when people use the term "disability," they often think in terms of permanence and not temporary disability. It is sometimes the person who is temporarily disabled that finds themselves at risk of not knowing how to advocate for their own rights. This happened to one of us suffering from a severe injury, which took three years to recover from. A multitude of inappropriate communications occurred, from "others are doing your work for you" to "you can teach with [your injury], others have done it" to "we do not have the funding to accommodate you" to "you are milking the system" in an effort to get the faculty member to return to work prior to being released by a physician. All this came from the very academicians who teach classes on how to treat others with equity is surprising at least and alarming at best. You just shouldn't need accommodations.

The lessons we wish to pass on to you in regard to **differences** include know the law, know your rights

and pick your battles. There are numerous "other" differences which separate and place people as targets of bullying. No matter the difference, help yourself and others by making sure that a diverse voice is not dropped during meetings. Find a colleague who echoes your ideas when they are passed over, and do the same for them. Remind the group, "so-and-so had a good idea, let's revisit it."

To survive as a new member of the ivory tower, you will need to pet your green-eyed monster. You have to keep your **jealousy** in check, while watching your back. Basically, you may be doing everything right, and because someone is promoted to their level of incompetency (Peter Principle), you may find yourself sabotaged because they are jealous of your competencies. The ear bent by those in power over you will attempt to define who you are, more than what you do, especially, if you are unaware it is happening.

The Peter Principle was breathing in the corners of the room during both our evaluation periods. Despite years of exceptional evaluations, peer reviews, administrative reviews, publications, quality teaching and sound service, Peter's incompetents were unable to allow their jealousy to be put aside in an attempt to sabotage a career. The system is designed to protect from this, and sometimes that system works. Sometimes the system breeds jealousy because jealousy is about resources.

Hello! There is not enough money in higher education. Resources are fought for at every level. Inequitable allocation of resources breeds envy and competition. Many times resources are withheld in effort to make a competent person look incompetent. For example, a course needed extensive supplies, but no money was available. The supplies used during the time the course was taught were supplied by the professor or the guest speakers. Later, the course was given to a second professor. There was a vested interest by an administrator that the new professor be elevated to success within the course. Money magically appeared…lots of money…lots and lots of money.

Know your system and use the mechanisms set up to protect you, but most importantly, know yourself. Know your capabilities. Be always aware it is not just who or what you know, but how that person, or persons, in power regard you. Cultivate your

relationships carefully.

You think you've made it to the ivory tower. You think you've proven yourself, remember? So everyone is going to want your advice when making decisions. Why wouldn't they come to you for help making decisions? Well, basically, you are not involved in *clandestine decision-making,* and there is clandestine decision making.

More than one instance occurred in which a clandestine decision was made to change the nature of a course, and the colleague teaching the class was excluded from the meeting set up to redesign it. Another example; someone in power made the clandestine decision that faculty in certain disciplines earned more money than colleagues in other fields. Further, committees have been set up to make clandestine decisions on the selection of books for courses that the members are not even teaching. We recall an administrator, not teaching, arbitrarily making a clandestine decision to change the academic teaching schedule for the entire university without any known input. Clandestine decision-making, where not only are you not heard, but you are not seen…because you're not invited, can drive you crazy, and just when you think you have it figured out, you find out there's an entirely new unexplored level of crazy decision-making.

Clandestine decision-making is a powerful form of bullying. It is very covert. Take care of yourself. Have consideration for yourself and others. You are not your own boss, you are accountable. Act with integrity, and you will be able to defend your actions. Arm yourself with facts. Be certain who the players are and know their fit within the larger system. Again, pick your battles.

Now you are a professor; you are a leader. You have academic freedom. Academic freedom has consequences, or does it?

Leadership accountability can change like your underwear. You do change them every day, right, because daily you may be held *accountable* when others are not, and vice versa. You may pay for standing up for yourself when assigned an overload, for example. Team players do not complain and do not advocate for themselves. Advocating for yourself, in the example, is indeed hard to do when you know everyone is working an overload. It is a cutthroat place, the ivory tower. Often, you will be in a situation where the person who made a clandestine decision places the blame on you to save what goes in *their* underwear.

Leadership accountability bullying can take place at any level of the ivory tower membership. In one of our institutions, an unpopular administrator was publicly chastised and belittled in a campus-wide social platform written by a faculty member. No one in administration intervened to stop the public humiliation. In fact, others publicly added to the discussion. Months later, the faculty member who was never held accountable for what he saw as acts of leadership was given a prestigious award by the administration. How's that for honor?

We repeat: Take care of yourself. Have consideration for yourself and others because the ivory tower needs you to work more than you should. It is not funded to have the resources necessary for you to thrive. You are not your own boss, you are accountable. Act with integrity, and you will be able to defend your actions. Don't expect fairness even when unfairness is blatantly obvious, but continuously strive for equity.

Blaming the victim, also known as gaslighting, is an attempt to bully a victim into thinking that what they say and do is insignificant, unworthy, and unvalued. Bullies do this by being dismissive and by reframing or slanting what is true. One of us remembers a colleague saying they were a pessimist in a situation where they were actually being a realist. In another situation, an administrator, when presented with ideas he was against, was known for saying to his faculty, "You actually think you can do that?" The message: what a fool you are for thinking that. Other ways you may find people with velvet sleeves dismissing you include: placing you on the meeting agenda, but never getting to your item, asking you to give input and being told your input is wrong, publicly asking others to "fix" a course with the professor of record sitting there, or being told you are not a good employee because you are not working the industry standard of 60 hours.

Gaslighting is often done to someone who is perceived as having too much status. So, celebrate here that someone thinks you have status! However, it is being done to usurp or undermine your credibility and your

belief in yourself. The important lesson here is that you need to recognize gaslighting, and learn to depersonalize the message. Recognize the flaws in the arguments or statements given, move on knowing you have educated reasons for what you do, think and say.

At this point in our correspondence, you may be wondering why we are still in academia. You might even be thinking that we are bitter, or our experiences have soured us into using this forum to complain. On the contrary, we love our jobs. We love the students. We love teaching, the research and the service aspects of our profession. With the ending of this letter, our hope is to also inform you of the four main reasons (relationships, teaching, research and service) we have stayed and why we value our velvet sleeves.

Relationships

Through the combined 35 years we have been in academia, we have chosen employment within institutions where teaching is the primary focus of performance; therefore, students have always been the driving force. The students we teach are amazing; watching students grow catches us on fire. There is a thrilling energy surrounding students as they use critical thinking skills while grappling with content that requires them to create new schema. Mentoring students throughout their educational journey to graduation is rewarded with welcoming them as budding colleagues. This in turn leads to ongoing relationships within the community as practitioners, and in the profession, as they return to school to advance their education. Relationships: the most significant reason we stay.

After we arrived to the ivory tower, the relationships we developed with the people we are in this with have led to special friendships outside of our velvet sleeves. Our colleagues and friends, who are authentic, provide valuable feedback and support, believe in us during trials and tribulations, and make us laugh at ourselves and situations, are invaluable. Relationships with these special individuals remind us to make light of the bullying behaviors that no doubt exist in our work setting, and advocate for us to use what we know about social justice. They remind us to use humor, sarcasm and truth to understand what we may feel we have no control

over, just as we have employed throughout our letter to you. Without sarcasm and humor, one might end up in jail, or so our friends tell us.

Teaching

Curriculum development is exciting. Taking a subject that students may not like and creating a focus of inquiry so strong that students fall in love with the content and want to continue to pursue it, is just one aspect of teaching that turns us on. Academic freedom within the classroom allows us to teach the way we believe people learn, applying our personal pedagogies. Teaching affords us our voice, our voice in the academic arena. Yes, *you have arrived* when you get to do this!

Research

Being in an environment where people are continually generating ideas, disagreeing and testing hypotheses, is invigorating. Daily situations arise that offer opportunity for investigation. The opportunities often invite collaboration from different disciplines, the community, and students to explore a topic through different venues. Research *after you have arrived* may become a lifelong professional achievement. You are going to love the energy and ideas you have the chance to uncover.

Service

You've arrived…you are the expert in the field, and your contributions may be welcomed. You get to serve; oh, do you get to serve. But the nice aspect about service is that you pick and choose the areas that matter to you, the things close to your heart. Because there is service to the department, college, university, community and broader profession, there is a wide variety to select from for professional gratification. Also, and extremely rewarding, you may find yourself involved in professional development in an area you may have never pursued to provide a service for a group you serve. For example, we became certified mediators in an effort to serve the university in their shared governance. In addition, we became certified restorative justice facilitators in an effort to serve the community in which we live and teach. Neither of us set out in our careers to be mediators or restorative justice facilitators; however, we could not imagine our professional lives without this stimulating work.

In closing, dear future colleagues, when you believe you have arrived after you have defended your dissertation and received employment as a professor only to find that not only have you not arrived, but you are back on the bottom, remember the six themes of bullying and how to circumnavigate the bully. When you traverse the velvet sleeves with your own velvet sleeves, you will receive all the benefits that relationships, teaching, research and service present. You achieve what you set out to accomplish when you decided to work in the ivory tower. We hope that this letter helps you to find your voice, and that you will pay it forward. The ivory tower does glow. You're going to love it!

Wishing you all the best in your future endeavors,

Pam & Jenny

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Editor's Note: The authors wish the reader to know that the order of the authors was alphabetical, as each was an equal contributor to the research and text.

Article 25 Changed my Life: How the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Reframed my Social Work Practice

Jane McPherson

Abstract: This reflection recounts how working with survivors of human trafficking led one social worker to discover the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and how that discovery catalyzed a process of personal and professional discovery that continues to this day. According to Article 25 of the UDHR, an "adequate" standard of living is a human right – as are food, clothing, housing, medical care, and even necessary social services. Learning to see her clients – who were universally living in rural poverty – through a rights-based lens set this writer on a course to reframe social work practice as human rights work.

I went to work in rural north Florida in 2007. The area is lovely in a formerly prosperous, rural, southern, north-Florida sort of way. Pre-civil war plantation houses still stand, and descendants of slaves still till the soil – now alongside Central American migrants. Barns once used to dry shade tobacco have been abandoned and devoured by kudzu vine. The monumental county courthouse is surrounded on all sides by half-hearted businesses: there is a re-sale shop featuring hats for church ladies, an art gallery, a new Hindu Temple, some county social services, and a restaurant that frequently changes hands.

I didn't go there for hats or shade tobacco. I was hired by the County Health Department to provide mental health, parenting, and child development assistance to pregnant women and mothers of young children, especially those who were at risk of poor outcomes. I knew the area because, as a social worker specializing in parental bereavement, I'd been there before, spending time with families whose sweet babies had died before birth or shortly afterward. With its high rate of infant mortality – disproportionately high among African American babies – it was the kind of place where my grim expertise could come in handy.

As a Health Department social worker, the heart of my job was to provide support for unprepared or overburdened mothers. As a matter of course, women seeking pregnancy testing or prenatal care were screened for depression. They were asked to evaluate their feelings over the prior week, and to assign points to their feelings of distress. Specifically, they were asked if they'd been able to laugh; if they were looking forward to things; if they'd felt anxious, overwhelmed, scared or sad; if

they'd had difficulty sleeping; and if they were considering harming themselves. If they scored high enough, they might well be referred to me. Rural north Florida is large and poor, so my caseload of moms who admitted to feeling anxious, sad, miserable, or simply overwhelmed, spiraled out from the Health Department in all directions. And it was my job – and also my honor – to visit them in their homes. Visiting my clients, I navigated hundreds of miles and many communities. In the area's small urban centers, I would sit with moms on rented sofas in stuffy public housing units; in the county's rural zones, I might visit a family living in a creek side trailer or sit outside under a shade tree near a field of ripening tomatoes. I might accept a glass of sweet tea in one old house, and then eat pozole in a trailer home later that same day.

It's hard to generalize my clients, though it's certainly true that they were all living in poverty. Many of the women I got to know never had a decent teacher, never lived in a safe place, and never held a decent job. Without transportation, a woman couldn't get a job; without a job, there was no way to buy a car or even a ride. Without transportation or money, there was no way to buy groceries or baby formula. It was possible, we would hear at the Health Department, for young mothers to swap sex for diapers or needed rides. Many of my clients seemed heroic to me in their perseverance.

As we visited with these women in their homes, my colleagues and I wondered about the value of our work. In this county – as in many counties across the rural United States – the public school bus comes for school-age children and takes them off every weekday to see friends and experience a bit of the larger world. Very often, their mothers – stranded – spend their days at home with their younger children or with neighbors

and family members who've been similarly left behind. Some of the value in my visits was simply a bit of novelty or entertainment, but I wanted – and the Health Department expected – the value of my work to be more profound. My goal was to help young women overcome the barriers between themselves and a life they would feel good about; my goal was to help women connect with their children in ways that would provide those kids with the resilience they would need when confronted with barriers of their own.

Many of my clients spent hours and hours every day in dark houses with televisions booming, so I felt good when I could get a woman outside. I felt great when I could get a baby into a stroller and take her mom for a walk and a longer, more ambling talk; I loved bringing art supplies and getting moms and toddlers messy with paints in the yard; I felt useful when I could take a Spanish-speaking mother to her child's public school and translate for a parent-teacher conference.

But I felt ridiculous when my teachings were demonstrably out of touch with reality. On one humbling afternoon, I looked through the floorboards of my client's bedroom into the accessible dirt below. She was patient with me as she explained that, no, she could not put her baby to sleep in a crib (which she didn't have) or even a dresser drawer (which she did) because if she didn't sleep with her child, she worried that the baby would wake up welted with insect bites or worse. This mother was reasonably afraid that a baby left on her own might encounter a snake, a spider, or even a rat. My Health Department notions of "safe sleep" did not address the very real dangers that her baby might face when sleeping alone.

I worried about the medication management piece of my job: As an LCSW I worked alongside our psychiatric nurse in dispensing anti-depressant, anti-psychotic, and anti-anxiety medication to new mothers. I wondered about all this medicating of their anger and distress. In school, social workers learn that anger turned inward can lead to depression, and we know that women may be more vulnerable to these "internalizing" disorders (Freud, 1922; Herman, 1992). I wondered if it might be better for them to harness that anger and use it as fuel for changing their lives and their communities.

In my own caseload of medicated moms, I can definitely think of a few medicated women who became more engaged with their worlds; others seemed to evaporate into the rural landscape.

So this is the context in which the discovery of human rights blew my mind, altered my social work practice, and changed my life. The story I want to tell here isn't about the individual women I worked with. It's about their collective situation and how I learned to see them as women whose human rights were being violated with every breath they took.

One Summer Day

One summer day, I received a referral from a Health Department colleague working in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC). They were worried about a very young Central American woman who was pregnant with her second child. We can call her Silvia. Like many of our clients, Silvia came to this country illegally, and she was well known at the Health Department, as she'd received our WIC and prenatal services with her first pregnancy as well. The WIC ladies were worried about her. They found Silvia hard to reach. She didn't smile at them or chat, but also she seemed uninterested in the baby in her arms, and similarly unconcerned about the new one who would shortly join her family. My colleague, Susan, came to get me in my office, and we went together to meet Silvia. Susan introduced me, and then I had the chance to sit down with Silvia for a few moments before she told me that her ride needed to take her home.

As I looked at Silvia, I saw a strong, 17-year-old girl. She was clean and neat, well-dressed, and the baby was cutely turned out. I cooed at the baby, of course, but Silvia didn't join in. She accepted my interest in her and the baby, but she didn't lighten up and soak up the attention as many mothers do. She didn't mirror or join in my babbling, nor did she choose to show me more about her baby or tell me any stories. In my first visit with Silvia, I agreed with WIC that Silvia should be assessed for depression, and that she and her baby might benefit from intervention to support and strengthen their bond.

I made a plan to see her when she came in for her next WIC check. When she didn't keep her appointment, the WIC ladies asked me to go to her house. I stopped

by the house several times before I was permitted entry. Silvia, her boyfriend, and their baby were living in the insulated garage of his family's home. The day she let me in, she was home alone with her daughter. She said quickly that she didn't like to have visits when her boyfriend was at home, but she offered few other words. The room where the family was staying was small and the one small window was heavily draped. There was a bed, a crib, a dresser, a television, and one chair. We stood together awkwardly. She did not ask me to sit down, and her eyes mostly avoided mine. I was more than twice her age, but in her presence, I felt young and unsure. I expect that she was wondering why I was there and what she could do to bring our visit to a quick and polite close. She knew I'd been sent by WIC; she knew she wanted to continue WIC benefits; and she'd been willing to open the door, but she certainly didn't seem like she wanted to talk. The baby was strapped in her car seat on the floor.

Our conversation opened up when I suggested we take a walk. Silvia allowed me to change the baby and put her in the stroller. I used my moments with the infant to check her reflexes and get a sense of her development. At just 6 months old, the baby looked healthy, but she was not yet able to sit up on her own. Silvia allowed that she was feeling exhausted by the demands of the baby and not really looking forward to the next one. I hoped that Silvia might let me get down on the ground and play with her and her daughter. I wanted to connect Silvia with the experience of baby joy and help her find some motherly delight and skill, but on this particular day, I didn't want to push much besides the baby stroller. Our connection felt so fragile. On our walk, however, she did open up a bit. When I asked her what sort of help she might need, she told me that she needed to go to Tallahassee and didn't know how to get there. When I asked why, she told me that she needed to see her lawyer.

That was surprising to me. There was nothing in her chart about juvenile detention or a pending case. Probing gently for details, I learned that she had been the victim of a crime, not the perpetrator. She told me that her lawyer was located at the university's Human Rights Law Center, and that she was trying to get her permanent US visa. I didn't ask for more details right away. I wanted to spend some time building trust and relationship with Silvia, so I

offered to bring her to Tallahassee myself.

A few days after that first home visit, I returned to Silvia's house and picked her up along with the baby and car seat. We all strapped in for the hour's drive. Silvia was grateful for the ride, but I imagine that she and I were both uneasy about the hours of forced togetherness. I let her pick the radio station. Beyond the radio, the drive was pretty quiet as we made our way to her lawyer's office.

Once there, at the suggestion of her lawyer, Silvia signed a release of information that allowed me to know the details of her case. That's when I learned that she'd been brought to Florida from her native country when she was just a kid, perhaps 8 or so. A family friend had promised to put her in school. Instead, Silvia was put to work taking care of children even younger than herself. She was not allowed to leave the house where she worked; she was never paid; she was not allowed to go to school; indeed, she was a slave. As a victim of human trafficking who was collaborating in the prosecution of her traffickers, she was eligible for a special "T" visa and therefore permanent legal residence in the United States. I agreed to help Silvia prepare her statement for court, the whole story of how she came to this country; what her family in El Salvador had expected when they allowed her to leave for the US; her very different experience of being imprisoned in her workplace; her eventual rescue; and the contributions she would bring as a citizen of the US.

Over the course of several months working together, I think I did earn Silvia's trust. We prepared her statements; we also did get down on the floor with the baby, who quickly learned skills as she was given more time out of her car seat. I was pleased to see Silvia begin to play. In the end, Silvia got her visa, and when the new baby boy arrived, she came to my office and we took lots of smiling pictures. That was the end of my relationship with Silvia, but just the beginning of my understanding of social work as human rights work.

Over the Next Year

Over the next year, I had the opportunity to help additional survivors of human trafficking. Working alongside lawyers, I learned more about visas and about human rights. One lawyer colleague suggested

that I read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; United Nations, 1948). I was unfamiliar with the UDHR (it wasn't included in the MSW curriculum when I graduated in 1991) and I was initially hesitant, imagining that the declaration would be as impenetrable (and as deserving of avoidance) as small-print legal agreements usually are.

When I did read it, I was amazed by its simplicity. It was accessible – and beyond being merely understandable, I found it useful: it provided me with the lens I needed to really see my work in focus. Using the UDHR allowed me to see that all the mothers on my caseload – not just the survivors of human trafficking and violence – were victims (and survivors) of grave violations of their human rights.

Particularly, I found myself mulling over the words of Article 25. I had been a social worker for more than 20 years and had spent almost every day of my working life with women, men and children whose rights to an adequate standard of living – including food, housing, medical care and unemployment security – had been systematically and continually violated. In essence, Article 25 presented a brief inventory of the rights to which my north Florida clients were inadequately entitled.

> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 25
>
> 1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
>
> 2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection. (United Nations, 1948)

I had long been uncomfortable with the dominance of the mental health framework as the way to understand our clients' realities. My fellow social workers and I regularly discussed our concern about the focus on our clients' personal symptoms (e.g., obesity, depression) at the expense of the social problems which felt harder to address (e.g., unemployment, inadequate education). The UDHR clearly challenged us to embrace a different assessment framework. It wasn't only about the individual woman's sense of distress; it was about the deprivation she shared with so many of her neighbors: the lack of access to work, to safe housing, to sufficient healthy food, to quality education for her children, to nearby specialist healthcare, and more. It was also about the presence in these women's lives of violence and discrimination. The UDHR gave me new language to ground my clients' "symptoms" in injustice.

A mental health diagnosis has the power to define the bearer as defective. A human rights lens shifts the focus; it requires us to diagnose the environment, not just the woman (McPherson, Siebert, & Siebert, 2017). The human rights lens helped me understand my discomfort with Health Department food baskets and drives to provide families with Thanksgiving turkeys. Of course, I didn't want the families I was working with to go hungry, but I wanted them to have food every day, not just on holidays or during emergencies. Plus, I bristled against a system that required them to compete for assistance. No one is more deserving of food than another; all people deserve food because it is their human right.

Embracing the UDHR

I embraced the UDHR with the zeal of a convert. I printed copies and shared them with my clients and with co-workers at the Health Department. For some mothers, the laundry list of rights was just one more sheaf of papers. I imagine those women asking themselves how there could be even more hoops to jump through or new forms to fill out. With others, I had interesting conversations about rights. Some clients, who had not thought about housing or food as human rights before, were interested in engaging around these ideas. There was even a bit of hope: Was there someone from whom they could demand access to these newly discovered rights? Alas, I had to explain, the answer in the US is sadly no. Unlike our allies in Western Europe, Brazil, Japan, and beyond, the US is not party to the United Nations conventions – the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination Against Women, or the Convention on the Rights of the Child – which might have guaranteed those rights.

Still, these rights exist. As US residents, we may currently have variable access to them, but the existence of social rights elsewhere offers us an opportunity for activism and change. Indeed, some US communities like Eugene, OR, Birmingham, AL, and Pittsburgh, PA, have moved ahead to assert those rights for their citizens (U.S. Human Rights Network, n.d.). I didn't see the women I worked with become political activists, but I did see that for some of my clients the existence of these rights – services to which they should be entitled – seemed to have a dignifying effect. If there is a right to a decent standard of living, the understanding of poverty can be transformed: "I am still poor, but the problem is injustice, not simply personal failure."

I encouraged my colleagues at the Health Department to take a look at the UDHR, too. I had hoped we could use the declaration as an alternative form of assessment, alongside the many other mandatory forms. That is, I suggested that we assess our clients in a comprehensive way that would include both individual and social problems, and look for solutions on the micro and macro levels. I wish I could say that introducing the UDHR transformed the Health Department.

Shortly after my discovery of the UDHR, I applied for admission to a doctoral program in social work. I spent the next six years completing my Ph.D. and working with colleagues around the country and around the world to evolve a human rights approach to social work practice (McPherson, 2015). That's what I teach now, what I write about, how I think, and how I see.

Now that I am part of the social work academy, I sometimes tell my students that if I were to get a tattoo, it would include words from Article 25. In truth, I don't need the words burned into my skin, because they are indelibly etched in my mind. Article 25 gave me the words and the framework to understand the work I'd been doing for 20 years. It gave me the courage to reinvent myself, and – I hope – to help reinvent social work in the process.

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Housing a Homeless Shelter: A Case Study in Community Deliberation

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Abstract: Among the core competencies of macro practitioners are the skills to design, implement and evaluate conflict resolution processes. Drawing upon theories of deliberative democracy, restorative justice and the Just Practice framework, this paper explores a process of deliberation which engaged 200 community members in the controversial siting of a homeless shelter. This case study is both descriptive and reflective: by offering an in-depth description of the process and a reflection on the guiding values, this paper provides critical insight into best practices in – and limitations of – using deliberation to resolve divisive community issues.

Missoula, Montana – a college town of 66,700 residents – is rich with opportunity: within minutes one can access hundreds of miles of trail for hiking, biking and skiing, and one can enjoy ample cultural events, from book readings to pow-wows, to art exhibits. Yet, Missoula County is also disproportionately impacted by poverty. According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, a greater proportion of Missoula residents live below the poverty level compared to the rest of the state, and median home values are nearly $50,000 above the state average. The 2007 recession produced sharp job losses (Barkey, 2010), and given the high housing costs, the region saw stark increases in people accessing public assistance (Montana State University Extension Economics, 2011), and a 21 percent increase in homelessness between 2009 and 2011 alone (Montana Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). In May 2011, the Poverello Center (the only emergency shelter within 100 miles) announced plans to build a new facility. A controversy erupted over the proposed location, deeply dividing the community. Seeking mediation, the city contracted the Missoula chapter of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), a non-profit that provides training and facilitation to reduce prejudice and resolve conflict. As NCBI's director, I led a team charged with designing, implementing and evaluating a city-wide process that would engage community members in deliberating the shelter's new location.

The ability to facilitate groups and communities through conflict is among the core competencies expected of macro practitioners (The Association of Community Organization and Social Administration, 2008), but there are few case studies detailing community practice responses to divisive issues. Relatedly, there is a body of scholarship exploring the practice skills and strategies needed for effective group facilitation and community planning in general (Weil, 2013); few studies examine the application of these skills to resolving divisive issues. In an attempt to address these gaps, this case study is both descriptive and reflective. By offering an in-depth description of the process, and a reflection on the guiding values, I offer some key considerations for practitioners working to resolve community conflicts.

Approaches to Community Deliberation

Most group work approaches to conflict resolution are grounded in ideals of deliberative democracy. While it is beyond this paper's scope to present a full account of theories of deliberation (for an excellent synthesis, see Freeman, 2000), proponents generally agree that it is through respectful reason-sharing, questioning one another's conclusions, and critical reflection, that members of society make informed decisions (Abelson et al, 2003; Freeman, 2000; Guntmann & Thompson, 2004). These scholars contend that in a free society, reasonable people will have wide-ranging perspectives on various political, social and environmental issues, and that processes of deliberation allow people to understand these diverse perspectives before making decisions. As social epistemologist Jose Medina writes, "Democracy is not only about voting but also about talking…Without such discussion, voting would only give expression to private preferences and not to a public interest" (2013, p. 5). Deliberation does not guarantee that an outcome will be rational, moral or just, only that decisions reached through deliberation are more likely to be rational, moral or just than those reached in the absence of such engagement (Freeman, 2000).

Theories of deliberative democracy have a number of strengths when applied to settings of community

conflict. Deliberative processes may legitimize decision making; even when people object to the final outcome, they are more likely to accept decisions if their perspectives have been thoughtfully considered (Freeman, 2000; Guntmann & Thompson, 2004). Further, the deliberative process is consistent with democratic values. In seeking perspectives from those who will be impacted by the decision – as opposed to simply imposing a decision – a group, organization, and/or government demonstrates respect for its members. Further, when members thoughtfully consider one another's positions, they demonstrate respect for one another (Guntmann & Thompson, 2004).

These strengths notwithstanding, deliberative approaches have distinct vulnerabilities. First, advocates of deliberation presume that decision making is driven by rational thought. Some scholars argue that widespread ignorance and irrationality make deliberative processes infeasible, particularly when applied to emotionally charged issues (Somin, 2010). Second, deliberative approaches leave many important questions unanswered with regard to power and equity within groups (Abelson et al, 2003; Morrow, 2011). For example, how can inequalities in influence among participating members be addressed? Who decides the content of deliberation, how much discourse is sufficient, and how decisions will be made? How will members be held accountable for those decisions? The frameworks of restorative justice and just practice begin to address these vulnerabilities.

Restorative Justice

While most commonly thought of as an alternative response to individual crimes, restorative justice approaches can also be applied to addressing community-level conflicts. Rather than focusing on assigning blame or delivering punishment, restorative justice seeks to repair harms and restore damaged relationships (White, 2003). Using a restorative justice approach to conflict resolution, a facilitator engages the parties most affected by the conflict, seeking to understand their distinct perspectives and garner their commitment to a reparative process. Through facilitated group sessions, participants share with and hear from one another, learning how each member experiences the conflict, and attending to the emotional impacts of

the situation. The process then shifts to identifying areas of agreement and possible reparative action (Beck et al., 2011). Reflecting on a restorative justice process in a neighborhood conflicted about high rates of youth vandalism, Abramson and Beck note that the conclusion of the facilitation "signified not so much the end of a conflict, but rather the beginning of a cohesive and child-friendly community" (2011, p. 160). In this way, restorative justice approaches work to transform relationships as much as conflicts.

Just Practice

The Just Practice framework (Finn & Jacobson, 2008) suggests five interlocking principles which can guide social work research and practice: meaning, context, power, history and possibility. Whereas in clinical work a practitioner relates these concepts to an individual client, in community practice, a facilitator must seek to understand, hold, and apply multiple interpretations of these concepts into a single transformative process. Applying the Just Practice framework to the shelter relocation raises critical directions for inquiry: What meaning do various stakeholders assign to the Poverello Center? What contexts, background experiences and conditions inform stakeholder viewpoints? How do distinct stakeholder groups access power, influence policy, or inform decision-making? How is the relocation process shaped by individual and organizational history? What possibilities for mutually beneficial partnerships may exist? Augmenting theories of deliberative democracy with restorative justice practices and Just Practice principles increases the potential for deliberation to be used in the context of divisive community conflict.

The following is a case study of a deliberative intervention into the controversial re-siting of the Poverello Center. Rather than an empirical evaluation from a third party observer, this is a reflexive accounting of the facilitation design and implementation from my experience as facilitator, drawn from participant observations, practice notes, process reflections with the facilitation team, evaluation data, and archival data related to the relocation (including print and social media). To increase the credibility, various participants in the process reviewed earlier drafts of this article and offered critical insights. While the practices described here may not be appropriate in all contexts, I have

sought to provide enough description for readers to discern the relevance of findings to other sites of community conflict (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Case Study: Housing a Homeless Shelter

Since the Poverello Center opened in 1981, it operated out of a century-old house, tucked between residential and business neighbors on the perimeter of Missoula's downtown. In January 2011, with temperatures outside dropping to seven degrees below zero, 111 people sought shelter at the Poverello. Every bed was taken, and many people spent the night on hallway floors (Fowler Pehan, 2011). After years of trying to meet the increasing demand within their current facility, the Poverello's Board accepted that the old building was woefully undersized, not wheelchair accessible, and – plagued by faulty plumbing and out-of-code wiring – simply unmaintainable. For three years the center had sought a location for a new facility, twice nearing closing only to have community backlash undermine the sale.

On May 29, 2011, the local newspaper reported that the Poverello Center had neared a deal on a new location (in Missoula's Westside neighborhood), which had the support from Missoula Mayor, the United Way, and many neighborhood individuals (Szpaller & Cederberg, 2011). This report was news to most Westside residents, especially parents whose children attend Lowell Elementary School, located three blocks from the proposed site. A controversy erupted. Within a week, members of the Lowell school PTA formed a Facebook group titled "Poverello not by Lowell School" (Facebook, 2011), and the local paper received a flurry of letters and anonymous online comments, overwhelmingly opposed to the move. Many respondents conflated homeless people with violent and sexual offenders. In response to the outcry, the Mayor asked the Poverello Center to delay their purchase in order to address community concerns.

In late June, the city contracted NCBI to design, facilitate, and evaluate a public deliberation regarding re-siting the shelter. Given the urgency of the Poverello Center's need for a new building, the city gave NCBI but three months to complete our process. In that time-frame, we were asked to engage a large number of people who hold diverse,

divergent, and emotionally charged points of view, and to provide opportunities for their meaningful participation in informing the Poverello's re-siting. In designing our process, we aspired to: 1) challenge the classism that marginalizes and silences the homeless as well as low-income neighbors, 2) correct misinformation about homelessness, 3) equalize power among participants, and 4) meaningfully inform the Poverello Center's decision-making (recognizing that the final decision rested with the Poverello Board of Directors).

NCBI launched a four-phase process. First, we completed an assessment through individual interviews and focus groups. Second, we facilitated an open community meeting that focused on creating opportunities for participants to share with and learn from one another. Third, we led a work group process where a small group of representatives from various stakeholder groups vetted specific sites. Finally, we facilitated a final open community meeting where the public deliberated site alternatives before the Poverello Center made its final decision.

Phase 1: Assessment

Prior to bringing conflicting parties together in a public forum, I engaged a small planning team from the city and the Poverello Center to generate a list of stakeholder groups, including those who had voiced concerns about the new location. I invited all of these stakeholders to participate in a confidential one-on-one interview or a focus group. In total, I met with fifty-two community members in the assessment phase, including Poverello clients, residential neighbors, business neighbors, city representatives, and organizational partners. Listening transformed my understanding of the controversy. I sat with a group of current residents of the shelter, who shared their anxiety about being relocated further from the bus line and needed social services, as well as their pain, as parents and grandparents, at being labeled as a threat to children. I met with business owners, who described their discomfort – and that of their patrons – when they have to step around homeless people sleeping in their doorways or negotiate human feces on the sidewalks downtown. I listened to neighbors opposed to the relocation, including one Westside neighbor who haltingly described walking his kids out the front door on their way to school, only to find a homeless man who had died in the night in their yard, and his

fear that occurrences like this might become more frequent. Taking in these stories helped me understand the nuanced feelings and experiences motivating stakeholders' positions.

In many cases, the act of being listened to also transformed the speakers' understanding of the controversy. One conversation with a Westside neighbor began by him stating his vehement opposition to the relocation. He had brought in a multi-page list of all the registered sex offenders currently living in his neighborhood, and contended that moving the shelter closer would only increase these numbers. Over the course of the hour, he visibly softened: his speech slowed, his shoulders relaxed, and he began to distinguish between aspects of the relocation he did not support, and aspects he did not fully understand – such as the shelter's policy on serving sex offenders. One person at a time, the act of listening began to create relationships between me and the diverse parties engaged in the controversy. As they felt listened to, valued, and supported by me as the facilitator, they increased their willingness to enter into a community process with others they did not yet believe would listen to, value, or support them. The assessment phase generated critical buy-in for the next step, bringing people together.

Phase 2: Teaching-Learning

On a warm summer evening in August, more than 200 people attended a 3-hour open community meeting. The Poverello Center's new Executive Director addressed the packed room, providing a brief overview of the center's history and mission, and presenting the need for a new facility. This was the first time the center had made its case for a new shelter to the community at large, and it was critical to correct some misinformation about their services and clients. The bulk of the meeting, however, was reserved to elicit diverse perspectives about the Poverello relocation.

At this stage of the process, the goal was not to generate solutions but to increase understanding among community members through peer teaching and learning (Finn & Jacobson, 2008). My co-facilitator and I directed participants to self-select into a number of stakeholder groups, including: Poverello residents, staff, and volunteers; neighbors

who welcome having the Poverello Center as a neighbor; neighbors who object to having the Poverello Center as a neighbor; businesses who welcome having the Poverello Center as a neighbor; and businesses who object to having the Poverello Center as a neighbor. Each group generated answers to three questions and then reported back to the whole. These questions were: Why do you care about finding an appropriate facility for the Poverello Center? What are 1 to 2 key concerns to be addressed at any new facility? What do others not understand about your position?

The teaching-learning process revealed significant areas of consensus. All seven groups expressed an ethic of responsibility to shelter the homeless and ensure the dignity of those in need. Safety also emerged as a key theme: while not all believed that Poverello clients posed an increased risk to business and residential neighbors, all concurred that community members' fears concerning safety must be addressed. Several groups expressed concern that the stigma surrounding homelessness led to mistreatment of Poverello clients (NCBI Missoula, 2011).

Stakeholder reports also revealed important distinctions between groups, particularly related to the divergent and at times conflicting meanings assigned to the Poverello Center. For clients, volunteers, staff and board members, the Poverello Center represented a critical safe-haven to those in need. As one resident said, "the Pov is a safe place to lay my head, to get a healthy meal, to clean up." For others, however, the Center signified a place of risk and danger. For residents of the Westside neighborhood (home of the proposed shelter location), concerns about safety had heightened when, within weeks, a known child sex offender was found "lurking" around Lowell school and another man, living one block from the school, was arrested for a series of sexual assaults (Florio, 2011). Fear sparked by these incidents steeled their opposition to the Poverello, whose services are available (though not targeted to) level 1 and 2 sex offenders. For some of the Poverello's current business neighbors, the center had become synonymous with public drunkenness and aggressive panhandling downtown. For them, if the Poverello serves homeless people downtown, and homeless people are a problem downtown, then the Poverello should leave downtown.

This initial public deliberation was revealing on several accounts. First, creating a space for open deliberation allowed people who had not engaged in the media controversy to participate in the conversation. While there has been an organized group of downtown businesses and Westside neighbors advocating against having the Poverello as a neighbor, until this meeting there was no organized presence of those who welcomed the Poverello Center. Much to our surprise, nearly half of those in attendance communicated strong support for the Poverello at any location. In fact, the businesses who would welcome the Poverello stakeholder group outnumbered those business members in opposition 2:1. Many business leaders spoke to a sense of heightened responsibility to take visible action to assist their community members in need. The Poverello Center staff and clients in attendance later shared how meaningful it was, in this time of heightened public scrutiny, to see so many in the room express support.

Second, the deliberative process allowed people to reevaluate their positions. Though many people had expressed opposition to having the Poverello as a neighbor before the meeting, they were resistant to the label of opposing once in the meeting. Hearing the polarizing language that had been used in public discourse reflected back to them, some participants found themselves moving toward center. At one point a woman wandered away from the "neighbors who object to having the Pov as a neighbor" stakeholder group, looking a bit lost. When I approached her, she reflected, "I came here because I thought I didn't want the Pov as a neighbor…now I think it's just that I have some concerns I'd like to see addressed."

Despite some extreme differences in perspective, the sharing in this first community meeting was strikingly nuanced and respectful, particularly in contrast to the divisive tone that had permeated letters to the editor and social media until this point. There was a palpable shift in the room as people were able to more deeply hear one another: several participants publicly thanked those whom they disagreed with for helping them understand other perspectives on the move, others asked questions for more information rather than rushing to express disagreement, and when the meeting ended, many people lingered, talking with those around them.

This shift in tone was also reflected in overwhelmingly positive participant evaluations[1] (NCBI, 2011). For many, this meeting represented a first step toward collective action. As one participant shared, "I am so proud of the community working together to try and come up with a positive solution for the Pov" (NCBI Missoula, 2011). The room was buzzing with a sense of possibility that night.

Phase 3: Work Group

To continue moving toward collective action, NCBI established a work group charged with vetting possible locations based on the concerns expressed in the initial community meeting. The twelve-member work group was diverse by design: The City of Missoula appointed three members (including a police officer, a member of the planning staff, and a member of the mayor's staff); neighborhood associations appointed three members (including a member of the Westside neighborhood); the Poverello Center appointed three members (including a resident, a staff member, and a board member); and the business community also appointed three members. About half of these people entered the work group process with pre-formed opinions about where the new shelter should be sited – some strongly opposed to the move, and others strongly in favor – yet all agreed to apply the community-identified criteria to the vetting process, and to use a model of modified consensus.

As a non-voting member of the group, I had limited impact on the content the group produced, though as the crafter of the agenda and recognized facilitator I had a great deal of influence on the process. Throughout my work, I drew upon basic practices of accompaniment, including nonintrusive collaboration; modeling mutual trust and equality; and a focus on process, particularly in mediating discussion as needed (Whitmore & Wilson, 1997).

The work group met over three sessions. The first evening we toured the current Poverello Center. This was critical, as nearly half the members had never been there before, and were shocked at the cramped

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[1] Seventy-four participants completed a written evaluation. On a Likert scale of 1-5, with "1" being poor and "5" being excellent, 93% rated the meeting a "5" or "4."

quarters and crumbling infrastructure. We then refined a rubric that would allow members to score possible locations using criteria that had emerged from the assessment and first community meeting.

During the second session work group members piled into a small, hot van, and visited five potential sites. At the first stop, I turned to Dave, who was currently living at the Poverello and asked, "You've lived at the Pov for almost a year. What is most important for you as a resident?" He quickly answered, "Access to personal hygiene. Food. A safe place to sleep that has a roof over it. Access to medical assistance. It's a simple fact...I am too old to sleep outside." Members began deliberating informally, sharing their distinct perspectives. The patrol officer talked about the relative accessibility for emergency vehicles. Neighborhood representatives pointed out the impacts of foot traffic to and from each site, and the business folks reflected on which types of businesses might be more or less affected having the center as a neighbor. As they listened, members also began seeking information from one another. The business representative, who was less familiar with the bus lines, asked the Poverello resident about the accessibility of each site, for example. Between the second and third meeting, each member independently scored each site. During the final work group meeting members reviewed one another's scores, discussed and challenged one another's decisions, and in many cases, changed their scores based on new information. In the end, the work group unanimously agreed that three sites sufficiently met the criteria to be recommended for further consideration, and that the two remaining sites did not. Interestingly, the sites that remained included were the most controversial locations: one downtown and two in the Westside neighborhood. Spirits were high the night of the work group's final session together. In our closing round of appreciations, members spoke with pride of their collective ability to overcome initial divides and work together, and shared a deep respect for one another's contributions. They had built a sense of solidarity; though they still did not all agree on which site they thought was the best for the Poverello, they had reached consensus about which sites had the potential to work. Though they took their work seriously, they left the room with handshakes and high-fives, ready to bring their recommendations back to the community.

Phase 4: Final Community Deliberation

The work group's final task was to present its findings to the community in a second public meeting on September 9. While the meeting started and ended as a large group, to maximize opportunities for participation for the more than 100 people in attendance, NCBI facilitators divided attendees into three smaller groups. Each of these cycled through facilitated conversations about each potential site. For each site, a team of four work group members summarized the strengths and challenges they had identified about the location, and participants had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and add additional strengths and challenges.

The stated goals of this meeting were twofold: 1) to update the community on the process, research, and findings regarding potential sites for a new facility, and 2) to gather additional community input to inform the Poverello Center's site selection. By these measures, the evening was effective. Given their positive experience during the work group process, a number of members also had an unspoken goal that the community would experience a similar sense of coming-together, and later expressed disappointment that this did not take place. Now that particular sites were up for discussion, many community members came to the meeting as advocates. Some conversations were less respectful than in the first meeting. At one point, a man stood up in the back of the room and shouted that he didn't want to live by a bunch of sex offenders. My throat tightened as he began to speak, and, from my stance at the front of the room, my heart sunk as three Poverello residents – seemingly distraught by the accusation – slipped out a side door. While I intervened and called on people to remember that there were Poverello residents in the room, and that everyone was here because they wanted a safe place to live, those three residents did not return. The persistent misinformation about people experiencing homelessness was deeply troubling to many work group members, myself included. As we gathered together at the close of the meeting, several questioned whether our work group efforts had mattered, and I wished I could have done more to prevent the continued barrage on the character of homeless people.

Interestingly, while the tone of the second meeting was

more adversarial than the first, the meeting evaluations were again overwhelmingly positive (NCBI, 2011). This affirms the critical importance of creating spaces where people feel heard. In the end, 83 percent of attendees recommended using this process for other divisive issues.

From Deliberation to Decision-Making

Two months after the second community meeting, The Poverello Center announced its intention to build a new facility at the Westside location which had sparked the May controversy. While disappointed in the decision, Greg Martin, a leader in the Westside neighborhood, said that the neighborhood council would, "… do whatever we can to welcome them to our neighborhood..." (Szpaller, 2011). The PTA Facebook group that initially mobilized opposition to the Poverello relocation changed its name from "Poverello not by Lowell School" to "Northside-Westside Community Forum" (Facebook, 2011). The neighborhood association, fractured before the Poverello process began, solidified through it, and established a work group charged with maintaining open dialogue with the Poverello Center. They drafted a communication plan which was adopted by the Poverello Center to improve engagement with the neighborhood.

According to Eran Fowler Pehan, Poverello's Executive Director, the community engagement process exceeded the organization's expectations in both cost and gain. The process required a considerable investment of time, and there was also a significant toll of those participating in discourse that was infused with stereotypes and stigma. She reflects, "Feeling helpless as we listened to the misperceptions – again, and again, and again – was a large cost (emotionally and spiritually) for the clients who participated in this process, our staff, board members and volunteers" (personal correspondence, 12/2/12). At the same time, she said she believes the community engagement yielded significant rewards. As she concludes:

> This process brought to realization something we had been professing, but I don't think we really understood: that the Poverello Center fully belongs to this community. We are of course free to make decisions about our future and our services, but without support and buy-in from the

community, there is no way for us to successfully see this vision play out (personal correspondence, 12/2/12).

Implications for Practice: Reflecting on Process and Principles

This community-based process provided an opportunity to identify the best practices in – and limitations of – deliberative democracy. Augmenting deliberation with practices from restorative justice helped to maximize the relationship-building aspects of the process, and attend to the emotionality surrounding the re-siting of the shelter. Drawing upon the principles of Just Practice increased the facilitation team's awareness of and attention to how history, context, meaning, power and possibility shaped the controversy. While succeeding in achieving many of our process goals, we were challenged to fully realize some of our core principles. In conclusion, I reflect on key lessons learned along the way.

Develop an Internal and External Team

Designing, implementing and evaluating a process of this scale would not have been possible without a strong internal team. NCBI used 16 facilitators at the first community meeting, (two up-front leaders and 14 experienced small group leaders and/or scribes) – every one of whom was essential to the functioning of the meeting. In addition, the project was externally guided by a multidisciplinary team including the city, the Poverello Center, and United Way, each of whom was uniquely positioned to advise the project, provide a key source of feedback to me as the lead facilitator, as well as support to the Poverello Center board and staff, who spent months under intense public scrutiny throughout the process.

Create Multiple Avenues for Community Engagement

To maximize participation, we provided multiple avenues for community members to engage in the deliberative process, both within and between public meetings. During the meetings, we facilitated structured large and small group discussions within which people could share, roaming volunteers armed with clipboards to record individual comments and concerns, and flip-charts posted around the room where attendees could write remaining questions,

comments, and recommendations. In addition, the city launched an interactive online forum for the relocation process where people could post additional feedback. The multiple modes of engagement allowed broad participation and transparency, and increased the credibility of the process as a whole.

Structure Opportunities for Intergroup Dialogue

This process offered a constructive alternative to predominant modes of political engagement, where people talk at one another rather than with one another. Mike Barton, former director of the Office of Planning and Grants, explained, "It's much easier to defeat something than to create something." Barton saw the Poverello engagement process "reinvent civil discourse…by teaching people how to talk to each other in a constructive way" (personal correspondence, 12/7/12). Unlike at city council meetings, where public comment is one-directional, and designed to advance a particular outcome, the Poverello relocation meetings offered structured opportunities for dialogue and learning from one another. While it is true, as Barton reflected, that "the most extreme people stayed extreme," the opportunity for intergroup dialogue produced shifts in understanding among hundreds of other people who engaged throughout the process.

Just Because You Want to Equalize Power Doesn't Mean You Can

Facilitators worked to equalize power among participants through a variety of moderation techniques – such as asking that no one speak twice until everyone has had the chance to speak once – and structural design. For example, ensuring that neighborhoods and businesses were equally represented on the work group. Still, power imbalances transcended the community process. The City of Missoula and many of the downtown businesses were both funders of the Poverello Center, and thus wielded a particular kind of power. Some neighbors, in contrast, found power in the emotive capacity of language, and shaped much of the public discourse using the narrative frame of the homeless-as-sexual-predators. Those with the least power were people experiencing homelessness. Although Poverello clients participated at all stages of the process, their needs received the least amount

of attention and appeared to be of the least concern in the public forums. In retrospect, we should have created more formal opportunities for their voices to be heard, perhaps by incorporating a panel in one of the community meetings, or displaying a photo-voice exhibit from residents in the meeting hall.

Correcting Misinformation Requires Negotiating Facts and Feelings

One of the key challenges in this process was the degree to which misinformation and fear about homelessness drove the discourse. Although the Chief of Police presented crime data demonstrating that the Poverello Center clients do not pose an increased risk to the community, and many people had the opportunity to hear directly from Poverello staff, clients and volunteers throughout the process, in the end, there were still many faulty assumptions about poverty. As Pehan reflected, "There seemed to be such powerful divides that factual knowledge could not address." Truth is not requisite to meaning, and untangling facts and feelings takes time. For many, the three-months allocated to this community process was simply an insufficient time period for such an untangling to occur.

Respect the Role of the Activist

One of the most difficult moments of the deliberative process occurred the day after the final public meeting, when the newspaper ran a letter to the editor written by one of the neighborhood work group representatives under the headline, "Process to choose site for homeless shelter insufficient" (Missoulian, 2011). Fellow work group members expressed shock and dismay that this member, who had only the day before seemed to profess pride in the group's process, would now publicly question the credibility of the process and delegitimize the work groups' efforts. The letter had to have been written before the second community meeting, primed to appear in the paper the following morning. For some work group members, this act betrayed the very heart of deliberation, in which, as Guntmann and Thompson (2004) write, "participants are willing to enter into a dialogue in which the reasons given, and the reasons responded to, have the capacity to change minds" (p. 20). I too felt shocked by his action. However, I came to see this work group member as torn between his role as an activist and his role as a deliberator, and to value both.

Political theorist Iris Marion Young suggests that the activist is correct to be suspicious of "deliberative processes within institutions that make it nearly impossible for the structurally disadvantaged to propose solutions to social problems…" (2001, p. 684). As this work group member saw it, the low-income residents of the Westside neighborhood were structurally disadvantaged relative to the city and business owners, and the city – in allowing only three months for the process – made it impossible to identify any new site alternatives. There is truth to this assertion; the process did not produce any previously unexamined potential sites for the Poverello, as none became available within the time-frame allowed.

As facilitator, I struggled to navigate this work group member's tension as he tried to participate while at the same time critiquing the process. He called me frequently over the course of our work together, frustrated about the time constraints on the work group, and yet showed up each meeting and participated fully and thoughtfully with the other members. After his letter to the editor ran in the newspaper, I also witnessed the painful rupture in relationship between this member and his former work group colleagues. On the phone that morning, one member said of the editorial-writer, "he's dead to me now." Though I understood, and to a degree shared, this member's sense of betrayal, I was also deeply concerned at what felt like an extreme backlash to his action. While it is difficult – and perhaps impossible – to simultaneously and authentically inhabit roles of activist and deliberator, that does not diminish the need for either (Young, 2001). Facilitators will do well to consider activist critiques related to power imbalances and constrained alternatives; local activists may be more attuned to these manifestations of power than outside facilitators.

Community members rightfully expect meaningful engagement in decisions that affect their families and neighborhoods. It is critical for macro-practitioners to be able to provide processes that bring people together around issues that so often divide communities. While there is no cookie-cutter model for community deliberation, this case study can help inform best practices and guiding principles for future efforts.

Case study post-script

Two years after the deliberation process, the Poverello Center broke ground at their new site, and in December 2014, opened its new 21,000 square foot facility. That winter was the first time in years that the Poverello had enough beds for all who sought shelter on the coldest nights, and the first time, it had sufficient space to provide classrooms for GED test preparation and resume building, on-site medical treatment, and semi-private rooms for clients with special needs (Kidston, 2014). Before the Poverello could begin building a new foundation upon which to provide expanded services to people experiencing homelessness, the Westside neighborhood and the Poverello Center built a foundation as neighbors, and the community deliberation process served as a critical component of that foundation-building. The long-term sustainability of this relationship requires ongoing effort from the agency and the neighborhood. The Poverello Center must continue to listen to and address neighbor concerns, and area residents must continue to address biases towards homeless people so that they can, in fact, be good neighbors to those in need.

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Medicare and Pediacare: A Fantastic Strategy That Never Matured

John E. Tropman

Abstract: This article surveys the life and work of Wilbur Cohen, an architect of and behind-the-scenes actor in War on Poverty legislation and politics. It focuses specifically on his mastery of the incrementalist approach to policy goals, the quantitative foundation of his work, and his dual role as policy developer and professor which formed his practitioner-academic approach to knowledge and activism during a pivotal point in American history.

Wilbur Cohen was a man of the ages; a son of Jewish immigrants who was passionately committed to creating a floor of security for all Americans. By way of introduction to the man and his work, let us reflect briefly on a sketch from Edward Berkowitz's (1995) biography of Cohen, *Mr. Social Security*:

> JFK tagged him "Mr. Social Security." LBJ praised him as the "planner, architect, builder and repairman on every major piece of social legislation [since 1935]." The *New York Times* called him "one of the country's foremost technicians in public welfare." *Time* portrayed him as a man of "boundless energy, infectious enthusiasm, and a drive for action." His name was Wilbur Cohen.

> For half a century, from the New Deal through the Great Society, Cohen (1913-1987) was one of the key players in the creation and expansion of the American welfare state. From the Social Security Act of 1935, to the establishment of disability insurance in 1956 and the creation of Medicare in 1965, he was a leading articulator and advocate of an expanding Social Security system. He played that role so well that he prompted Senator Paul Douglas's wry comment that "an expert on Social Security is a person who knows Wilbur Cohen's telephone number."

> The son of Jewish immigrants, Cohen left his Milwaukee home in the early 1930s to attend the University of Wisconsin and never looked back. Filled with a great thirst for knowledge and wider horizons, he followed his mentors Edwin Witte and Arthur Altmeyer to Washington, D.C., and began a career that would eventually land him a top position in LBJ's cabinet as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

> Variously described as a practical visionary, an action intellectual, a consummate bureaucrat, and a relentless incrementalist, Cohen was a master behind-the-scenes player who turned legislative compromise into an art form. He inhabited a world in which the passage of legislation was the ultimate reward. Driven by his progressive vision, he time and again persuaded legislators on both sides of the aisle to introduce and support expansive social programs. Like a shuttle in a loom he moved invisibly back and forth, back and forth, until the finely woven legislative cloth emerged before the public's eye.

> Nearly a decade after his death, Cohen and his legacy continue to shadow the debates over social welfare and health care reform. While Congress swings with the prevailing winds in these debates, Social Security's prominence in American life remains vitally intact. And Wilbur Cohen is largely responsible for that.

We gain a further sense of the breadth and length – and the continued reach – of his work in his *New York Times* (1987) obituary:

> Mr. Cohen went to Washington in 1934…and helped to draft the Social Security Act of 1935. He became the first employee of the Social Security Administration and a central figure in a 30-year quest for a national health insurance plan. A first move in that direction had led nowhere as far back as President Theodore Roosevelt's time. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt hoped to wrap it into his Social Security package but feared that this might doom the whole program on Capitol Hill.

> Mr. Cohen shaped the national health bill submitted by President Truman in 1952, again without success. He remained with the Social Security Administration until 1956, taught at the University of Michigan for four years as a

professor of public welfare administration and was brought back to the capital by President John F. Kennedy.

Named Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Mr. Cohen barely received Senate confirmation because his reputation as a social reformer aroused strong resistance from conservatives.

Mr. Cohen put his imprint on every important piece of social welfare legislation Presidents Kennedy and Johnson fielded under the New Frontier and Great Society labels. A quarter-century of experience by then made him the chief strategist and expert the government had in that field.

Medicare made little progress at first as Congress turned it back repeatedly. Only after President Lyndon B. Johnson's landslide of 1964 did Medicare pass, as did dozens of other proposals designed by Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Johnson rewarded him with a promotion to Secretary in 1968, and Mr. Cohen remained an activist to the final hours of the Johnson Administration.

He returned to the University of Michigan in 1969 as professor and dean of its School of Education. But he insisted on being given top-level assistants to allow him to roam the country in the pursuit of social justice, as he saw it.

Cohen's Incrementalist Influence on the War on Poverty

It is Cohen's "incrementalist" approach that we wish to highlight in this reflection – something that could have been of immense policy importance but is little, if at all, known in America today. In political science and public policy, *incrementalism* is the implementation of a goal via a series of small, planned steps rather than a few large leaps. Cohen was a master of incrementalism.

But let us start a little earlier. I arrived at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1963. I came to know of Wilbur from his time as a professor at the

University of Michigan School of Social Work (1956 to 1961) and later knew him as dean of the School of Education (1969 to 1977).

Wilbur was a passionate professor, a social activist rather than a scholar as such, an early example of the *pracademic*, or practitioner-academic. Although he appreciated data, he viewed it from a policy, rather than an explanatory, perspective. This perspective was evident when, while at the University of Michigan, he co-authored with James Morgan – then at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center – Martin David, and Harvey Brazer, a volume titled *Income and Welfare in the United States* (Morgan, Cohen, David, & Brazer, 1962). Based on more than 3,000 interviews conducted by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center, the book used original datasets and quantitative analysis to discuss, among other topics, determinants of family income, conditions of the low-income population, dynamics of social and economic change, and attitudes toward education.

Together with Harrington's (1962) *The Other America*, Cohen's *Income and Welfare in the United States* was the subject of a 13,000-word *New Yorker* review by Dwight Macdonald – the longest the magazine had ever published. Mr. Macdonald did not like *Income and Welfare.* He gave Harrington high marks but Cohen and colleagues a very bad review, going beyond even the book to tarnish the authors' scholarship. It is clear that Mr. Macdonald knew nothing about social science research or the author's scholarship, nor did he take the time to find out anything about either. But he did not let that stop him from negative dumping:

> *Income and Welfare in the United States* differs from the other works reviewed here in length (531 big pages) and in being the result of original research; 2,800 families were interviewed "in depth." I must confess that, aside from a few interesting bits of data, I got almost nothing out of it. I assume the authors think poverty is still an important social problem, else why would they have gone to all this labor, but I'm not at all sure what their general conclusions are; maybe there aren't supposed to be any, in the best tradition of American scholarship. Their book is one of those behemoths of collective research financed by a foundation (in this case, largely by Ford) that daunt

the stoutest-hearted lay reader (in this case, me). Based on "a multi-stage area probability sample that gives equal chance of selection to all non-institutional dwelling units in the conterminous United States [and that] was clustered geographically at each stage and stratified with interlaced controls," it is a specimen of what Charles Lamb called biblia-abiblia – things that have the outward appearance of books but are not books, since they cannot be read. Methodologically, it employs something called the "multivariate analysis," which is explained in Appendix E. Typographically, Appendix E looks like language, but it turns out to be strewn with booby traps, all doubtless well known in the trade, like "dummy variables," "F ratios," "regression coefficients," "beta coefficients" (and "partial beta coefficients"), and two kinds of "standard deviations" – "of explanatory variable A" and "of the dependent variable."

Some concurred with Macdonald. Writing in *International Social Work*, Lynes (1963) also reviewed together Harrington's *Other America* and Cohen and colleagues' *Income and Welfare*. Harrington, he concluded, "used facts as an artist uses paint, to create a picture; and where personal impressions are more colorful than statistics, he does not hesitate to use them" (p. 51). Harrington should be required reading for every sociology student, Lynes observes – and then laments that students are "more likely to find *Income and Welfare in the United States* on their reading lists" (p. 51). His review lambasts the "impersonal" approach and "impenetrable" style of *Income and Welfare*, contrasting it with Harrington's secondary-sourced *Other America* and unconvinced that "in the present instance the loss of comprehensibility is justified by the quality of the results achieved" (p. 51).

Others, writing from a more academic perspective, nevertheless judged that the work provided little new information. "Out of an enormous amount of manipulation of data, little new emerges…No policy emerges unless it is that of greater equality of opportunity for education in order to minimize the intergenerational transfer of low-income status" (Reid, 1963).

However, Macdonald's observations were not the only response to Cohen and his colleagues. From the Brookings Institution, Alice Rivlin wrote:

> [The authors] have collaborated to produce…an important book. Here for the first time the full power of multivariate analysis applied to a well-designed national sample survey has been used to find answers to basic questions [about households and demography in America]. The book is well organized and clearly presented, which is remarkable considering that it had four authors. It should be valuable not only to the economist and the sociologist, but also to that mythical reader, the well-educated layman….While one might quarrel with the details and one might wish the authors had carried the analysis further at some points, it is a fine piece of work and deserves to be widely and carefully read (Rivlin, 1963).

Her assessment was echoed by others, among them Caslon (1964) in a review of three volumes addressing the question of economic security in America. As he explains, *Income and Social Change* (Titmuss, 1962) did not attempt to "replace the discredited data on income distribution with estimates of true family disposable income or analyze the bases on which distribution of income rests" (p. 253). Cohen and colleagues, Caslon continues, have produced a more satisfying work. They "analyze the factors influencing the distribution of welfare and the process of change itself," concentrating on quantifying and analyzing the importance and effects of varied factors (Caslon, 1964, p. 253).

Although less than evenhanded, Macdonald's review, especially the portion on *The Other America*, was widely influential and credited in large part with kick-starting the War on Poverty. This focus on poverty had emerged in nascent form as President John F. Kennedy's President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime (Kennedy, 1961).

Jill Lapore, also a *New Yorker* writer and Harvard professor, commented on Macdonald's review and its impact in her *Smithsonian* article (2012), observing that Macdonald's evocative prose used *The Other America* as a call to action. She had little use for the other two books in the review, commenting that Macdonald's "Our Invisible Poor" used "a slew" of other titles (only two; hardly a slew) along with a series of economic reports, to demonstrate his claims.

Contrary to the naysayers, I have found Cohen's *Income and Welfare* very useful over the years when using it in doctoral and advanced masters classes. What is missing from the unflattering contemporary reviews, which we can now see from the perspective of distance, is that *Income and Welfare in the United States* was an absolute game changer regarding the systematic collection of social science data (as opposed to descriptive census data) and a careful analysis of those data. One outworking of the book's approach to data collection and analysis was the evaluation tool designed to assess President Johnson's War on Poverty programs: In 1966 and 1967, the Office of Economic Opportunity implemented an early version of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. In 1968, the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center developed and launched a longitudinal version of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics under the direction of Cohen's colleague and co-author, James Morgan. It continues today at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research as the world's longest longitudinal study of household dynamics (PSID, 2015).

Cohen's Incrementalist Influence on Medicare

Wilbur Cohen was one of the principal movers behind the construction and passage of the Social Security Act itself. Subsequently, as secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, he championed Titles 18 and 19, Medicare and Medicaid. A detailed treatment of this effort can be found in Harris' (1966) *A Sacred Trust*.

During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, I had the opportunity for many conversations with Wilbur, and we became academic friends and occasional collaborators. He wrote the forward to *Strategic Perspectives on Social Policy* – an anthology developed by Tropman, Dluhy, Lind, Vasey, and Croxton (Cohen, 1976, p. xi). Here is what he said:

FOREWORD

I have been involved in social policy for some 40 years, and I find it fascinating, changing, elusive, and volatile.

My experiences in social policy formulation have evolved from my roles as student, civil servant, parent, and taxpayer, professor to political

appointee and back to professor, observer, and citizen. I marvel at the many different ways by which social policy may be perceived, interpreted, and criticized.

I welcome, therefore, this stimulating and wide-ranging collection of readings, which my colleagues – Professors Tropman, Dluhy, Lind, Vasey, and Croxton have assembled.

There is the frequently told story about the man who realized one day that he had been reading, writing, and speaking prose all his life. His self-image improved remarkably with this new knowledge. It changed his whole life.

Similarly, it has been astounding to some people to find out that they have been deeply involved in the formulation of social policy. For the human kind, social policy is as pervasive and essential as breathing air. Men cannot live without creating, influencing, and utilizing social policy.

New and changing social policies are in the making for the decade of the 1970s. This volume of readings is a welcome addition, which should help to gain new insights into social policy processes, analysis, and implication.

Wilbur J. Cohen
Professor of Education The University of Michigan,
U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968

He also contributed a chapter, "What Every Social Worker Should Know About Political Action," to that volume. In his chapter, he outlined the complex process of an incremental approach to political action, of which he was a master. Here are his steps:

1. Idea: The proposed solution or action.

2. Legislative Proposal: The legislative document prepared for the appropriate group of decision makers.

3. Period of Conflict and Public Debate: Public discussion in the form of focus groups, press articles, speeches, etc.

4. Development of Alliances: Building support among

relevant policy elites and organizations.

5. Period of Legislative Debate: Hearings within the legislative (or other decision-making) body, front room and back room discussion.

6. Enactment of Legislation: The vote on the proposal.

7. Funding of Legislation: Appropriation that enables the legislation to be carried out.

While items 6 and 7 are not listed as specific phases, he discusses them in his chapter, so I include them here. (However, we should note that Wilbur ends too soon. After a piece of legislation is passed and funds are appropriated, operating guidelines known as Federal Regulations are developed. These have their own steps in the legislative process.)

As noted, Wilbur was an incrementalist. He believed that successful transformational change (of the system) occurred through the accretion of transactional changes over time (change within the system). His underlying practice theory I called the "Fuller Brush Man approach to social policy." For those encountering this American idiom for the first time, it refers to the door-to-door sales technique of the Fuller brush salesman (and later, saleswoman). The idea was that you do not sell much standing on the stoop. You have got to get your foot in the door, and then get yourself into the house. Once inside you do much better.

That was why his four-part Medicare/Pediacare plan was so interesting to me, even though only one part succeeded. He proposed:

Part 1: Medicare, or medical care for people over age 65.

Part 2: Pediacare, or medical care for children under age 5.

Part 3: Broader accessibility, or gradually lowering the age of Medicare eligibility. This proposal continues to emerge, decades after Cohen suggested it (Sanger-Katz, 2016).

Part 4: Broader Pediacare accessibility or, as children aged they would drag their eligibility along.

He suggested that, in its first year, Pediacare should apply to children under age 5; the next year it should be available to children under 6, and so on. According to Cohen's plan, when the two ages met America would have (had) a national health plan.

Under President Lyndon B. Johnson, Cohen successfully headed a lobbying effort to pass Medicare, which the president signed into law on July 30, 1965. He also assisted in passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Elementary Education Act of 1965. Johnson rewarded Cohen by promoting him to undersecretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), a post Cohen assumed on June 1, 1965. His work centered on the implementation of Medicare and Medicaid and the passage of additional Great Society legislation. Early in 1968 HEW secretary John Gardner left his post, and Cohen became the acting secretary. After Johnson's March 1968 announcement that he would not seek re-election, he appointed Cohen secretary of HEW, and Cohen served until January 20, 1969. As secretary, he continued to push for passage of additional Great Society legislation. Further, he advocated for, but failed to convince Congress to pass, the expansion of Medicare to cover infants and young children (Berkowitz, 2000).

The Final Boarding Process

In 1969, following the conclusion of the Johnson administration, Wilbur returned to the University of Michigan as dean of the School of Education. There he continually lobbied for positive social programs. It was not a great appointment, however. Wilbur was a national thought leader, and he worked on the national stage. He really did not need to be bogged down with running an education school – it was not, actually, his areas of expertise. I have no knowledge of what the university administration was thinking when it engaged him. In my judgment, however, an appointment that better suited him would have been University Professor of Health, Education and Welfare Policy, with affiliations to the schools of Education, Public Health, and Social Work and the then-small Institute of Public Policy Studies (later the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy).

He continued as an activist to the end of his career. This included traveling to a May 1987 gerontology conference in Korea. We agreed to talk more about the

Medicare/Pedicare plan when he returned: His interest was still percolating, and he had ideas for a fresh approach that repackaged the components and incorporated new political strategies. He died during that trip, and I never found out what they were.

Had he lived, and had his incrementalist approach taken root in healthcare and other social welfare issues, who knows what American social policy might be like today?

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Black Men, White Teachers, White Colleagues: An Autoethnographic Triangulate of Racial Profiling Interaction and Closure

Stefan Battle

Abstract: Educationally, I use autoethnography as a method for teaching social work students to write self-narratives and to listen first to their own experiences, then to listen fully to their clients. Therefore, this qualitative, autobiographical article uses autoethnography to reconsider three decades of racially charged experiences, and how racial profiling affected me as a younger, and eventually older, Black male. Within the context of educating students of social work, this article examines three written self-narratives with reflexive responses as support, and it outlines how students can learn from this exercise.

Keywords: racial profiling, relationships, practice

Educating Social Work Students through Autoethnography: The Racial Profiling Experiences of a Black Man

In the early 1980s, I was a student at a Boston University. One fall evening, a classmate and I had arranged to meet at her apartment to go out to dinner. I was on my way to her apartment, walking slowly. People were coming home from work, so the sidewalk was busy. I was walking toward the entrance of a subway station. From a distance, I could see people flocking up the stairs and then fanning out as they headed in so many directions. As I approached the entrance to the subway station, I came upon a white female who was walking slower than me. I advanced, maneuvering to pass her on the right. Immediately, she noticed my presence and glanced back at me with a look that I can only describe as fearful. Then, she began to run! I instantly stopped in disbelief and shock. I felt numb, and for a few seconds I didn't comprehend what was happening. In my naiveté, I never thought that someone would simply fear me, would run from me just because I happened to be in close proximity. Within mere seconds that seemed like minutes, the white female stopped running and noticed that I had stopped walking. She turned and saw me staring at her in disbelief. In the distance, I could see what appeared to be shame on her face. She uttered a quiet apology and continued to walk.

My innocent wonder – not the incidents in this vignette – is what should be shocking to readers because I should have known better given the history of racism with Black males in the U.S. I share this story of thirty years ago to say that nothing has changed for a Black male. Racial profiling at the most unconscious level is alive and well. I know this is a cynical statement, but this truth is undeniable when you are a Black male in America. I was stereotypically treated as if I were dangerous because I was both Black and a male. Sadly, my experience is not unusual. According to Ghandnoosh (2014), "White Americans overestimate the proportion of crime committed by people of color and associate people of color with criminality" (p. 3).

Such a view of criminality connected merely to a Black man's color leads to the painful reality that Black males continue to be vulnerable. Imagine walking into a store and being watched or followed simply because you fit the stereotypical and socially constructed profile of a person with a specific gender and race identification. Imagine walking down a street where a white female looks nervously at you and nearly sprints to her car, locking the door quickly even though you are yards away – all because (as with the woman walking to the subway in my vignette) she happened to see you, a Black man, approaching her direction. Imagine entering a clothing store where the employee greets everyone who entered after you with "Can I help you?" but offers you no greeting. These incidents are indications that you have been racially profiled. Racial profiling may be experienced as a humiliation or a personal attack that can be quite blatant or even subtle (and therefore deniable by the perpetrator). Such profiling is commonly directed toward a person – historically toward males – whose physical characteristics (usually racially based) are common of a marginalized group. I am able to offer this description distinctly from a Black man's perspective because I have been racially profiled; by

now, no longer a naive young man, I have had this kind of experience more times than I can count and certainly enough to recognize it when it occurs. I do not need to research a formal definition with scholarly citations to identify the clearly perceptible, instinctual, gut-clenching feelings that surge inside me when I have been profiled as a Black male. In this area, I know my subject firsthand.

Since the 2012 fatal shooting in Florida of Trayvon Martin, a young Black male, there have been multiple deaths of young Black males that have received national media attention. Their deaths and the tenor of media frenzy unfortunately verify that racial profiling is alive and well in this post-Civil Rights era of supposed harmony and equality for everyone even though, as Ghandnoosh (2014) said, "most White Americans no longer endorse traditional forms of prejudice associated with era of Jim Crow racism-overt beliefs about the biological inferiority of Blacks and support for segregation and discrimination" (p. 30). Those people who do – overtly or covertly – believe in white superiority are critically dangerous to people of color. The massacre of innocent church goers on June 17, 2015 by a racist young White man in Charleston, South Carolina showcases the harsh atrocity against Black people. In the traditional sense, the idea behind racial profiling is for law enforcement professionals to have a means to prevent crime or to identify perpetrators of crime. More realistically, racial profiling seems to have enabled law enforcement officers to use their power to target marginalized men of color with excessive force and violence in the name of maintaining order. It also enables everyday citizens to shy away from Blacks in public and private settings and it somehow seems to encourage mentally and morally ill people to target and kill Blacks and other people of color.

I write this article as an experienced social work professional and assistant professor at a prominent northeastern U.S. college. Although most often my students are White, from time to time there are a few males of color, especially Black males, in my classes. Whenever I share the story that opened this article, I immediately get "the look" from them. I do not need to finish; the incident is all too familiar to them. Unfortunately, they have been subjected to and are able to identify similar circumstances of racial profiling having occurred to them, which they often share in class. Sadly, all too little has changed, generationally, from my time to theirs today, regarding racial profiling.

As a social work professor, one of my jobs is to teach students in the Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) and in the Masters of Social Work (MSW) programs about the social constructs that both unconsciously and consciously guide their life choices and perceptions of the humanity that surrounds them. Particularly regarding social class and race, these students need overtly educational opportunities to reflect on often unselfconscious beliefs learned in myriad ways as children in the U.S. They need poignant and powerful new experiences that encourage them to dig into notions of appearances and perceptions that cause them to presume that people *are* treated alike just because they know people *should be* treated equally. These new, often young, helpers-in-training benefit from the power of narrative – specifically of their teacher's self-narratives. It prompts them to ask the unasked questions and to question the unquestioned perceptions that will interfere with their abilities to act as social work professionals. I use autoethnography to both harness my own conscious awareness of racial experiences, and as a tool for teaching social work students to recognize their own experiences in which they are either judged by their gender, race, or socioeconomic status, or have prejudged others. Before they work with clients who have their own history with prejudgment, they need to become self-reflective. In this article, I describe how autoethnography can help in teaching new social workers to listen to themselves fully and then, with newly opened ears, to their clients.

The self-narratives that comprise this article are examples of the kind of autoethnographical work teachers can use to their students' benefit in the helping professions. Equally important, the teacher's act of self-search involved in autoethnography is a necessary first step toward being able to help students write their own autoethnographical self-narratives. Hence, the self-narratives in this article demonstrate a viable teaching process that may lead to self-knowledge and a compassionate ability to listen to clients. As written, these self-narratives articulate familiar themes from my past, rooted in my adolescence and carried into adulthood. In ways that reading a textbook cannot, they offer examples of stories that channel the interconnection of familiarity

surrounding blatant inequities and disrespect for my racial composition as a younger and then older Black man. I use these vignettes to sketch details that expose my experiences endured in connection with some white Americans. My self-narratives capture raw and pronounced incidences that generate embedded emotions and reactions, some of which were not fully uncovered until I wrote them down (despite orally sharing some of them with students over the years). The act of writing these self-narratives captured nuances in how I coped with and navigated through dark events with some white Americans in my life. Both this written act and the written artifact that can be shared with students offer potent ways to teach those in the helping professions about both their own and others' attitudes, which certainly will influence their work.

In this article, I examine autoethnography as an empowering and effective teaching tool that engages and educates people in the helping professions. Using the intimate details of my personal experiences as a Black male with memories of racial profiling that developmentally impacted me as a student and young professional, I offer my vulnerability to help students of social work reconsider racial profiling and how it may have influenced them in their own lives and actions – as well as how it may impact those people they assist as professional social workers. To meet these aims, I first explore autoethnography as a teaching method for offering actual information about racism, prejudice, and stereotyping encounters. I then use autoethnography to articulate that racial profiling is not exclusive to law enforcement and that these actions and behaviors can occur in other settings. Finally, I use it to provide student helping professionals with vivid examples of racial profiling intended to promote dialogue regarding the social injustices that affect to their clients who are members of a marginalized group. I end this piece with specific suggestions for how teachers might use autoethnography with their student social workers or other helping professionals.

Autoethnography

According to Wall (2006), "autoethnography is an emerging qualitative research method that allows the author to write in a highly personalized style, drawing on his or her experience to extend

understanding about a societal phenomenon" (p. 1). Specifically, "autoethnography is a style of autobiographical writing and qualitative research that explores an individual's unique life experiences in relationship to social and cultural institutions" (Custer, 2014, p. 1). In basic terms, "as a form of ethnography, autoethnography overlaps art and science; it is part art or self and part ethno or culture" (Ellis, 2004, p. 31).

The premise of "autoethnography is to use self as the subject of investigation" (Chang, 2008, p. 62). Therefore, the rationale to use autoethnography as an investigative tool is that it provides a wide lens of self-awareness that leads a person to uncover and to understand the meanings of social phenomena. Denzin, as cited in Furman (2015), explained: "Researchers' capacity to use their own humanity to connect with the humanity of others is essential; increasing our own capacity for emotional depth and insight is certainly a prerequisite to our producing research of emotional depth and sophistication" (p. 103). Researchers who engage in autoethnographic research strip away those prerequisite, evocative layers before experiencing both positive and negative emotions that might challenge their internal selves and, similarly, those positive and negative experiences related to self. This work can lead the autoethnographic researcher to rehash the evocative experiences. Rehashing, in turn, can enable the autoethnographic researcher to raise to conscious levels those experiences, which may empower them to become experienced storytellers of their own lives. According to Custer (2014), "Not only does an individual have to face their own pain, often times they are exposed to the pain and anguish of other people who have experienced similar circumstances" (p. 1). As an experienced storyteller around a particular experience, the autoethnographic researcher offers the self through self-disclosure by sharing their evocative experiences with others who have dealt with or who are dealing with similar experiences. Custer (2014) stated that "autoethnography by its very nature is engagement of self" (p. 4). Self-disclosure as a mode of therapeutic treatment is a way for a reader of the autoethnographer's work to connect and navigate his or her own evocative challenges and to not feel alone. To this end, autoethnography becomes not only a research tool, but an educational one as well.

Wall (2006) discussed the necessity to conduct reflexivity as part of the autoethnographic process,

finding it beneficial to "step back" from the process and reflect on the "presence, standpoint, integrity, or characteristic" (p. 3) that might be influential to the autoethnographic writing. Such reflexive thinking can be usefully conducted through writing. Autoethnography, therefore, often engages writing about one's emotions, which is something social work teachers typically do not ask of students despite a "strong connection between writing and the healing of emotional wounds" (Foehr, 2000, p. 340). Such personal writing can help people to engage their past and their fears in positive, courageous ways that enable a transformative reframing of lived experience (p. 350). Therefore, autoethnography is a potent teaching tool, but it certainly is not without its dangers; those who educate helping professionals through such writing should be aware of how sharing their vulnerabilities may encourage similar openness in their students, who must learn to protect themselves even while offering up their own stories. Indeed, those students who practice such self-revelation also require deeply respectful responsiveness from their teachers. Mindful modeling of how to work with such self-expression is necessary. Custer (2014) stated: "Writing and telling a story about oneself can open old wounds, but also manifests the energy needed to heal them completely" (p. 9). The thoughtful educator will guide students carefully and with deep respect for their vulnerability when using autoethnography to teach. This method of self-revelation for teaching purposes can help to situate the classroom as a safe, if ideologically and emotionally challenging, setting.

From my personal, authorial perspective, finding the courage to use autoethnography was excruciatingly hard. It required me to revisit a period in my life as a younger – and eventually older – Black man that I would have preferred to suppress. However, the chronicle of these self-narratives with their supportive reflections have provided the opportunity to step outside the common teaching box of exploring textbook materials and from the traditional research modes to offer helping profession students real opportunities to learn and use accepting communication strategies. Furthermore – and equally important – the telling of these stories has enabled me to use my experiences and sense of self in a qualitative, empathic, and purposeful condition to heal wounds about racial hurtfulness that have affected me deeply, while bringing closure to those

past episodes through storytelling. It was personally important to me to address these wounded feelings as they held the potential to negatively influence my work with students as well as my professional social work interactions with, for example, white teachers. Autoethnography and self-narrative, therefore, have powerful educational potential for current and future helping professionals.

Finally, autoethnography as a teaching method provides educators the opportunity to reflect on significant periods in their lives. In my case, it offered an opportunity to examine significant instances of racial discord that influenced my thinking about the world. In fact, the self-narratives presented in this article have become a platform for architecting my racial identity as a Black man, which transmits to my students. Each self-narrative has a specific message that resonates with racial profiling and discord. They transition from one to the other, resonating with consistent themes and patterns that magnify crucial incidents in my racial development and awareness as a person of color. By offering reflexive responses after each self-narrative, I model for students that such stories can breathe as a portrait of endurance about oneself.

Three Autoethnographic Stories

These three narratives capture the memories of racial discord that began in my adolescence. Prior to attending high school, I did not experience noticeable racial disharmony in the primary grades. After experiencing the incidences that these self-narratives describe, however, I learned to internalize racism and prejudice. That was until the acts of telling them to students and then of writing about them allowed me to share painful encounters. This held them up for young social work students to consider and allowed me to begin to heal. The power of self-reflection about my racial experiences has led to closure of some unforgotten wounds. But healing through autoethnography does not come cheaply, which is something educators in the helping professions need to remember. Indeed, the traumatic process of writing the self-narratives stirred up anger, frustration and sadness for me. There were times when I needed to walk away from the computer for hours or even a day to allow myself to sit with the rawness and emotionally charged feelings surrounding a painful period in my life. However, the act of writing both the self-narratives

and the reflexive responses was therapeutic, allowing me to finally tell my story about race and racism without needing to suppress or hold back the emotions linked to each narrative. According to DeSalvo (1999): "The therapeutic process of writing goes something like this: we receive a shock or a blow or experience a trauma in our lives. In exploring it, examining it, and putting it into words, we stop seeing it as a random, unexplained event" (p. 43). Telling my stories has finally given me a voice to speak for others who have had similar experiences so that they do not feel alone or unrecognized by societal behavior with a marginalized group. My students can learn from these honest struggles because they will see the human behind them in our classroom discussions, which is a process that mere textbook work can sterilize and render impotent.

The Poem

As a young Black male born in the early 1960s who attended school in the last years of that decade and in the 1970s, I was guarded in my interactions with some white Americans, especially teachers. Socially speaking, my approach derived from being a child of the Civil Rights era in the U.S. when protests and campaigns advocated equality for Black Americans. In my family, I was raised to know myself as Black and as needing not to perpetuate stereotypes. My older siblings – all three of whom became helping professionals with significant higher education – were my mentors. My sister earned an MSW and eventually established a successful, private clinical practice in which she helped many people before her death from breast cancer in 1998. One of my brothers earned a Ph.D. in social welfare policy while his twin earned a law degree. They taught me how to carry myself, to build high self-expectations, and to say "I can do this" to myself and to a world that sought to limit my future because of my skin color. My parents, too, extended a great deal of freedom to explore and expose myself to racial differences, although they did so with caution and concern. Whenever I ventured out, my mother would say, "Remember that you are Black first." Her message was to be proud of my racial heritage, to let no one sway me way from being proud, and to always be aware of those persons who would judge me without any clear purpose, reason, or just cause. This aphorism became a ritual, signifying for me

what it meant to be Black in America and how such a statement can carry a burden.

One challenging experience stands out from my junior year of high school. The English Department hosted a school poetry contest. I do not remember the particulars, but students who entered the contest were expected to write a short poem and submit their writing to a six-person judging panel, all of whom happened to be white English teachers.

Having worked hard on my own poem, I remember nervously entering the school and walking to the third floor where the English department was located to submit it. I stood in line behind three white students as they presented their poems. When my turn came, the judge, who was a white female teacher, practically snatched my poem from my hands and read it intensely. My nervousness and fear escalated as I became intimidated and puzzled by her action, which clearly was different from what I had witnessed with the other three students.

After reading the poem, she looked hard at me and accused me of plagiarizing. I was shocked and didn't know what to say or do. But, with as much composure as I could muster in the face of this accusation, I defended my writing while holding back tears of fear and anger. I explained that I had written the poem without assistance. Refusing to listen and aggressively handing back my poem, she walked away.

This teacher's behavior, and how it differed between me and the white students who had been in line before me, suggested that she may have been racially motivated by societal stereotypes about young Black males and their presumed inability to be as successful scholastically as white students might be. I internalized her behavior as a negative illustration of how some white teachers viewed young Black male students.

I have never spoken to family or friends about this poetry contest incident. I remember trying to suppress and detach myself from it. However, I experienced shame even though I did nothing wrong. Unfortunately, the incident has left me feeling insecure about my writing, which makes this self-narrative approach to teaching all the more challenging (and suggests even more the freeing nature of autoethnography).

In all honesty, my reflexive responsive to this self-narrative about the poem took a while to write. I realized that the incident left me feeling strongly vulnerable and insecure about my ability to write. Even today, despite having earned an Ed.D. and being a scholar in the process of publishing, I question whether I am good enough to write scholarly pieces. I question whether my writing will be of importance and useful to the academic community, even for those who share my scholarly interests. I question how my peers, mainly those who are white, will receive my writing. I am afraid of being judged and have been made to feel incompetent by others, especially some white individuals, regarding my writing. I think this questioning leads me to procrastinate with writing at times, which is not a helpful scholarly behavior. However, as DeSalvo (1999) said, "I didn't know that if you want to write and don't because you didn't feel worthy enough or able enough, not writing will eventually begin to erase who you are" (p. 31). I do not want to be erased or invisible.

In rereading this self-narrative, I remind myself of thoughts – fears? – about not being likely to win the contest because I am Black. I thought then, *Why am I even bothering?* I think that my nervousness about entering the poetry contest was not so much about the contest itself but more about the reception from the judging panel. Although I do not recall having experienced difficulties before this contest entry, it was well-known in my high school that many Black students (male and female) were excluded by some white English teachers for Advanced Placement courses in English and other subjects, even if they were academically proficient. At some point, I had begun to notice that there always seemed to be some type of excuse regarding Black students' incapability to succeed academically. In fact, that English teachers thought that way was a standard rumor throughout the school, so I remember wondering *Who am I to think that they will greet me with fairness?* It felt like a self-fulfilling prophecy when the judge accused me of plagiarizing my poem. Indeed, I wondered how I possibly could have persuaded a white teacher that I actually had written my own poem when she perpetuated the racial indignities and stereotypical thinking and beliefs that young Black males were incapable of being academically successful.

In Tatum's (2003) *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? – And Other Conversations about Race*, the author did not simply examine why some Black high school students sit together in the cafeteria, but why other marginalized groups from different racial origins including whites create this culture for themselves. She writes: "As children enter adolescence, they begin to explore the question of identity, asking 'Who am I? Who can I be?' in a way they have not done before. For Black youth, asking 'Who am I?' includes thinking about 'Who am I ethnically and/or racially? What does it mean to be Black?'" (pp. 52-53). Tatum implied that similar racial group membership offers unity, solidarity, safety, and security because of familiarity. "Stepping out of the box," as I tried to do by entering the poetry contest, reveals my perhaps unconscious hope of assimilating into another racial group; indeed, the attempt altered my sense of unity and solidarity within my Black group. As I abandoned some of the familiarity with my own racial group, I simultaneously doubted my ability and questioned my identity and right to be in the contest because I was Black – the white teacher's response to me notwithstanding.

Black students at my high school seemed to be shunted into three categories: *academically able*, *somewhat skillful*, and *limited*. Many Black students were in the somewhat skillful group and very few were considered academically able based upon the perceptions mainly by some white teachers. *Academically excellent* was not even possible, it seemed. Unfortunately, when one constantly hears inadequacies about oneself, one eventually begins to doubt one's potential. The subliminal messages made me feel insecure and vulnerable, which translated into my insecurity about writing. However, I persevered despite these harmful messages. It is amazing how one incident from one's past can trigger unpleasantness, ongoing pain and self-doubt.

My Colleagues – Them Against Me

As an adult, I worked for eight years in several school systems as a school social worker/guidance counselor in northeastern Massachusetts. In that context, I observed and experienced white teachers' negative attitudes, interactions, and avoidance when dealing with their Black male students. In my professional role, an unwritten, unacknowledged – yet clearly expected – duty was added to my job. The duty was

managing the academic and behavioral challenges of Black male students and intervening in their relationships with white teachers. It was a strange and unspoken responsibility that some of my white teacher colleagues assumed I should take on. In cases where their discomfort or lack of awareness surfaced when confronted with racial differences, the need for my racial physical presence was obvious. The message was clear: I was the go-to Black person who would be expected to address, solve, and – I dare say – fix issues of racial disharmony when it came to conflicting and challenging interactions between a Black male student and a white teacher.

Not surprisingly, I found some white teachers' attitudes and behaviors blatantly insulting and racist in that they were observably uncomfortable when interacting with Black male students. Seemingly because of their discomfort, white teachers approached me to intervene regarding an academic performance and behavioral concern that they or other educators of any race should have been able to handle. In these cases, I typically had little to no previous contact with the Black male students before the request. The white teachers said such things of the students as: "Why is he not getting it?" or "Why don't you talk to him? I don't think he likes me." "He seems to be so angry." and "He should not be in this class. He should be in one of the lower-level math (or English) classes."

For some white teachers, the line of demarcation and their relationships with Black male students clearly was characterized by intolerance and resistance. Simply and without reservation, the line was drawn among some white teachers who demonstrated a controlled, segregated nature and intolerance for Black male students by not providing a nurturing classroom environment.

Writing about these experiences is causing me to wonder aloud why some white teachers are reluctant to interact with Black males in their classrooms. As educators, we are expected to assist all students equally and fairly regardless of their racial background. Obviously, to believe that this expectation was indeed fulfilled reflects my naiveté. Yet, being a Black male should not designate me to service all Black male students, whether I know them or not. Being a Black male certainly did not provide

me the ability to understand all Black males' experiences and challenges. How arrogant it is to assume such things.

Writing the first responsive narrative exhibited my fears, anxiousness and vulnerability as a younger Black male. However, writing this second self-narrative and its reflexive responsive from the perspective of being an older Black man has led me to feel anger and disillusionment toward some of my white colleagues. I realized that I had allowed my years of education and training as a school social worker to be taken for granted and minimized by some of my white coworkers, enabling them to successfully characterize me as the go-to Black colleague. Their characterization was an act of disservice and disrespect to me both as a professional and as a person. My racial identification seemed more important to some of my white colleagues than my skills as a school social worker/guidance counselor.

How dare my white colleagues think that they could dismiss their need to step up to the plate – frankly, to do their jobs – to support all students, especially young Black males? How dare my white colleagues think that they could shift their responsibilities to me, a Black man, just because I have the same racial identification as the student, so that they could avoid dealing with their discomfort? How dare my white colleagues pretend that race and cultural differences do not exist among us as educational professionals as they clearly acted out their avoidance to interact with students racially and culturally different from themselves? How dare my white colleagues allow what I can only characterize as their white privilege to manipulate and cause dissension in their teacher-student relationships, duties, and responsibilities as teachers by not treating young Black males with equity and respect?

Although at the time of these incidents I was angry and astonished by my white colleagues' lack of sensitivity and disservice to a particular group of students, intellectually I knew that I had the power to push back on their requests to become the go-to Black person in the building; I knew I could have empowered them to assume ownership as educators and to serve all students, not just a select few based upon their choice of comfort versus discomfort. However, my vulnerability got the better of my cognitive ability and therefore I allowed myself to be used for what I believed to be the preservation of the

Black male students. In other words, I did not want the Black male students to become the victims of potentially harsh and discriminatory behavior. It was obvious by the tone of some of my white colleagues' voices and their prejudicial and embedded attitudes that the Black male students might not have gotten a fair chance. In some respects, I felt like I needed to take on the responsibility to prevent disservice to the Black male students even if it meant suppressing my own raw emotions. I felt like I had a duty, even though it was not fair, to enable my white colleagues' to not establish a relationship with young Black males. I felt I could not allow these students to have the same detrimental experiences in school with some white teachers as I had as a young school-aged Black male.

Our students depend on their teachers to direct, guide, support and mentor them in their educational journey. How heartbreaking for some students, especially students of color, when this reality is shattered and the student-teacher relationship is tarnished based solely upon the color of the students' skin.

Being a Black Male and the Nature of Public Education

This third self-narrative depicts and considers my attempt to become a freshman at the high school, a college preparatory school, to which I referred in my first self-narrative. The school's guidance counselor, a tall white man, came to visit my eighth grade parochial grammar school class to meet prospective students. He identified himself as the guidance counselor for the incoming freshman class.

When I met with him, I noticed that he had my academic folder on the table and was reviewing the contents. As I sat across from him, I remember looking at his face and hearing his tone, which seemed to express uncertainty. He would look up at me over his brown eye-glass frames, periodically frowning in an authoritarian manner. His behavior made me feel uncomfortable and unsettled.

Although my city had four high schools from which students could choose, since the sixth grade I had dreamed of attending this particular high school. Whenever I would drive by, I would secretly say, "This is where I am going." However, during this

interview I wondered whether my dream would be shattered in a twenty-minute conversation because of the counselor's uncertainty about me. I recall being the only male of color in the group of prospective students from my grammar school. Most of my male friends of color went to the city's trade high school.

What was the guidance counselor's apparent hesitation about? What did it mean that he kept peering over his glasses that way? Was his reaction based upon my academic ability? Was it that I might not be a good fit? Or, was there a problem with my racial identification? Despite all of the worries brought about by this counselor's attitude, the good news is that I was accepted to the high school.

During my freshman year, that uncertainty and the guidance counselor's apparent reluctance to admit me resurfaced. Since he was the freshman guidance counselor, throughout my freshman year he periodically checked in to see how I was doing. However, his check-ins were not as supportive as they seemed to be purposeful. He had a mission, which appeared to be to prove that I was not college material. Even though I was accepted to the high school, the acceptance felt like a set up for failure, which certainly would support and perpetuate his perception of me a young Black male student who could not sustain the academic rigor of a college preparatory high school.

His actions included consistently overtly stating that I should transfer to the local trade high school. He expressed that because I was an "uncertain" candidate for college, gaining some type of trade would secure skills to prepare myself for employment. The rumor around school, which was supported by my own experience, was that he campaigned to remove students, specifically Black males who did not "cut the mustard" academically.

Before I graduated – I did graduate, of course, and then attended Boston University – I secretly learned both from some teachers of color and white teachers that he had been identified as a racist who habitually targeted young Black males. There was validation in having this information based upon my previous concerns that my racial identification might be a factor in his uncertainty about me, but it wasn't comforting to learn how close I had come to being manipulated by his racism.

This was a difficult self-narrative to write. With each rekindled memory, I experienced the resurfacing of this school authority's abhorrent behavior – a man who was expected to treat everyone the same regardless of differences. Can you imagine being a student given an exciting opportunity to achieve something that you have always wanted and, unbeknownst to you, there is an individual waiting for you to fail, plotting to remove you? Learning about such a person can damage one's self-esteem and leave deep emotional scars.

In truth, I lived a sheltered life growing up. My mother was extremely protective and watched almost my every move. Although she referred to me as her "city child," I was not out of her sight for any extended period of time. It was not until I went away to college that this over-protectiveness stopped. Because I was born and raised in a major city, I think I should have been sophisticated about people's behaviors and intentions, but I was not. As a sheltered last child and, in particular, having attended a parochial school during my earliest years, I grew up believing that my peers and the adults in my life had good intentions. I did not see them as mean-spirited people. Although I knew that evil existed within some people (e.g., murderers, rapist, and child molesters), I did not ever expect to encounter anyone whose extreme behavior and intent were purposely planned to be hurtful or emotionally abusive.

Now, I am not saying that the guidance counselor was an evil person. That would be incredibly harsh of me, but his actions and thinking could be characterized as detrimental toward me. In the beginning of the pre-acceptance interview, I believed that he had good intentions and my best interests at heart. However, during the interview process, his body language and his behavior of staring at me over his eye glass frames belied that assumption. I quickly learned not to trust him. In another ritual aphorism, my mother would say to me: "Not everyone is good! You think everyone is good. It is not so."

The previous two self-narratives had their basis in people's ignorant behavior and lack of self-awareness. In writing this vignette, I realized that the guidance counselor also demonstrated

ignorant behavior and tendencies. However, the guidance counselor later developed a strategic, calculating plan to disempower me and others like me. Why? Were his personal prejudices so strong that he had to minimize us first as human beings and second, as students? Were we a threat to him? If so, how? We were young Black males striving for an education in a college preparatory high school. We were young Black males who wanted to be successful and make our mark in the world. We were young Black males who wanted our families to be proud of us. We were young Black males who wanted to make a difference as examples and mentors for other young Black males. As I type, I choke up on these words and I wonder why someone might want so badly to stand in our way. Basically, what was he getting out of his behavior?

In the Broadway play and later movie Sweet Charity, the main character Charity sings "If My Friends Could See Me Now." In light of this guidance counselor's narrow-minded view and harmful shunting of Black students toward the trade schools, I would change the song's title to "If He Could See Me Now," and I would go back to that high school and let him and others who knew me then see me now. Unfortunately, the high school is gone. The building structure remains but has been made into condominiums. Besides, I graduated from high school 34 years ago. Most of the educators are retired or dead. Regardless, I know who I am. I know who I have become. I know my successes and accomplishments since entering and graduating from high school. As my deceased mother and sister so often said to me: "Once you get it, no one can take it away from you. It is yours to keep, and you have worked every bit as hard as anyone else!"

Using Autoethnography as an Educational Tool for Helping Professionals

Everyone has a story, which is both a cliché and a true statement. The art of storytelling – or of autoethnography in this case – captures one's ideology through emotions and how he or she constructs and navigates life. Autoethnographic learning, which is an interactive sharing of knowledge and experience through storytelling, empowers one to become comfortable with the self and the other. This process is especially powerful with helping professional trainees who will spend their professional lives interacting with people who may have had emotionally challenging lives. Because autoethnography can add a captivating

angle to courses beyond using textbooks alone, it allows the person who is writing the self-narrative to connect socially and emotionally with both the self and with others. For helping professionals-in-training, autoethnography as a learning process also can change how students connect socially and emotionally with clients who are vulnerable and who may be members of a marginalized group.

In examining Erikson's (1963, 1968) Stages of Psychosocial Development, educators recognize that his theories relate to and are measured by how social and emotional occurrences affect people throughout their human development, and the ways by which they navigate those experiences. Helping professionals-in-training need to learn that their individualized human experiences propel them to react, confront, manage, and navigate through socially related human development experiences. This cause-and-effect behavior is unavoidable and natural. Those human development experiences can be challenging and difficult to embrace. However, when educators help their students to embrace those experiences, the new cohort of helping professionals may be better able to share their stories with others whose voices may have been silenced because of shame. In using autoethnography to share our stories with students, we model for them how to confront and contemplate their own painful pasts and how they can do the same for their future clients. This sharing process allows us to enhance a person's personal growth and may help to erase harmful, stigmatizing pain and shame. The process of helping students get to know themselves will transfer into their work with clients who are socially different from themselves.

Here is how I use autoethnography with BSW and MSW students. I begin within the first two class meetings with the explicit instruction that to get to know their clients, they must first know themselves. This is my opening for sharing that autoethnography can be critical to teaching and learning. Throughout the course, especially within those first two weeks, I offer lectures, discussions, and full-class and small-group exercises that enhance their self-exploration and knowledge. To encourage them to take a chance in sharing stories about which they felt vulnerable, I model by using my own autoethnography to establish within the classroom a

safe environment where students can be comfortable. By sharing stories, we connect our vulnerability with that future and current clients.

The fields of social sciences traditionally examine human conditions through social relationships. The autoethnographic method uses the traditions of social science to capture the essence of one's personal experience (past or present) through storytelling. This research method demonstrates how intimately those experiences can reshape a person's human condition in the development of future social interactions and relationships. For educational purposes, one first uses autoethnography to self-reflect as I did with my stories. This self-reflection provides the writer with a "gatekeeper" mechanism as a reminder of the past and a prod to move into the future without resentment or animosity. In an educational setting, through periodic autoethnographic writing assignments throughout a semester, I as the instructor can offer these lessons overtly and can lead the students to inductive discussions about themselves. I share with social work students that autoethnographic lessons and writings will continuously allow them to become sensitive to their own experiences. At the same time, while establishing this internal connection for themselves, they will become sensitive to the experiences of vulnerable and marginalized individuals and groups. I also share that such sensitivity can be a double-edged sword in that I have become hyper-vigilant of my surroundings when issues of racial profiling occur. Being hyper-vigilant offers a protective shield, yet it does not provide me with a sense of safety; rather, it helps me to stay merely a few steps ahead of being subject to or becoming a product of the unjust racial profiling interactions that occur among some white Americans toward Black males in our country today.

When I stand before my students and have a discussion about race and racism, and the impact it has made on my social development, the classroom's silence is profound. The students' faces often appear stiff with disbelief. I can immediately tell that they want to ask questions, but they naturally are very cautious in doing so – really, there are so few appropriate and safe opportunities to raise such questions and receive honest, frank responses. The floodgate of questions does not open until I break the silence by saying "What do you think about what I said?" I purposely strive to share my own personal stories about race and racism to my students so that

they will use their own stories and become conscious in their preparation as helping professionals to expect similar if not other stories surrounding this subject. The sharing of my experiences enables them to feel safer to share their own stories and make parallel connections among me, themselves, and other clients that they will serve.

Through autoethnography, I use storytelling to teach my students to ask the necessary questions with open minds, but also I teach them to ask respectfully and to really listen to the answers. Many years ago, I tell them, I worked with an older Black woman. She often said to me:

> I don't mind a person asking me a question about my race. Asking a question is a good thing. In some respects you want to get to know me and perhaps we can share similar stories. I do mind people making assumptions about me and my race. Making an assumption hurts; asking a question is more permissible, and I get the chance to answer or not.

Autoethnography for educating students in the helping professions is one way to teach them to ask the important questions and then to sit back and listen – `first to themselves and then to others.

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Do All roads Lead to Rome? Teaching Social Work Transnationally

Itzhak Lander and Stefan Köngeter

Abstract: This story describes the journey of two social work educators who experienced transformation through co-teaching a course transnationally. Video conference technology was used to deliver a course on child and youth migration, simultaneously to four different groups of students located in four different classrooms in three countries. Our story sheds light on the significance of the teacher as a person and its effect on learning processes, within the context of the internationalization of social work education. The establishment of a community of learning was facilitated when teachers, along with students, were able to together venture beyond their accustomed paths of instructing and learning social work. For this to occur, substantial space was devoted – beyond that dedicated to the delivery of course content – to an exploration of commonalities and differences in personal and communal histories, cultures of learning, preferences with respect to discussion and questioning, as well as conceptualizations of the social work profession. Our reflections capture various aspects of the ongoing transformation process and highlight the complexity of social work education which involves the person of students and teachers alike.

Keywords: transnationalism, internationalization, teaching, transformation, forgiveness

Introduction

This journey has several starting points which ultimately converge. Stefan and Itzhak, the two protagonists, enter this journey at different times and with different backgrounds and histories. Stefan was a young researcher when he joined into a collaboration of German and Israeli colleagues during an international meeting of a research network on care leavers in Oxford. Itzhak entered this journey later on when the map of the collaboration between the German and Israeli colleagues had already been drawn. The group had decided to use the European Union's (EU) TEMPUS program as a stage to develop a joint project focusing on child and youth welfare. TEMPUS was funded by the EU to further collaboration between higher education institutions in the partner countries of the EU, particularly in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2014).

The EU-TEMPUS project, bearing the not-so-catchy acronym TACHYwe (Transnational Academic Careers in Child and Youth Welfare), began at the end of 2012, and ended in early 2016. Its major aim was to develop a curriculum on international child and youth welfare based on international expertise to help train future professionals. Itzhak came from Sapir College, one of the Israeli participating higher education institutions; Stefan was a faculty member at Hildesheim University, Germany, one of the four

institutions from inside the EU.

This group of scholars wanted to internationalize study courses and curricula as a central means to prepare students and future professionals to be active and engaged participants in a multicultural, interconnected world (D. R. Cox & Pawar, 2006; Kidd Webster, Arenas, & Magana, 2010; Link & Healy, 2005). This group built TACHYwe on important insights into international social work education, which began already in the 1970s and 1980s (see e.g. Healy, 1988; Healy, 2001). The group considered the internationalization of academic education as a reaction to the growing importance of cross border activities and of interconnections between countries, peoples, cultures, values, languages, political and economic systems, religions, and of current political transformations of the social world (Healy & Link, 2012). Our group thought it was pivotal to challenge students in a variety of ways to achieve a deeper understanding of global issues through personal encounters, as well as scholarly examination and inquiry.

Our group thought it was imperative for TACHYwe that the development of joint international courses avoid a top-down process, typical of professional imperialism (Midgley, 1981). Therefore, the project was designed as a bottom-up approach to curricula development, starting with the expertise and experience of the consortium partners. Integrating concepts of cross-cultural understanding across all disciplines and creating stable and respectful

relationships is not only an important competency for students in child and youth welfare, but was also a guiding principle in the work of the consortium. The challenge, however, is to translate these very common principles into the everyday practice of the project and the consortium.

Thus, TACHYwe put an emphasis on repeated border crossing practices among participants, virtually, as well as through on-site research visits and project meetings. These transnational practices (Köngeter, 2010; Vertovec, 2009) were not only important for gaining a better understanding of child and youth welfare in the various countries, but also for building a trusting relationship, and for getting a deeper understanding of the life stories of project participants. These transnational practices involved both students from participating universities as well as scholar participants – including Itzhak and Stefan. This approach challenged their knowledge, as they were confronted with the difficulties and barriers involved in understanding each other. Such understanding would necessarily involve reflection of their own explicit knowledge, as well as knowledge that is taken for granted (implicit knowledge) (Polanyi, 1969).

Upon this stage offered by the TACHYwe program, the two narrators initiated a joint course with students from four sites and three countries, using video conference equipment and software-based video conference tools. They were aware of the different forms of e-learning utilized in educational science, though less so in social work (e.g. Ballantyne, 2007; Bye, Prom, Tsybikdorzhieva, & Boldonova, 2006; Larsen, Visser-Rotgans, & Hole, 2011)). Interestingly, videoconferencing is hardly mentioned as an important means for the internationalization of higher education. Although the following stories will not focus on the technical aspects, it seems to be an important feature of the process since videoconferencing enabled a specific kind of simultaneous presence, which was buttressed by face-to-face preparatory meetings, skypeconversations and countless emails.

Itzhak's story

The story of the course begins for me in Dublin in the sports field at Trinity college where while strolling along together I got up the courage to talk

with them. I mean the Germans. Not my colleagues from Germany or the people from Germany… but rather… the "Germans." As I pondered my move I felt a pang of guilt. Would this mean I was forgetting Mrs. Wolfman, my childhood neighbor who had never spoke about what she had been through, but could not conceal the long series of numbers tattooed into her arm? What about the promise I made to myself when I reached the age of my manhood that I would never even sit in a Volkswagen? Almost despite myself but at the same time feeling propelled forward by a strong force deep within, I sidled up to them and spurted out, "I was never in Germany. I have never met Germans." And then I waited for what seemed to be a long time, but wasn't really. Immediately one of them smiled back towards me and I felt a gentleness that touched me and we talked. Although as we talked, a small voice inside of me continuously urged me to quit and return to my own group of Israeli colleagues. Back then I could not at all have imagined how what was nothing more than a five-minute conversation could snowball into a life changing transformation.

One month later I took a further risk. I decided to go to Berlin for a holiday. In the last days prior to my departure I felt so much guilt that I almost cancelled. How could I go and enjoy myself in the land where my people had been annihilated? The visit was extremely hard emotionally. I shed many tears.

The visit to the Berlin monument, to the victims of the Holocaust and the adjacent museum. I had seen all the photos before but somehow seeing them here was more real, more shocking, more painful.

On the small golden plaques outside of the homes of the victims, one of the names I saw was Berman – my own mother's maiden name.

At the same time, I could clearly see many positive sides to the society. The people in the street I met were friendly, kind, liberal and very humane. I felt lots of sensitivity to our joint history of horrific tragedy. All of a sudden I was finding myself in the beginning of a process of forgiveness.

With the passing months and another consortium meeting in Moscow, I understood that I was to teach a joint course with my German colleague with the kind and welcoming smile. I welcomed the opportunity. It might have sped up my forgiveness processes.

Suddenly Germany, German people and German things were of great interest to me. I wanted to learn more and more, and a university course was quite safe for me. There's no way someone who is a university student could have been *there*. Even with my hang-ups I could not in any way blame them for what happened. They are innocent.

Working on developing a joint course is difficult. Joining us are some Russian professors.

But working with them is extremely difficult and their professional knowledge is limited to what has been written in their mother tongue. I discovered that I don't want to hurt their feelings. I am very sensitive to the hardships and disadvantages that they must experience, and am very curious about my extraordinary sensitivity to them. Eventually I came to understand that it likely also relates to the Holocaust. Again my heart and soul return to this existential departure point. How can I forget that without the Russians, the world probably would have totally collapsed into the darkness of Nazi reign? Sixty years later, this seemingly negligible and dry historic fact has captured my professional better judgement.

Eventually all the university partners – Israeli, German and Russian – settled on a course syllabus. It had a very strong practice orientation and reflected our Israeli orientation, which is predominantly American. Again, is this once more a revisitation of my core issue? The allied forces... the liberation of the camps...

As our academic discussions proceeded, I noticed the distinctiveness of my distinguished colleague from Germany. He appeared to me a genuine scholar. I admired this and at times felt inadequate and even jealous for his breadth of knowledge.

He and I decided to Skype about the course. I was excited, though a bit apprehensive, to bring him into my home. I prepared logistically and mentally for half an hour and waited for him, for his ring. It was a milestone. My forgiveness was galloping forward. The conversation was productive and pleasant. I searched in the background for any other important information I could find. The furnishing on the wall was no different than ours here. He mentioned at one point his small child's school – I felt another leap in

my forgiveness – a tsunami of common humanity was hovering above me and was about to crash its full force on my head.

And it did crash down, as a powerful and even intoxicating experience teaching together.

Even more important than the course content was him, Stefan, and the exposure to the students he brought me. So the course content will have to wait. I feel I must start as my heart leads me.

Stefan was sensitive, gentle and humane… He treated the students – mine and well as his – with the utmost respect. He seemed to really genuinely care when he spoke about the distress young people who are immigrating to Germany from a marginalized background experience. And the students from Germany – they look just like we do – they talked about little things like the weather. They wanted to get to know us.

Both the groups of students were thirsty to get to know one another. For the Israelis, it seemed like a deep wish to go towards forgiveness. For the German students, well maybe they unconsciously wanted to promote our forgiveness, but they also showed lots of interest in getting to know us as people. The Israeli students were thrilled with the partying and beer that the German students spoke about. We were searching for and evoking the common, the human, the regular. One of the Israeli students told her German peers that her family had their home in Berlin. From the German participants there was the first direct actual reference to our joint tragic history. The moment was heavy with emotion. From our side, the Israeli students sighed with relief that the German handled the moment with appropriate sensitivity; another step toward my forgiveness.

A big deal, the Israeli students were extremely divided about showing our "dirty laundry" to the German students around our current treatment of African refugees who have crossed deserts and wastelands to get to Israel in hopes of a better future. I wonder why. Because it takes us away, distracts us from the underlying core issue in our relations? Or the Israeli students perhaps felt that our ambivalent response to these unfortunate people betrays a searing imperative to not turn our backs on the stranger, on he who is in pain? On she who suffers oppression?

A major discovery for me in the course is the way the German students are so obedient. They do whatever they are expected to do and they don't seem to express any feelings of discomfort in doing so. Compared to the Israeli students, they did not really share much emotion at all. This seemed unreal to me, but as I experienced it first-hand, it sinks in that this is something of cardinal importance in understanding our joint history.

One year later, I sat on the train going to visit Stefan so that we could write together. I was very happy to see him again. I sat beside a couple who was sensitively and kindly comforting their infant son who was tired of the train ride and just wanted to get home. They seemed so loving to him. Across the aisle was a very elderly man; overweight, red-faced, drinking a cup of cola but sneaking into it swigs of alcohol from a smaller bottle he had hidden in a brown paper bag. I felt compassion for him. I have forgiven.

Stefan's story

Thinking back to where this course has its roots, I remember those days when we tried to set up the consortium. Our Israeli colleague, Anat, made contacts with the Russian partners, and we made contacts with European partners. It was interesting to see how people reacted. One of our partners was very hesitant to collaborate with Israel. He would only agree to support the project if all partners signed a paper, a kind of memorandum of understanding, stating that the consortium unanimously condemns Israel's policies toward the Palestinian people and works toward a just peace in the Middle East. We began our collaboration without any such position paper. However, the question of conflict and peace was always in the classroom.

It was in Dublin in 2013 during a meeting of our TACHYwe consortium when I met Itzhak for the first time. Our summer school in Dublin was the second meeting of the consortium and Itzhak joined the delegation from Sapir College. My first impression of him was a person who commented positively on almost everything and everyone.

I'm not sure who had the idea to have joint teaching sessions. Anyhow, it turned out that we both taught

courses in our academic institutions which were considered to be part of the TACHYwe process. I introduced at Hildesheim University a course on international child and youth welfare. As far as I recall, Itzhak taught his course in the winter term of 2013/2014 on cross-cultural migration, also as part of the TACHYwe project. We thought it would be a great idea to have joint courses, though not knowing how this could work out. By chance, our courses overlapped a bit. I had only 10-12 students in my course, but they were highly motivated and open for intercultural communications.

I remember that Itzhak and I agreed to start our first of four joint sessions with the students getting to know each other. I prepared the students for this session by explaining the context, i.e. the TACHYwe project.

What was important for me was that they showed interest in the other students but that they should refrain from why-questions. That was my only strict rule. However, everybody can guess what happened. After introducing each other, we stumbled across the unavoidable topic of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, one major "elephant in the room."

One of my students asked the question which was also a statement: "Why do you act like you do towards the Palestinian people, you, a people who was persecuted so cruelly in Germany?" I have to admit, the question was not totally out of the blue since the Israeli students were themselves critically analyzing the situation of the Palestinians. The question caused great tension and led to intense free-flowing discussion among the Israeli students. Some of the Israeli students agreed with her, some did not. I remember that Itzhak tried to make the situation more understandable, and come to some kind of constructive closure. I was completely annoyed and exhausted after this session. I talked to several German students who were also upset. I did not get a chance to speak with the German student who posed the initial question about Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. She had to leave the lesson prior to its conclusion and did not appear the next two times.

Itzhak and I spoke on skype after this event, but I don't recall exactly what we discussed. I felt like I had to apologize for the student and explain that she did not have any bad intention. I remember what he said – and this was very intriguing for me – that the Israeli

students were relatively open to showing their vulnerability. I never thought of that in this way. Instead, I focused on the guilt of the German student, not the vulnerability of Itzhak or the Israeli students. Anyhow, in the following session we had to reflect on the last session and Itzhak explained his perspective again, also expressing that they were overall comfortable in showing their vulnerability. This changed a lot about the course dynamic, not only for the students, but also for me. I became acutely aware of how important it was to openly address our common history. And – most importantly – Itzhak and I agreed that we should continue with this co-teaching and co-learning experiment and take on an entire joint course.

The next time I met Itzhak was in Moscow. I remember having breakfast together with Wolfgang, a colleague from Hildesheim. Did Itzhak tell me there that he was raised in Canada in a neighborhood where there were many Holocaust survivors? When did Itzhak tell me about his son who was a combat soldier and fought in the Gaza strip? When did he tell me that he immigrated to Israel because of political reasons? I'm not always sure whether I understood one hundred percent. Anyhow, it was important for me to get to know a little bit more about his background. I know for sure that Itzhak only told me later that before Tempus he never met any Germans. Well, I'm not sure how much I told him about my background as a German who is part of the second post-war generation, my father having been in the war only during the last weeks. He was sixteen years old in May 1945, preparing himself for a suicide mission for the Nazi regime, although – or because? – his father was a communist. Anyhow, my father survived, and always claimed to be a friend of Israel. Why? I don't know exactly.

We agreed to teach a full course together in the winter of 2014/2015. I left Hildesheim University and in October 2014 took on a new position in Trier. Itzhak recruited one of the Russian partner institutions to also join the course. This was very impressive since we never were able to get in contact with the social work department of this university. What was an intriguing idea of Itzhak's – I thought and I still think – was to start the course introducing with an article called "Ten considerations in addressing cultural differences in psychotherapy." This article was not only a perfect

theoretical introduction to our topic, but also very relevant for us in trying to develop a joint virtual classroom in three countries. We discussed this article, then asked students to apply the principles to the group itself.

In the initial sessions, our discussions returned to the Holocaust and the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and we also spoke of the Russian-Ukraine conflict. It was interesting to see that the German students were careful in what they said. One very poignant thought that several mentioned was that the dark history of Germany is one of the few things that gives Germans an identity – certainly not a positive one, but yet a clear historical anchor, worthy of substantial reflection.

It was interesting that although most of the students in the course were hundreds of kilometers away, I felt strongly like we were all together in a single classroom. I recall how surprised my students were by the nature of the discussion among the Israeli students: lively, engaged, emotionally charged. This was in stark contrast to my students' opinions about our discussions in Germany – commandingly academic and less practical, and also less interactive and more boring. My students wanted to understand why this was so. They identified a significant difference between the two populations of students. The Israelis were older, and already identified themselves as social workers and were working in the field. However, I asked myself whether this was the entire explanation. Perhaps the difference had something to with my overwhelmingly scholarly approach as a social work educator?

I recall a particular class when Itzhak was the moderator and he referred directly to students in Trier, and started asking them in turn questions about the material. The topic was not so important, rather it was the way in which he asked the questions. He began with a simple but inviting "How do you feel about this?" Despite his openness, my students responded with an impersonal statement referring to some theory about intercultural communication. However, Itzhak insisted on a personal account. It was fascinating to observe how difficult it is to introduce an alternative culture of communication into the learning environment. However, he eventually managed to get through; he insisted three times and my students realized what was going on. And I realized, too! This

had an important effect on how I would continue to communicate with my own German students.

Importantly, this influential process did not end when we finished the weekly Monday afternoon course. Itzhak and I continued our discussions between classroom sessions. Both my students and I had the feeling we needed time to reflect more on the course process, and also the content, to better understand what was occurring. During the classes themselves, we had to concentrate extremely hard to make out all the words in English. This had an effect of fundamentally changing my relation to my students. I had often been aware of the distance between my students and myself, not that distance itself is necessarily a problem. However, I had the strong impression that this had always prevented them from daring to tell me what they really think about my course content and teaching style. I had also often wondered in the past whether my students perceived my courses as meaningful and relevant to their own experiences. Things were very different in this joint course. This was in part connected to the reflection of my students and myself each week immediately after turning off the video conference equipment. All of us, myself included, were part of this teaching-learning experiment and we were enthusiastic to explore its novelty and significance together. I was no longer exclusively an expert, but one person amongst others experiencing something new and important. I felt like I was an integral part of a community.

All these experiences were very meaningful for me as a social work educator. They transformed the way in which I address students, design courses, and conduct class sessions. My point of departure has become the personal experience of the student, and his emotional involvement in the learning process became significant for me. Similarly, I have invited my own person into the learning process and have become much more deeply involved. I now approach content on a personal, as well as professional level.

This transformation is not always smooth. At some point during the course, myself and two students were asked to present our experience with international video conference courses to the prime minister of the Rhineland-Palatinate region. Although the students were still impressed by Itzhak

and his emphasis on classroom processes, they critiqued the relative de-emphasis on content. They wanted more information and less getting to know each other.

All of this seemed to come together for me when Itzhak eventually visited Trier and he and I were able to actually sit down face to face and reflect on all that had happened during the course of the past two years working together. It became crystal clear to me that although both of us had experienced transformative experiences, the nature of each of our journeys was distinct. His was focused around a transformation of himself as a person, and his attitudes and feelings towards Germany, Germans, and our common, if not tragic, past. Mine centered on a deep change in myself as social work educator. I had been stuck in the spider web of classic German academic that places exclusive importance upon theoretical mastery and reflection. Making use of my own experiences, my subjectivity, my own person, feels problematic from this angle. However, it opens up new ways of thinking, but most importantly, new ways of interacting and collaborating. I learned through experiencing it myself that to establish a true community of learning, the establishment of relationship is a necessary prerequisite. I'm curious how my, how our, journey will continue.

Discussion

Both of our stories describe how social work educators themselves become fully engaged with course content and process leading to the emergence of a highly synergistic community of learning. Such engagement involves active and critical reflection on the encounter between academic material and our ever-evolving personal and professional selves. We may frequently expect our students to become immersed in their learning experiences, and we may even consider this as a requisite for their optimal development. The importance of inviting students to seriously and actively explore the points of encounter between the professional and personal seems axiomatic. We as social work educators, however, may sometimes fail to recognize the potential benefit to ourselves, and certainly to the learning process of which we are a central element, of becoming genuinely involved as learners in our own courses. This does involve diving into the waters of academia with our own professional and personal selves, and exposing these to the critical

reflection of our students, and more importantly, of ourselves. Though we may not always be ready or willing to place ourselves as educators in this extremely vulnerable position, we may often tend to expect our students to stand and cope and grow within the shadow of susceptibility.

Our stories show that neither of us expected to become involved in such a manner. In the context of another project, two social work educators were brought together, an encounter ensued and a process that was unpredictable unfolded. The complex composition of partner countries, universities and colleges, and academics challenged collaboration from the very beginning. This complexity and the related tensions are part of both of our stories, but from very different angles with each story highlighting different conflicts and vulnerabilities. Mutual trust was not the departure point for this unique encounter, but rather a willingness to recognize coincidences and make use of opportunities. Such an engagement, without smoke and mirrors, does not necessarily lead to successful collaboration, as the stories show, but does lead to a sort of involvement that can trigger a rich learning process among those who embark on this process.

Without assuming such a fully engaged position ourselves, however, we may be seriously compromising our ability to be role models for our students as learners. This stance may not come naturally for us as social work educators, and may even be difficult, as it has been engrained in us that we should start where our clients are. That is the imperative to give eminence to the experience of the other, and this may be extended by definition to our students as well. Perhaps for teachers to truly join our students in a community of learning, we will need to start with ourselves and first concentrate on reflecting how we as persons and professionals encounter our course materials and dynamics. When this occurs, teachers became learners as much as teachers.

This repositioning in the teaching and learning cycle may be related to taking a stance of mindfulness which leads one to focus on what is happening inside oneself in the here and now, and not to concentrate on the other or even on the actual academic content of the course. Our stories demonstrate the transformation we each experienced

with this repositioning, though the turning inward and listening first to ourselves paradoxically led to the building of a community of interconnected learners, which seemed to have had great benefits for the students as well.

In both of our stories, we can identify key situations where these changes occur, situations in which the past and the present meet, where tensions become palpable and of commanding importance. These transformative moments are based not only upon our individual histories and life stories, but also upon our connection to our collective pasts and perceptions of how these meet. Collective experiences are imprinted in the two stories; they unfold according to their own dynamic.

Sometimes the two narrators refrained from touching upon these collective histories and related tensions; sometimes they exposed the "elephant in the room." Nevertheless, it is the mutual recognition and working together collaboratively on these extremely complex and painful issues that seemed to be the basis for the growing trust among the two protagonists of these stories. There is no single turning point. In fact, each story seems to unfold according to its own dynamic. The stories cannot be fully understood without highlighting this intricate, interwoven process which led to transformation.

In the two stories, we can identify key situations in which these changes are brought on stream; situations in which history and presence meet or in which tensions become palpable. These situations are based not (only) in individual histories, but also in (imagined) collectivities and perceptions of other collectivities. Collective histories and experiences are imprinted in the two stories; they unfold their own dynamic. Sometimes the two narrators presumably tended not to touch upon these collective histories and tensions. They enclosed those dynamics; sometimes they opened up and named the "elephant in the room" – even this article and the reflection on the two stories is part of this back and forth of taming and unfolding.

The transformation we each experienced through the teaching and learning of our joint course was profound, and for both of us, revolved around the integration of our personal and professional selves. Though this is a well-known conceptual anchor in social work practice and supervision, there is relatively little discourse about where the personal meets the

professional in the social work educator. This is despite our great interest in delving into our students' encounters with their personal and professional selves. For Stefan, the deep change he experienced, centered on his sense of himself as a social work educator. Exposure to Itzhak's active use of self in the classroom was central here. Furthermore, the self-disclosure of the Israeli students, as well as their vitality in discussing the course content, was an impetus for the significant critical reflection that he experienced around the possibility of using more of himself in his role as teacher.

This would be a struggle as Stefan had for a long time been guided by the idea of collaborating with students to get a deep analytical understanding of those topics he teaches in social work. This approach, however, is an obstacle to involvement as a person, and undermines collaboration.

For Itzhak, the transformation he experienced centered on his sense of himself as a social work practitioner. Most important was exposure to Stefan's commanding adherence to social work values, especially the inherent worth of the person. Furthermore, the humanity of the German students and their compassion, led to intense self-reflection around the possibility of renewing his commitment to an empathic stance as practitioner. This would be a struggle as Itzhak had for an extended time been restrained by a long standing belief that although excellent, there are some cases where certainly it is beyond our capacity. Itzhak's nascent forgiveness of Holocaust atrocities, facilitated within a newfound community of social work learners, would serve as a catalyst for a renewal of both personal and professional empathy, and unconditional positive regard. Perhaps much of the impetus for the intense transformative processes that occurred for Stefan and Itzhak, and which seemed to be reflected in the learning experiences of students as well, was some kind of overarching imperative to work through a common, and exceedingly complicated, even painful history. There seemed to be an underlying existential demand from the very beginning of the course to make the encounter really matter, and make it more than just learning course content. When social work teachers risk allowing themselves to also become active learners in their courses, where traditional boundaries between us and our students are blurred,

a joint community of learning may be built. When this occurs, social work academia may more fully reach its potential as a vehicle for professional, as well as personal transformation.

Conclusion

Itzhak

The earliest modern day pioneers of Israel who came from Eastern Europe around the turn of the last century faced extremely difficult physical conditions as well as poverty and illness. They desired to establish an agricultural settlement and toiled the land which was either arid desert or putrid swamp. They had largely been socialist intellectuals in Russia and Ukraine, and draped their daily manual labor in rich cultural and literary pursuits.

Perhaps their most well-known motto was "to build and to be built." This reflected their deeply held belief that through a group's devotion of substantial effort toward an important project, a collective of human beings will be inherently and positively transformed.

Early into the joint course with Stefan, I realized that not only had I met an outstanding social work scholar with whom I would teach a course, but also a person of great compassion and sensitivity. This meant that I had before me a valuable opportunity to begin my journey toward forgiveness as a Jew born in the decade following the Holocaust, still bearing substantial hurt and anger.

Reflecting back upon the processes that unfolded in the course, it seems to me that the students' openness was somehow related to their realization that in this course I was a fellow builder, a genuine member of a community occupied by both academic accomplishment and also personal growth.

Stefan

Since I started to teach social work transnationally, I experienced the fascinating and multifarious challenge of communication across cultural, scholarly, national and ethnic differences. Beginning with the assumption that the ultimate goal is mutual understanding, I realized that it is not first understanding, but rather the process of translation itself that I must focus upon.

German academics are very proud of their scholarly tradition and just as desperate when it comes to making these things understandable to persons outside of the tiny realm of German universities. One of those terms of which German professors are very proud of and refer to often, is "bildung" which roughly translates into education. "Bildung" has much to do with how we think of teaching, of learning, and of ourselves as scholars. "Bildung" underscores the specific way that individuals relate to other people and to the world. Therefore, "Bildung" is considered to be a process by which individuals become knowledge bearers and creators. However, this process is geared by the individuals, and not induced by someone else. Thus, teachers or educators are considered to be persons who help others find their way in the process of...yes "building, and being built." But whereas the German thinking of "Bildung" is much more focused on the autonomous process of individuals, the agrarian metaphor of building and being built points out the material roots of "Bildung" and the collaborative effort of building...across nations, across disciplines and across generations.

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Southern African Reflections on Social Work and Social Justice

Otrude N. Moyo (Editor); Lauren Rose Caldie; Otrude N. Moyo; Zandile P. Nkabinde; Vuyelwa Langelihle Sibindi; Martin Moyo; Nenekazi Melody Gxashe; Thandi S. Tshabangu-Soko

Abstract: This is the Special Section on Southern African Reflections on Social Work and Social Justice, comprised of an introduction by the editor, Otrude N. Moyo, a photo essay by Lauren Rose Caldie, and six other articles, which are grouped here in one downloadable special section containing all of the materials.

Keywords: Southern Africa, Ubuntu, Prefectship system, role of education, autocracy

Editor's Introduction:
True learning is Unlearning

Otrude N. Moyo

This special section consists of seven articles. In these articles the authors share their journeys to unlearning those aspects in their socialization into their professional lives that have been part of the exclusionary political economies of imperialism, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism in southern Africa. These journeys are not easy nor are they straightforward. Indeed, knowledge of reconstruction and restoration is complicated and convoluted. It dabbles into what is perceived as "right" in improving quality of life, which may be contradictory with the actual reality of experience and/or what we desire to be "right" for the communities we work with. In these circumstances, clearly there are complications and contradictions. Indeed the articles in this special section are self-conscious and self-critical focusing at times on shortcomings of the way we work as exemplified by the article on Schooling in Capitalist Autocracy in Zimbabwe. However, the paramount purpose of these reflections is motivated by a strong desire to stop repeating the same old narratives presented as new experiences in social development.

Ferguson in his Anti-Politics Machine reminds us about the irony of "development" especially in the global south where "development" has succeeded in reproducing a controlling, repressive, self-serving bureaucratic structure that is anti-politics. In this vein, the articles in this special section consider the ironies of development – where the desire for progress means adopting and adapting, instead of unlearning things that are not serving human well-being. Social development is an even more convoluted social construct with diverse meanings. Emanating from the dissatisfaction with economic growth led efforts in improvement of quality of life. This concept too has its shortcomings (but that is a paper on its own). The important point about these articles is their attempt at deconstructing decolonization of development, highlighting that true learning is unlearning. Leaning to unravel the inner landscapes of the political economic systems that sculpt inequalities and oppressions.

The articles in this special issue are about authors attempting to de-program their lives as social workers, social development workers, educators, and our work in that purpose to improve the quality of life for all. Our journey is a process of removal of that which does not serve us in improving quality of life for all. Social development as an approach to improving quality of life is multidisciplinary, meaning it draws from diverse disciplines all giving their own perspective. It is also interdisciplinary meaning that those who purport to be engaged in social development should be able to understand and engage social issues (from social science; humanities approach and natural sciences). Hence, these articles offer a journey to unlearn colonization and learn that within indigenous practices, all social phenomena is interwoven. Again, the major theme running throughout the articles is that true learning is unlearning. In this respect, the articles are a journey of rising above victimhood, suffering and inhumane experiences of history, in order to pave new understandings and practices. This journey is only beginning for the authors here, therefore this is an invitation to engage in this complicated pathway to social justice with a commitment to unlearn those practices that don't serve us fully in the affirmation of human dignity for all. As outlined above, this special section draws from different educational backgrounds and personal

experiences in social development, from education, to agriculture, human service work, social development and international research/community work.

The special section begins with a photo essay complied by a co-researcher on Ubuntu: Lauren Rose Caldie.

Next, I then offer a dialogical dimension of Ubuntu as an African epistemology, guiding the ongoing search and personal journey towards decolonization. In the second article, I highlight the incongruencies in my personal and professional life that have led to the founding of Ubuntu Arts – a youth project that uses art based civic dialogue and community building initiatives through Ubuntu cultural explorations. I see Ubuntu Arts as part of community learning to unlearn, and a beginning to re-write, re-frame and re-right indigenous knowledge, a critical initiative in the narration of Ubuntu in community. Youth and adults who participate in the project engage in story telling about Ubuntu to build knowledge about the concept and encourage Ubuntu in practice, hopefully undoing the current incongruencies between school and home, in terms of cultural orientation.

The third article by Dr. Nkabinde explores the educational changes in South Africa twenty-one years after the end of apartheid. This article examines progress that has been made as well as highlights some of the lingering pitfalls with regards to marked differences in state funding, affecting the overall quality of education. In addition, the article engages the goal of education, curriculum, funding, and educational opportunities based on new policies of inclusion, social justice and equity.

Still on education, the fourth article coauthored with Ms. Vuyelwa Sibindi takes a personal look at the "prefect systems" as part of a relic of colonial experience, and argues that the prefect system in Zimbabwe only serves to propagate in-egalitarian practices, and serves well the autocratic rule that stifles respect for human dignity of all.

Looking at agriculture economics as part of social development in Zimbabwe, Dr. Martin Moyo begins his article Development of Agriculture or Is it Underdevelopment? Advocacy for a Return to Small is Beautiful in Agriculture in Zimbabwe by highlighting the predominance of the share of agriculture to the Zimbabwean economy and argues that given this reality and extensive factor markets problems (i.e. lack of capital, inputs) these two factors (factor markets and share of agriculture) intersect to give an inverse relationship to agricultural output that makes large scale farming less lucrative. This article provides an unlearning of growth led agricultural policies to begin an appreciation of "small is beautiful" as the mainstay of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector.

Ms. Nenekazi Melody Gxashe provides a personal experience of her work as a social auxiliary worker with the Department of Social Development in South Africa. She highlights a personal journey to the opportunities of this position, her current role and her mission to cultivate a social work profession that considers historical and cultural context.

Article seven is by Ms. Thandi S. Tshabangu-Soko, reflecting on the provision of services and benefits, and the struggles for social justice in Zimbabwe. Ms. Tshabangu-Soko brings experience of social service provisioning from both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

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Ubuntu Art Project – Umunt' ngumunt' ngabantu

Lauren Rose Caldie (Compiled by Dr. Otrude Moyo)

Abstract: Lauren Rose Caldie uses narrative and photography to capture the essence of her experience with the Ubuntu Art Project. Contrasting her preconceived ideas of Africa and how the project unfolded for her. She describes how her impression of Africa and "Ubuntu" developed throughout the journey. The Ubuntu Art Project, a two week summer multigenerational gathering in Fort Beaufort, was facilitated by Dr. Otrude Moyo and several of her students. Ms. Caldie describes the many 'contradictions' prevalent in South Africa – the beautiful rainbow of races of people juxtaposed with the segregation that still exists. She notes how the spirit of Ubuntu, one that emphasizes harmony, love for one's fellow man and peace, contrasts deeply with the painful history of apartheid in South Africa. Yet, she highlights how the spirit of Ubuntu might be the way for healing the remaining scars of South Africa's past.

The photographs displayed at various places within this issue are a glimpse at the vast collection of pictures we have amassed during the Ubuntu Research and Art Project, in Fort Beaufort and Healdtown Communities in Eastern Cape, since 2011.
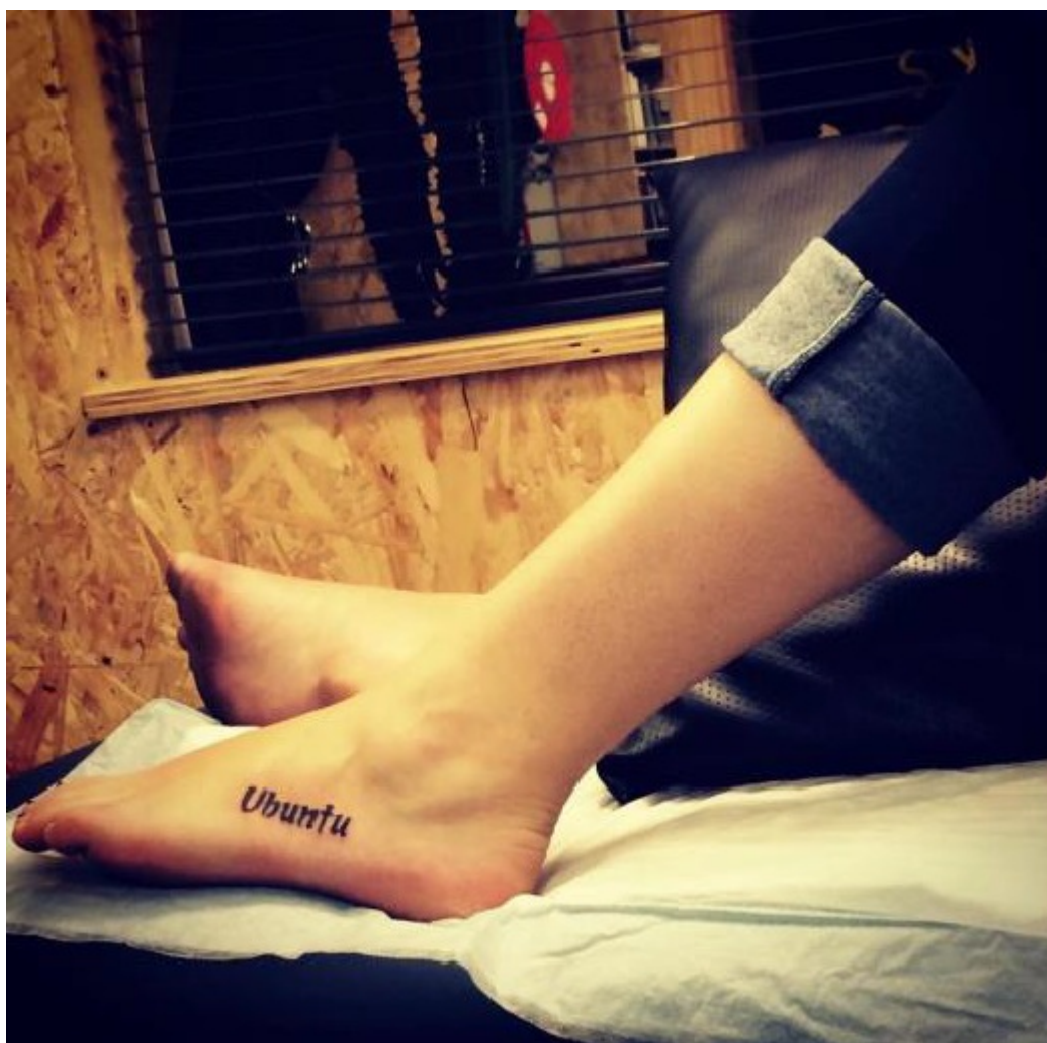
These pictures we hope tell a story of a commitment to learning together about Ubuntu. The photo essay is based on a reflective learning journey by one the student researcher's on this project, Lauren Rose Caldie.

Dr. Moyo first began Ubuntu project as a research study to explore perspectives of Ubuntu in private and public lives of people in Eastern Cape. The research project evolved into Ubuntu Arts & Dialogues in Diversity project. Ubuntu Arts is a two-week multigenerational gathering, which was founded to support civic dialogue and community building initiatives through Ubuntu cultural explorations in Fort Beaufort and Healdtown communities, Eastern Cape South Africa. The initiative uses

dialogues in diversity and art based initiatives to facilitate community building. Ubuntu Arts has been a partnership between social work students from the US and residents of Healdtown community, using Healdtown Comprehensive School as the project site.

My view of South Africa before I went could be best described as foggy. I had silly misconceptions about the wildlife where lions and elephants roamed the dirt roads in the villages, that there were big purple mountains constantly in the distance and grassland fields surrounding it. This isn't to say that I didn't see elephants (protected in national parks) and that the grassland wasn't vast, but I was missing the point, I was missing what gives South Africa its heart, its people.

Learning about South Africa from our pre-trip preparations I knew there was a lot of diversity within its peoples, but I did not comprehend how much. I pictured the town made up of four peoples: Native South Africans, Europeans, Indians, Coloreds and other people of color. (Wow, that was hard to write, I am so ashamed to admit that.) When I got there, I found out that although those were the groups apartheid tried to force upon South Africans, a diverse population can not be neatly split up based upon physical appearances. The South Africa that is starting to be embraced today is that of a "Rainbow Nation" where everyone does not neatly fit into one category or another. In fact, it seemed that most people in South Africa do not fit into these groups as South Africa felt like an amalgam of cultures and trans-racial love (we saw many children who seemed that they could be the result of multiracial couples, but we did not see the actual couples) have been just a few of the factors

making the nation more diverse. The sad irony of this was that many groups making up the areas we visited were much more segregated than I had imagined, even when the marginalized groups were in the majority.

I'd be wrong to say I didn't wonder about the people before going, but I had no idea how big of an impact they would have on me. I had thought that we would travel to place A, B, and C, interview a bunch of people, and go home, but I was very wrong! Interviews took not only time, but also special care to get speakers to know and trust us, which was very important. I was naïve in that I thought that people there would not want to learn about me as much as I wanted to learn about them. We spent quality time and learned much about each other, and I am very grateful for that.

What I have learned from South Africa is one of the hardest things to explain. I've learned that Ubuntu is a way of living, not just a philosophy or an ideal. It's real, tangible, and will only live on through the practices of it. Documents, movies or papers may describe it, but one will not be able to understand it until one has both experienced it and lived it. It is within the human spirit, something that drives our humanity, maybe not quite humanity itself, but the action of living out one's belief in humanity. Ubuntu drives what leads us to care for one another better than ourselves.

We were well cared for in South Africa, welcomed into many homes and cared for as if family. From the first night on, we were treated as long lost sisters, who had much catching up to do. I do not think that I would have learned as much about Ubuntu and myself had we not been welcomed and able to get true glimpses of day-to-day life.

If you ask me about what I remember, I will go on and on about how great it truly was, but that does not mean that I was oblivious to the pain around me. South Africa is a place of contradictions to me, of incredible beauty and heart, yet not without its stories of strife that are carried around in the eyes of so many. I wish we could hear more stories, the sweet and the bitter. Even when I could not understand the Xhosa language, I saw the stories as they were being played out in others' eyes.

If I close my eyes, I can see their faces, and hear their voices. The soundtrack of South Africa is bittersweet. The voices like the gentle trill of Auntie, combined with the bouncing rift of the morning doves, the chords of the church choir, the "hooting" of horns on the streets, the rare snippets of traditional music and the waves crashing on the beach, all play on repeat in my mind. When you ask me, "How was South Africa?" I will sigh and take a deep breath, remembering the little things that made it so special. We really did have an amazing time learning so much in such little time. I'm sure everyone there would teach us so much more if we came back.

"Oh, so what were you studying?" The simple answer to that question is Ubuntu, but to explain Ubuntu is like trying to explain love, for South Africans tended to hold it in their heart and have a hard time describing it themselves. It can be described, but it must be experienced as well. The word itself made me want to learn Xhosa in order to grasp a better understanding of where it came from. Reminded that Ubuntu does not necessarily speak English, or does it? To experience Ubuntu, one experiences a togetherness rooted in understanding, care, and concern for everyone, including complete strangers. In these concepts, South Africa is rich.

There was a fullness when we were in the smaller communities within Fort Beaufort that I couldn't describe, a sense that although we were travelers, we were welcome and safe there. As much as some folks (a very small

minority) tried to warn us of the dangers, there was nothing to be frightened about, really. Why do the residents build great walls and some pay for high-tech security systems? Some of the places we felt the safest, like at Auntie's small, cinder block house, had barbed-wire fences that could easily be penetrated, but they were respected. If you have love and show Ubuntu to your neighbors, why do you need to keep your neighbors out? At the core of Ubuntu is to love humanity, love your neighbor, so why then not trust your neighbor? Walls only keep you in, keep you from experiencing the world outside.

The walls at the B&B where we stayed felt safe at first, but quickly became eerie. I remember the children would play football (soccer) just down the road from the B&B, in the torn-up road and in the dirt around it. I would only catch a glimpse of them on our way out or in from our flat, but I wondered what their community would look like without walls. If we hadn't any walls around the Bed and Breakfast, would they have been able to play in the giant green lawn of the B&B's compound or would they still be seen as trespassers in their own land?

The history of South Africa is enough for anyone to understand that there are still visible walls as well as invisible ones there. There is the explanation to the great contradiction, how one can build huge walls, and still practice Ubuntu. The history should not be seen as the "excuse" of why South Africa is still divided, but it gives us the chance to realize how extremely deep South Africa's wounds are. Colonialism and apartheid gave South Africa its wounds, and capitalism, free-markets – call it whatever you wish – have been conducive to these barriers. It seems that the only way to healing is not through the short-lived Truth and Reconciliation hearings, but through learning of what Ubuntu means and how it can bring humanity back together.

Note from the Editor of Reflections: Dr. Otrude Nontobeko Moyo is on the right in the photo above.

Apartheid was about as contradictory to Ubuntu as anything could be. The xenophobic lacing of Africans by South Africans is a crime to humanity. While one philosophy taught fear and superiority, another is teaching acceptance and humility. How did Ubuntu survive then, during the forcing of conformity to take on apartheid or be punished? As "born-frees", Generation Mandela has now come of age; are their philosophies that of their ancestors who believed in and re-constructed Ubuntu, apartheid, individualism, socialism, capitalism, or combinations? Ubuntu does not encourage the separation of any peoples; it welcomes them in, as we were welcomed. Ubuntu surpasses the walls and separations between us. Older than the walls of South Africa, it is a remainder of the humanity in all of us, to work harder to be more inclusive societies, and encourages the potentiality to become more humane.

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Navigating my journey towards learning Ubuntu-A way of decolonizing myself

Otrude N. Moyo

Abstract: Growing up within a traditional Ubuntu home and attending European schools during the day leaves one with the sense of living in two worlds. Professor Moyo describes this "double consciousness" she experienced while growing up in her native home, where her family life revolved around Ubuntu values and perspectives, but her schooling was based on European ideologies. Ubuntu was predominantly practice in earlier African communities, where the focus was on the functioning of the collective versus the individual. Ubuntu values emphasize interdependence with others, the wellbeing of the whole collective or family, and cooperation versus competition. Western ideas such as individualization, competition, and capitalism have changed the socialization of today's modern African youth. This narrative is a call to incorporate the spirit of Ubuntu with modern society and preserve its practices as it offers rich history for Africans and African cultural identity.

Keywords: Southern Africa, Ubuntu, autocracy, double consciousness

My youth was spent in environments that were sculpted legally, socially, politically, economically, psychologically by racialization, and in turn white supremacy, education and liberation have meant a reassertion in education of those perspectives that I deem represent me, in this case Ubuntu. As an African woman, my socialization is characterized by W. E. B. Du Bois's double consciousness, describing not only the psychological but political and social challenges of Africanity in a world defined by dominance of Eurocentrism. As an African woman, I have had the presence of those two-souls that are not quite reconciled. For example, throughout my schooling there has been incongruence between my school and home socialization. At home, I was socialized into perspectives, values, virtues of Ubuntu – for example, how one greets those that live together on a day-to-day basis, those that live apart, those who have departed and inviting them for guidance to help us live peacefully with our selves and strive for that common good Ubuntu as a philosophy of life is relational, there are no ready made moral decisions, there are only consultative relationships that guide the ethical decision making, which in turn is guided by experience and continued dialogue where change is continually experienced as transformative. However, in my western, Eurocentric schooling Ubuntu was discarded, and its existence relegated to antiquity. As such, the incongruence of my life at home and my experience of schooling without Ubuntu brought a lot of turbulence in my mind and spirit. I realized at a tender age that I had to complete "their" schooling and begin to educate myself about Ubuntu as indigenous knowledge.

My journey to consider Ubuntu is exemplified in Kate Rushin's poem, "The Bridge Poem," where she calls all of us to be our own Bridges, the bridges to our own education and self-acceptance. As such, at a young age I lived Du Bois double consciousness, that I had to complete "their" western schooling. Thereafter, I could begin my own education. If I could begin to be the bridge to my own liberation, then perhaps I could be useful! After completing my doctoral studies, the pathway to my education has been to unlearn the knowledge, values and

practices that do not serve the well-being of all. Specifically, it has been to learn Ubuntu.

The urgency of my research on Ubuntu is driven by the unsettling observation that even today, young people in southern Africa are not offered a space to understand their own cultural practices/identities, let alone offer a diversity of perspectives about organizing society for that common good. In this regard, the incongruence of my western schooling and the lived experience of my education, I have hungered to decolonize myself – by returning self to the cultural practices that are indigenous to me. I feel strongly that it should not take young people in southern Africa and/or else in the world, adulthood, like it did me, to complete their schooling before they can get an education about their heritage! It is in the spirit of cultivating an education of Ubuntu that I write this reflection. Let us consider what Ubuntu means to me.

What is Ubuntu?

Ubuntu is the worldview, value system, philosophy of life, and an old tradition in southern African societies. Ubuntu is the philosophy of life most recognized in southern Africa, familiarized within the Nguni aphorism "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"- "a person is a person through the humanity of others." Ubuntu links individuality – the essence of "one's being" to the humanity of others, to a collectivity that is interdependent. Ubuntu is grounded in relationships, a communitarian ethics where individuality and collectivity are symbiotic. It does not end here, but symbiotic connections of Ubuntu extend to spirituality, to connections with the natural and physical world; plant life and animal world. Now, decolonization means to me that after centuries of experiences of colonization, expropriations of imperialism, racism, exploitations and all sorts of oppressions, we must recall and return to Ubuntu as foundational for our contemporary ways of life, education and knowledge building. Indeed, the systemic, cultural, interpersonal experiences of exploitation and domination have placed difficult demands on reconstructing and living Ubuntu, but this means a greater urgency to explore our versions of decolonization, visions of justice and comprehensively honor our differences. Specifically, we must examine the ways of our international engagements to determine whether we are continuing to promote assimilationist visions, or mutual learning, cultural creativity and integrity.

Ubuntu has been part of my life as long as I remember. In my everyday socialization, I remember my father's folklore wisdom about cautionary tales (insumasumane/izinganegwane), of hardworking ants banding together to conquer elephants; of the clever hare tricking crocodiles to line up from one river bank to the other for a count foiled in getting the hare to the other side of the bank.

These folklore/cautionary tales were about relationships that were rich in Ubuntu and those that were empty. In my young life Ubuntu was like the air we breathe, taken for granted as if it always be available. Growing-up, I began to notice how Ubuntu was cultivated in day-to-day simple things. For instance, in everyday greetings, acknowledging and affirming the presence of each other's existence, "siyabonana", meaning, "I am seeing you, I am meeting you!" In our hurried lives this profound humane acknowledgment of a fellow human being; in a greeting that has evolved to simple "sawubona." These changes have been of interest to my scholarship, as a way to re-right the African indigenous heritage as a source of figuring out improvement of quality of life.

Besides the incongruence of my western education and my lived experiences, my journey to explore Ubuntu is connected to my diasporic life. In my family history, it used to be my grandfather went to work at Wenela to be able to pay the "hut tax," head tax and related taxes related to living as an African in Western-sculpted spaces. In order to pay for his very existence, he had to work in gold mines of South Africa. Growing up, I did not even realize that Wenela was not a place but an agency. I used to think it was a physical place. The real Wenela was the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association (WNLA), a recruiting agency for migrant workers across southern Africa, popularized as WENELA! Instead of going to Wenela, now I have to straddle southern African and United States just to provide the basic necessities, where local economies have changed to be outward looking towards those places where capital is concentrated. My straddling has become more intentional rather than accidental. Coming from the margins, I have never been quite comfortable with the status quo. So, my educational desire has

been to broaden my students' perspectives by introducing indigenous worldviews and values and begin conversations about what the world would look like if we were to consider Ubuntu as the worldview structuring how we relate to each other, our perspectives, values, our institutions, societal organizations, etc.

As an African from southern Africa working in the United States I keep asking myself: Do people of southern Africa want freedom and development that would continue to disconnect them from their cultural frameworks and their identities? Did they want a way of life that would continue to subjugate their own identities as Africans of various ethnic groups, ways of doing things – as the late musician Busi Mhlongo states: "Kade sithath 'imikhuba yezinye izizwe siyenz 'eyethu (it has been a long time that we have assumed and reproduced ways of "others" – how long will we continue to assume ways of life of other people to define our lives, our relationships?)

How it changed for me?

Du Bois's double-consciousness is perhaps a multi-consciousness of the world I live. As a public scholar, my purpose has been to problematize and unravel the existing worldviews and political economies of exclusion. I began teaching in 2001 at the height of neoliberal politics. The year 2001 is significant in my life because that was the same year – in August 31-September 08, 2001 – that the World Conference against global racism was held in Durban, South Africa. For me this conference marked significant interest in the world to examine global racism, specifically how racism and racial injustice impacts the social and economic relations of global, South Africans, and indigenous peoples of the world. I remember vividly and with disappointment how the United States and Canada walked out of this 2001 conference due to the presumed criticism of Israel's "racist practices" against Palestinians. Momentous for me as a student of society, the denial by the US and Canada to engage in global racism at this conference marked an affirmation for me to begin unlearning and undoing global racism in my encounters. By that refusal to engage the world in addressing global racism signified that the transnational political landscape was reconfiguring yet again to continue racism, oppressions and continued material inequalities, especially for the global south and for Africans. This conference had meaning for me to understand alternative discourses to global racism – particularly, questioning ourselves in social work and those engaged in social development: How do we engage relationships that cease to foster new forms of imperialism and oppressions?

Another incident that sparked my interest to consider dialogues about Ubuntu in Eastern Cape, was the derogatory names I kept hearing about myself. When I lived in Fort Beaufort I kept hearing local Xhosa people call me 'iKwerekwere' – a derogatory word for Africans from other parts of the continent. I emphasize this there are no derogatory terms for Whites/Europeans foreigners in South Africa; names that elevate whites, umlungu! Only Africans in South Africa are foreigners, never Whites! I had been called this derogatory name several times. But one day I turned around and said to the Xhosa person calling me 'iKwerekwere' – and said in Xhosa "ikwerekwere ngunyoko" meaning, "ikwerekwere its your mother!" It puzzled my Xhosa neighbors. How come I spoke their language? For me this name-calling had to stop, not only because of its implicit denigration and disrespect that lead to tragic xenophobia, but I also realized that my Xhosa neighbors in their own socialization had been denied a dialogue about southern African history. Indeed southern African history from the African experience had eclipsed Abantu! Recently, to continue the ethnic divide, the President of Zimbabwe, Mugabe, participating in ethnic hatred in Zimbabwe, called people who are Kalanga, from Matabeleland living in South Africa, "uneducated" and "criminals." The reader may notice, the politicization of ethnic relations in a different place. Zimbabweans who are Ndebele, Kalanga are presented as criminals (to be killed) and the Shona as hard working to be embraced! This is a political ploy to incite conflict, xenophobia and hatred. To me, this was a similar story line to the Gukurahundi killings of the Ndebele in the 1980s. These horrendous experiences have spurred my activism to teach anti-violence. I knew that I had to do something to enable the few young people I come into contact with to unlearn these hateful practices. I had to engage a different space for unlearning apartheid and structural violence that was playing in my interpersonal life- hence, dialogues in diversity through Ubuntu Arts became a seed and ,my activism in cultural community development.

My agency and plan of action at the personal level meant I had to work hard at findings ways of decolonizing of self – based on my experiences and the philosophy of life Ubuntu. The agency and activism about our "common good" has to be placed in our own hands. In 2001, I started my first job full teaching in social work. The area of my interest has been social welfare – meaning well-being in multicultural societies. When I started teaching, I desired a learning environment that would engage students in various worldviews in understanding the provision and assurance of quality of life, and problematize the United States example instead of universalizing it. As a student of society, I had a conviction that my version of decolonizing of self was going to be useful to generating different political spaces for emancipatory education founded in indigenous cultural worldview; in the knowledge and languages of Ubuntu. In my version of emancipatory education, Southern Africa's vision of good societies must be based on Ubuntu knowledge about the nature of humans, nature of society and justice. Our relationship with other humans and non-humans had to come from abantu. Yes, we could borrow from other cultural frames, but we must know and cultivate our own wisdom from our own experiences and knowledge. Many of us have never known who were are! As Razack (2002) puts it clearly for me, I desired to "unmap" a White Settler culture in me, using Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies to re-center, re-research, rewrite and re-right.

Throughout my ten years teaching in the United State's public universities, I had been trying to pave a different space for education – to use the questions of Manicorn & Walters (2013): How to design learning climates for engendering critical consciousness and deep dialogue? As I indicated above, ten years I had been trying to move my teaching of social welfare in ways that engage other cultural worldviews. The more I moved my teaching the more I needed teaching/learning materials about Ubuntu. As a matter of fact, I had gotten inpatient with my own teaching, particularly the lack of awareness about the African continent, especially within the field of social work. I began to push myself to consider opening up spaces for learning about southern Africa in my own teaching of social welfare and social policy, but there were very limited materials about Ubuntu as a worldview and its influence. I desired teaching materials that would offer discussions of lived experience of Ubuntu. Moreover, in today's world, where our histories and experiences continue to be sculpted in traditions/values that pursue high self-interest and personal ends, so that the collective is subjugated, "enspirited" leadership that considers the symbiotic interdependence of individuality and the collective – where I am because we are – could perhaps offer a different approach to pathways to social justice. Furthermore, in a world where continued economic and social problems persist, because of the prevailing strong pursuit of individualism and self-interest – there is a need to renew the commitment to that "common good," because it would happen by itself, and it has to be reconceptualized and reinvigorated. In 2011, I began my journey to my version of emancipatory education, hinging on mutual learning through collaborative dialogue, where learning is ubiquitous and perpetual, and specifically seeing the view that knowledge is something produced, not merely discovered (Manicorn & Walters, 2012).

The Context of Ubuntu Arts Project

Three years ago, I changed positions to teach at a public university that was keen to extend international perspectives to their student body as part of promoting high impact learning. My diasporic living enabled my interest to begin to utilize international study abroad as a way to explore transformative education with select undergraduate students from the United States, to dialogue with southern African students around the concept Ubuntu. I am working towards complete mutual exchange where students from southern Africa also travel to learn in the United States. As I write, a student, colleague in social development from the University of Fort Hare, has visited the University of Michigan -Flint as our intercultural guest. This is an important visit as it marks that mutual exchange instead of continued travels to the global south by those who are privileged in the global north. My travel to southern Africa with US students was not necessarily ignited by the "wander bug" but a commitment to open dialogue and learning to consider that which has been subjugated, Ubuntu. From the start, the "ethics of poverty tourism," as described by Selinger & Outterson (2009), and the accompanying "moral controversies about international travel by westerners to the global south and/or areas of material want," has been at the forefront of my work.

I had lived in the Eastern Cape of South Africa and had an affinity. I had personally talked to various principles and teachers about my interest to engage dialogues in diversity and learn about Ubuntu. When I moved to the US I followed my request with letters. I wrote to a couple of school principals in Eastern Cape, South Africa, requesting the use of their schools to be a research and community project site for engaging Ubuntu. The principal of one comprehensive high school responded to my request and invited me to use the school as the field site to draw participants to understand Ubuntu in private and public lives.

The research uses collaborative ethnography as a way to engage community in exploring perspectives of Ubuntu. I say collaborative ethnography to mean the deliberate and explicit collaboration at every point of the research process, conceptualization of the project, fieldwork and writing. Also, I use collaborative in the interview and the actual telling of the story of Ubuntu. Most importantly, how the avenue of gathering about Ubuntu and dialoging about Ubuntu could become a community's way of coming together to improve quality of life. On one hand I engage the community to explore Ubuntu, and on the other hand, I run a winter/summer camp for youths to dialogue about Ubuntu through the use of arts.

The project runs on a very shoestring budget using the school as the center, offering art materials, snacks for a five-hour, two-week arts gathering to any young, adult, child who is interested. My USA social work students become part of the dialogues in diversity and are part of the gathering

Before, going into "the field" I began to focus my teaching of social welfare to examine diverse cultural worldviews and the impact of these worldviews on the ideology that is used to foreground views about human nature, institutions, societal organization and way of life for varied societies. This was a way to facilitate a dialogue for my undergraduate students to begin to problematize the universalized individualism and its impact. From these courses, students self-selected to further engage in Ubuntu. I say self-selected because those students who expressed an interest to learn more about Ubuntu, became candidates to travel with me to South Africa.

Prior to traveling, I began collaborating with the undergraduate USA students who were interested in Ubuntu. As a mentor, I facilitated a space of learning about southern Africa through assigned readings, novels, documentaries and discussions. The discussions were informal, but a critical space for self- reflection, and allowed for personality dynamics to play out. The discussions engaged the moral controversies of "poverty tours" and tourist voyeurism of the African continent. These discussions not only facilitated the deconstruction of "Africa", but also facilitated a care for humanity. Before leaving the US, to travel to the Eastern Cape, I needed to be sure that my USA students and I cared deeply about the humanness of each other before pursuing our journey to engage communities in Bhofolo/Fort Beaufort. It was important to me that we build a collective sense of being and understanding of each other's strengths to contribute to the process of collaborative research with the community. As a mentor who was somewhat of an insider, meaning speaking the language and being familiar with the region, it was crucial for me to share the history of my experience living in Bhofolo, sharing conversational Xhosa and Ubuntu as a concept.

Our learning in South Africa began in Johannesburg before going to the field in Eastern Cape. We spent a couple of days visiting the historical sites in Johannesburg, namely the Apartheid Museum, Hector Pieterson Museum, Constitutional Hills – understanding the landscape of oppression and social activism against it. Each evening we would gather to have a conversation about our experiences, noting our encounters. The most instructive moment was the way that my USA students began to notice those things perceived as NOT Ubuntu through our everyday encounters. I remember a simple wave by another motorist and a student commenting that person has Ubuntu! Whilst in Eastern Cape we attended a class at one of the universities and our host, a lecturer, engaged extensive discussions on the significance of Ubuntu in contemporary life. The Eastern Cape is the citrus capital of the world but at the same time the poorest region for those who work these farms. Racism is still very blatant in these parts, and most of our encounters were racially charged – I, an African woman, was traveling with young white women. I remember being excluded from an invitation to attend "White" church. Whereas the "white students" traveling with me were invited by white families to fellowship together at the exclusion of me their black professor.

However, my students were actually well prepared that they too declined these exclusionary invites. I remember too getting into a book store owned by a white Afrikaner woman – after spending our money, and just perusing through the book store, this white woman approaching me as a black woman, told me to stop perusing her books because her customers did not like books leafed through by black hands! No matter how well prepared we were, such encounters with racism were disturbing as one student commented: "The racism I saw there was another thing that made me literally sick to my stomach. This is what led me to the conclusion that people chose to ignore the heinous acts that went on not so long ago in their country. It kept me wondering why the whites wouldn't feel remorseful about what their people did to non-white men, women, and children" (UWEC Student Joan Laundy).

Ubuntu Arts Project

I have since extended my "research" of Ubuntu to engage small-scale solidarity work in Eastern Cape, South Africa, in two villages of Bhofolo and Healdtown, in Eastern Cape, South Africa. Ubuntu Arts is an art based civic dialogue and community building initiative. It is a small project engaging local youth , adults and children in dialogues in diversity through Ubuntu Arts. The research part is addressing perspectives of Ubuntu. Community members share their perspectives and these interviews are video recorded with consent. Then, findings of the research are shared with the participants in a documentary style to jump start conversations about Ubuntu. Community members embrace their own voices. Instead of hearing someone else explain to them their own lives; they learn from each other. Ubuntu Arts and Dialogues in Diversity facilitates community building through cultural explorations. In the week-to-two weeks participants engage spoken word; story telling; beadwork, painting, music and dance that is expression of Ubuntu and at the end of the gathering participants share and showcase their work to the rest of the community members. Eastern Cape South Africa. The initiative uses dialogues in diversity and art based initiatives as a tool to address broader community issues.

Programming of Ubuntu Arts

Ubuntu Arts uses a variety of arts based initiatives- welcoming activities that engage song exploring "I am because we are"; dialogues about "What is Ubuntu to me? How can we use Ubuntu to address community issues?" Participants engage photography; poems and story telling, and use inspirational talks like Chimamanda's "Single Story" to encourage story telling; beadwork, painting/drawing to represent their ideas of Ubuntu. At the end of the gathering, an art exhibit is presented which draws community members to interact with the work, and consider broader discussions about Ubuntu as a foundational worldview in addressing community issues, and supporting positive ways of life. South African community members teach and engage Xhosa culture, sing, dance and use street theater and comedy to engage difficult topics. These dialogues engage USA students and support the growth of future partnerships with local social workers to sustain and extend the programming. US students are co-facilitators, co-researchers and co-creators of Ubuntu Arts.

The program is at its infancy. The program is currently offered through a high school as a way to mentor high scholars and non-traditional youths to attend university. A visit to the local university is one of the activities. US students in the past have donated application fees for each one of the participants interested in applying to go to university. In the future we anticipate working with local libraries to reach more youths.

I see Ubuntu Arts as part of learning to unlearn apartheid and beginning to re-write, re-frame and re-right indigenous knowledge, a critical initiative in the narrative of Ubuntu in the community. Youth and adults who participate in the project engage in story telling about Ubuntu to build knowledge about the concept, and encourage Ubuntu in main curriculum, undoing the current incongruencies between school and home in terms of cultural orientation. We also attend Grahamstown Arts Festival.

On return to the US, post-debriefing efforts are undertaken with students: "I have grown as a person through this experience…Looking back and reflecting on the time that I spent at the Healdtown School working with the kids on painting, beading, drawing, writing and games, I learned a lot about Ubuntu, and how it can be reflected in

everyday life. I learned about how Ubuntu is about building friendships and relationships with people, and being part of a community with people. I also learned that Ubuntu is about sharing, respecting, and showing kindness and genuinely caring for each other. I was able to experience this throughout the time that I spent at Healdtown. I believe that the kids also were able to learn a lot about Ubuntu, and how they are able to express Ubuntu in their everyday life, and through their artwork" (UWEC -Student Kara Kraase).

In the Future

We hope to engage adult community workshops to offer both dialogues and art initiatives to unlearn violence, build individual strengths and leadership skills through Ubuntu dialogues, to address community issues and offer an incubation to community based solutions to community issues. Eastern Cape is materially poor – most of the communities we work in have an unemployment rate of 70-80 %. Inefficient infrastructure and lack of income generating activities is glaring. Making an income is a priority for most adults and it is hoped that Ubuntu Arts can be an incubator for self-employment opportunities.

Concluding Remarks

Living as an African woman, I understand why indigenous knowledge and experiences were subjugated during colonial era. However, with the changing of times, where we speak of post-coloniality and post-apartheid, it is disturbing that Ubuntu remains on the margins of southern African education systems, the psychology of people, of communities, in the economy and/or political authority. Indeed, the glaring absence of Ubuntu in my schooling speaks to the pervasiveness of coloniality. Its tentacles far reaching, even as the legal part is slowly being eroded. Notice I use schooling because education is what I continue to do for myself, that self-transformative bridge I cross everyday for myself and can be encouraged in solidaristic learning. When I approach most Africans in southern Africa to share that I am exploring understandings of Ubuntu – I am usually met with puzzlement and sometimes deep questions that Ubuntu is not knowable in those ways – through Eurocentric research ways! To me this means, Ubuntu like the air we breathe – has been taken for granted, it is presumed it just exists and will always exist! But, this is not so, there must be a way to record it beyond orality. For the White people that I encounter, and those that care to ask about my research, my exploration of Ubuntu is perceived as non-essential research! Again, an expression of coloniality – that process of domination and exploitation of the capitalist/patriarchal/imperial western/Eurocentric/ Christian-centric spread through out the world, as such decolonizing knowledge and power in learning about Ubuntu is my journey into decolonizing myself. A task and a process of liberation from the assumed principles of knowledge and understanding of how the world is, and should be, as well as forms of organizing the economy and political authority

In a sense, there is greater global awareness of Ubuntu as an indigenous concept of southern Africa because of global technological processes that have brought the world much closer. For instance, today there is Ubuntu computer operating system. If the reader had to do a "Google" search of Ubuntu on the internet, the search yields thousands and thousands of entries, of businesses, community services, foundations, etc. In a round about way, Ubuntu has been recast as a political ideology of the "political elite" says van Binsbergen (2002). Indeed, Ubuntu was used at the framing of the Truth and Reconciliation process following the harrowing, horrendous experiences of apartheid. Further, Ubuntu has been used in the framing of the South African, the social welfare white paper, but very little in reality expresses this (Government Gazette, 1996). It has been my interest to explore the usage of Ubuntu in both public and private lives of people in southern Africa. I have been interested in the performances and usage of Ubuntu. Increasingly, the usage of Ubuntu in popular culture and some political spaces raises concerns about the continued colonization, commodification and appropriations that continue systems of exploitation, domination and oppression in the name of indigenous.

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Post Apartheid Education in South Africa: A Review of Progress and Pitfalls

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Abstract: This paper explores the educational changes in South Africa twenty-one years after the end of apartheid. The paper will examine progress that has been made as well as highlight some of the lingering pitfalls with regards to marked differences in state funding, affecting the overall quality of education. In addition, issues like the goal of education, curriculum, funding, and educational opportunities based on new policies of inclusion, social justice and equity will be addressed. Current educational changes will be discussed against a background of the past apartheid education

Keywords: Apartheid, Post-apartheid education, Bantu Education Act, Afrikaans, Afrikaners, Coloreds and Blacks.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of post apartheid education is to improve the quality of life for every South African regardless of disability, race, color or creed. Apartheid education set the stage for educational disparities in school funding, quality of content and resources in black schools throughout the country. Thus, post apartheid education is aimed at eliminating illiteracy, ignorance, and exploitation of any person by another including those with disabilities. South Africa still faces high rate of school drop outs, high rates of unemployment among black youth, and escalating school fees.

OVERVIEW

South Africa, a country located at the southern tip of the continent of Africa, gained its independence from apartheid/colonialism in April 1994. The country has an estimated population of about 49 million people occupying 473,000 square miles (Gwalla-Ogisi, Nkabinde and Rodriguez, 1998). Education under apartheid was divided along ethnic, racial, and even regional lines (Compton, 2008).

Prior to 1994, the South African education system comprised of eighteen departments serving different racial groups (Nkabinde, 1997). Thus, each education department was responsible for formulating its own policies along racial lines. The apartheid system of government divided its citizens along racial lines, with the highest group having the most rights and privileges and the lowest group the fewest. The racial classification went as follows: whites comprised of the immigrant Afrikaners (Dutch, English or people of European descent), coloureds (people of mixed descent), Indians (from India/ Asiatics), and Africans (indigenous black people). In 1994 South Africa witnessed the collapse of apartheid and the birth of democracy. This political transformation led to the dispensation of a new educational system. This paper addresses post-apartheid education and how it has been affected by changes over the past two decades after 1994

EDUCATION POLICIES

The beginnings of formal education in South Africa date as far back as 1652 when the first settlers arrived. Geber and Newman (1980) explained that in the early years, education for Africans was seen primarily in terms of the labor they would provide. Then it became logical not to allow blacks to have a say in the planning, structuring, and implementing of education (Molobi, 1988). Many schools for Africans were built during the first quarter of the nineteenth century throughout the Cape Colony. These schools were established and controlled by the missionary societies. The overseas missionary societies, primarily responsible for this undertaking, included the Moravian, London, Rhenish, Wesleyan, Berlin, Paris Evangelical, and Glasgow Missions, as well as the Church Missionary Society and the American Board Mission (Behr, 1978). Prior to 1953, the types of schools blacks attended, as well as the content of what was taught, were different. These schools were mainly traditional

missionary schools.

In 1953, the Bantu Education Act (No. 47) was introduced, and the South African government imposed a system known as "Bantu Education." This act widened the gaps in educational opportunities for different racial groups (Wikipedia, 2011). According to this report the concept of racial "purity," in particular, provided a rationalization for keeping black education inferior. According to Simon (1991), the introduction of Bantu education in South Africa marked the origin of the crisis in black education. This system was characterized by rote learning and a curriculum virtually unrelated to Africans' aspirations or practical job qualifications (Johnson and Devlin-Foltz, 1993). Under apartheid, schools for black students suffered from enormous underfunding, were under-resourced and overcrowded (Kotze, Van Duuren, Afrika, Rkiep, and Abdurahman, 2009).

The Aim of Bantu Education

Bantu education was meant to replace the traditional missionary schools whose curriculum was criticized for creating inappropriate expectations in the natives, that is, expectations that clashed with life opportunities in the country (Moodie, 1994). There was a belief that education available to blacks prior to 1953 was alienating them from their communities. Therefore, a new type of education was designed with the aim of training blacks for certain types of jobs, thus keeping them in their place or subordinating them in all ways to the ruling minority class. One of the deep seated intentions of this Bantu type of education as described by Arnold (1981), was to produce black carpenters, laborers, and artisans who were needed by the white economy, but not black philosophers or thinkers who might provide the political leadership to challenge the status quo

According to Herbstein (1992), Bantu education's aim of negative social engineering was designed to make black school graduates incapable of competing on equal terms with their white counterparts. As a result of this strategy of deliberate inequity, there are high illiteracy rates, overcrowded and poorly maintained classrooms, high pupil-teacher ratios, high failure rates, insufficient funding, and low teacher morale among the black population. Therefore, the current state of education in South Africa is not accidental but is a continuation of past disparities. Nekhwevha (1999) described how apartheid education in South Africa excluded the culture and language skills of the Africans from the curriculum in order to keep them in a state of alienation. Hailom and Banteyerga as cited by Nekhwevha (1999) stated that: "Africa today is full of challenges. Education is expected to be an effective tool in coping with these challenges. However, the existing education in Africa is the legacy of colonialism. It has been geared to meet and maintain colonial interests under the cover umbrella phrase "modernizing Africa." What we see today is that the so-called "modern education" is not satisfactorily addressing the problems of Africa to meet the needs and aspirations of the African people. In other words, it has not done much to boost the material growth and spiritual development of Africa. What is vividly observed is that African wisdom and knowledge is being systematically undermined; African self-concept and pride; African understanding and interpretation of the environment; all in all, the culture and psychological make up of the African. If Africa is to regain its place as the center of culture and civilization, it needs to re-think and reframe its education in the context of Africa and its problems and aspirations" (pp. 491-492).

The Aims of Post-Apartheid Education

Chisholm (1995) described the aims of post-apartheid education as follows: In the first instance, it signaled a move away from the determination of policy by a white minority state for a black majority; in the second, official state education policy, historically geared towards building a united white nation, was now re-oriented to redressing inequalities and nation-building between white and black; in the third, instead of being predicated on exclusion and denial of rights, social, political and educational policy became based on the principles of inclusion, social justice and equity (p. 50). In addition to moving away from the apartheid goals, the new South African government wanted to implement new goals that reflected the democratic ideals of the new government (Makonl, Moody, & Mabokela, 2006).

According to the report of the South African Consulate in New York, the South African Schools Act 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), provides for:

* compulsory education for learners between the ages of seven and 15 years of age, or learners reaching the ninth grade, whichever occurs first

* two categories of schools, namely public schools and independent schools, and the establishment and maintenance of public schools on private property

* conditions of admission of learners to public schools

* governance and management of public schools, the election of governing bodies and their functions

funding of public schools (p. 2).

Disparities in the Current Schooling of Black South Africans

Despite a continued emphasis on redressing the effects of past educational injustices, all is not well, especially for poor rural black children, those in the urban townships as well as those African children schooled in the former Homelands. In South Africa, educators and practitioners are challenged to design and implement effective and quality education for all South Africans. However, demand for quality education in black schools outweighs the supply of professionals and resources. During apartheid, the provision of education was very unequal. There were different departments of education arranged along racial lines with separate budgets and administration.

Historically, the allocation of educational funding was grossly unequal where white education enjoyed more funding resulting in wide-scale disparities with regard to all aspects of education (Naicker, 2000). However, the end of apartheid era saw some improvements, as efforts were made to improve education for blacks, but separately and grossly unequal. Access to quality schooling in South Africa is now based on finances. White schools, which were previously well-funded and provided high quality education, are still privileged. Black middle class families in South Africa tend to send their children to historically White schools.

Post-apartheid Curriculum

The educational changes in South Africa in the early 1990s marked the end of Bantu Education. With the collapse of apartheid education, Curriculum 2005, sometimes referred to as outcomes based education (OBE), was introduced. The OBE as described by Msila (2007) introduced new learning styles initiating change from passive, rote learning to creative learning and problem solving through active participation in the learning process. In addition, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was established in order to provide structure for the new curriculum (Msila, 2007). According to Msila (2007) the NQF was meant to prevent learners from being trapped in any one learning situation by promoting movement between different areas and levels of education and training

According to Nekhwevha (1999), OBE differs from apartheid education, which promoted passive learning, rote-learning, teacher-centeredness, and rigid content based syllabi and curricula. Instead OBE stands for learner-centeredness, democratic curricula/programs, active participation and critical thinking as well as reasoning, reflection and action (p.500). Nekhwevha (1999) pointed out that one of OBE oversight is the absence of an understanding of African education philosophy and culture. Most problems currently facing African schools, including South Africa, are high dropout rates, alienation and unemployment, partly caused by incompatible Eurocentric curricula. Nekhwevha (1999) contended that a curriculum drawing on a traditional African education philosophy could reduce these negative factors which are embedded in the current curricula.

Curriculum reform has been modernized to make it more relevant to the needs of citizens of a developing country as well as a developing economy. The new curriculum has focused on formerly neglected skills such as mathematics, science and technology. The report by the Ministry of Education (2005) stated that schools of Mathematics, Science and Technology, called Dinaledi schools, have been established as part of a National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and technology aimed at:

* raising the participation and performance of Black learners (especially females) in Mathematics and Science at Senior Certificate level

* providing high-quality education in the three subjects to all learners

* increasing and improving human resource capacity to deliver education in the three subjects (p.3)

Hewitt and Matlhako (1999) reported that history is overwhelmingly being told not from African eyes, but from White South African eyes, and sometimes through eyes of the dominant world intelligentsia (p. 158). This trend is not only damaging to the African psyche but it keeps the African in a perpetual position of intellectual dependency. South African history books continue to present a biased and one sided view of South African history.

African history is centered on the subjugation of Africans. The land theft, exploitation of African labor, and violence against the Africans by the settlers are always minimized. On the other hand, the historical achievements of Europeans are overemphasized. African historians are to be trained in order to promote Africa-centered interests as well as to prevent distorted history from being taught and perpetuated. The mis-education of Africans about their past history must be challenged. Current historical events leading to the end of apartheid must be taught in schools. As students are taught about authentic European history, it is fitting to have students in South Africa exposed to Africa, its history, cultures, languages and achievements.

School Funding

South Africa's new educational policy mandates that the government make education free to all South Africans. Under apartheid there was no free compulsory education for black South Africans while white South Africans received a quality free public education (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2015). In 1995, the educational dispensation declared that education was to be free and compulsory for all six-year old children in South Africa (Nkabinde, 1997). According to Wikipedia report (retrieved in 2015), South Africa currently spends over 20% of its budget on education, more than any other sector

Fiske and Ladd (2004) reported that while racial inequalities in school funding and fees were reduced after the end of apartheid, they were not completely eliminated. For example, the South African Schools' Act of 1996 gave substantial powers to school governing bodies, which according to Chisholm (2012) were given the right, among other things, to decide on school language policy, and the level of school fees to supplement government funding. According to this author, school spending was equalized on the basis of pupil/teacher ratios, but the right given to school governing bodies to raise fees helped ensure that schools in wealthier communities were able to use fees to appoint additional teachers and maintain infrastructure, and therefore maintain quality (p.92). School fees are also used to restrict black Africans from enrolling in the formerly white schools. This is supported by a report by Yamauchi (2011), who noted that white schools in South Africa tend to overprice education in order to limit black students. Therefore, black schools remain overcrowded, impoverished and inferior. It can also be pointed out that the South African School Act (1996) made education compulsory but not free (Chisholm, 2012). Therefore, the transition from apartheid to democracy, as observed by Hammett and Staeheli (2013), required the South African government to negotiate competing needs for economic development and greater equality. Resource-rich schools belong to white minority, while resource-poor schools belong to the majority black schools, thus making desegregation efforts complicated. Most black middle class families send their children to formerly white schools,

but there is no movement from white schools to black and/or African schools. Thus historically disadvantaged African schools remain unchanged in terms of racial make up.

Today, access to quality education is now determined by class rather than race (Ndimande, 2013; Lemon, 2004). According to Lemon (2004), for the poor majority, the system offers neither equality of opportunity nor significant redress to compensate for the injustice of apartheid education. Lack of teaching resources as well as overcrowded black schools have resulted in students' poor achievement. This in turn limits their opportunities to attend colleges thus reducing their prospects of entering the skilled labor market.

New Language Policy

Language policy as it applied to the African population under apartheid, was designed in such a way as to promote ethnic identity, while limiting proficiency in the official languages (English and Afrikaans) in order to limit access to employment (Henrard, 2002). According to this author, the principle of mother tongue education was conveniently applied to further the political interests of division amongst all communities (Henrard, 2002).

Nekhwevha (1999), contended that one of the most challenging developments arising out of South Africa's post-apartheid education system relate to the adoption of English as the medium of instruction in schools, technikons, colleges and universities. The new language policy in South Africa is in support of multilingualism. Fiske and Ladd (2004) identified the three principles for determining the language or languages of learning: (a) The right of the individual to choose the language of learning; (b) The right to develop the linguistic skills necessary for full participation in national, provincial, and local life; © And the need to promote and develop South African languages neglected under apartheid (p. 64).

In a new education dispensation, minority white schools are allowed to preserve their religious and cultural values and their home languages. Some of these schools use the language e.g. Afrikaans in order to limit African access. While the South African constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of language, community schools have a right to choose the language of instruction. Following are the excerpts from the South Africa's Language in Education Policy in Akanbi, (2009):

* Learners have the right to be taught in the language of their choice.
* The governing body of a school may decide on the language policy of the school.
* Schools must provide for more than one language of teaching where necessary.

A majority of former white schools do not teach African languages as a school subject (Lemon, 2004). African students whose home language is not Afrikaans and/or English end up suffering academically. There is also a lack of native language speaking subject advisors in these schools (Akanbi, 2009).

The sad part is that even some of the black middle class parents who send their children to these schools see African languages as unimportant. However, Lemon (2004) warns about this trend as it puts African children in danger of cultural alienation from their environment. Languages carry histories of the society, traditions and rituals of the group. By undermining African languages in the curriculum, African identity and heritage are also marginalized. Teaching children in their vernacular languages is critical to their cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural development. Therefore, the maintenance of vernacular languages in South Africa is essential in avoiding the slow death of African cultures and identity.

Teacher Training

Teacher training in post-apartheid South African has undergone major transformation in the past two decades. During apartheid teachers were unequally schooled, qualified and trained. Schafer and Wilmot (2012) reported

that under apartheid the majority of teachers (mostly Black) received state-controlled college teacher training and a minority of teachers (mostly whites) received a university teacher training. The teacher training of African teachers served to reinforce the subservient position of the black race (Nkabinde, 1997).

When the first teacher certificate was introduced for black South Africans, two years of teacher training were allowed for primary school teaching for candidates with a Standard Six Certificate. Primary school teachers qualified for the Lower Primary Teacher Certificate. In order to teach at a secondary or high school level, the teacher must complete at least a Standard Eight Certificate or obtain a Junior Certificate before qualifying for the Junior Primary Certificate. For completion, the training requires two years. Other advanced teachers' diplomas include the Junior Secondary Teachers' diploma, which requires the candidate to have a matriculation certificate. This course also requires two years to complete. African teachers have fewer academic credentials than their white counterparts. Kachelhoffer (1995) explained that the majority of black teachers are trained according to a three-year curriculum at teacher colleges for primary and secondary education. Their white counterparts are trained at teacher colleges for primary education and at universities for secondary education; both programs are offered over a four-year period. This type of training gives white teachers an advantage over their African counterparts. Chisholm (2012) described a critical priority after 1994 which was meant to ensure more and better quality teachers. According to Chisholm (2012), between 1994 and 1999, the state undertook three main initiatives in this regard:

> First, policies were effected to rationalize, redeploy and redistribute teachers within the system rather than train new teachers. It resulted in many qualified teachers leaving the profession. Second, in line with international trends and on the basis of the poor quality of the majority of teacher training colleges in the former Bantustans, the state set in motion processes to bring teacher education within the ambit of higher education. This entailed the closure of many colleges of education. Both efforts resulted in immediate shortages of teachers and the third
> initiative, the introduction in 2005 of bursaries to attract young, new teachers to the profession (p.93).

Teachers in post-apartheid era are expected to teach in the midst of new political transformation without being properly trained. It is noted that most teachers in South Africa's schools today got inferior education under the Bantu education system and according to a New York Times report (2009), this has seriously impaired their ability to teach the next generation.

Inclusive Education Policy:

South Africa as it emerged from apartheid and as it attempts to transform itself from the history of exclusion to that of inclusion, has adopted inclusive education in its policy development since the 1994 democratic elections (Hay and Beyers, 2000). The driving force in the adoption of inclusion in South Africa is the provision of equal rights and equal access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, disability and/or creed. According to the Education White Paper 6, (July, 2001) inclusive education and training is defined as follows:

• Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.

• Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.

• Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases.

• Broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures

- Changing attitudes, behavior, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners.

- Maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions, and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning (p. 6-7).

The report also suggested the following key strategies required to achieve this vision:

- transforming all aspects of education, developing an integrated system of education, infusing special needs and support services throughout the system.

- pursuing the holistic development of centers of learning to ensure a barrier-free physical environment and supportive and inclusive psycho-social learning environment, developing a flexible curriculum to ensure access to all learners.

- promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators and learners.

- providing effective development programs for educators, support personnel, and other relevant human resources, fostering holistic and integrated support provision through intersectoral collaboration.

- developing a community-based support system which includes a preventative and developmental approach to support; developing funding strategies that ensure redress for historically disadvantageous communities and institutions, sustainability, and ultimately access to education for all learners (p.4.)

Through inclusion the new government is aiming at reducing the disparities of the past as well as improving access to education for all previously neglected population groups. According to Hay and Beyers (2000), the concept of inclusive education fitted neatly with the new policy of a unitary education system where racial classification as well as disability is no longer used to differentiate departments. Inclusion in a South African educational context addresses issues of redress and equity. While inclusive education is now promoted in South Africa. The following challenges have been identified by Prinsloo (2001): *Inclusive policies have not been able to protect individual rights adequately.

- Marginalized and excluded voices are not heard.

- The way in which people with disabilities experience inclusion and exclusion in education have not been satisfactorily determined.

- Parent and community groups are not making adequate and responsible contributions to the process of inclusive education.

- The implications of changing professional roles for teacher education have not been determined.

- Ways in which specialized teaching techniques can contribute to overcome barriers to learning should be utilized.

- How do we evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive education?

- How can pressures to exclude be overcome? (p.344).

According to Prinsloo (2001) this long list of unresolved issues is a clear indication of the challenges that face educators, policy makers, parents and communities in the implementation of inclusive education. Fataar (1997)

described access to quality schooling in post-apartheid schooling as a privilege for the few. The author stated that while funding for private schools increased in the 1980s, there was also a move towards the "semi-privatisation" of white schools in the 1990s. Fataar (1997) further stated that another feature of South African education was the vocationalisation of the curriculum in the pursuit of black skilled labor. While more money has been allocated to formerly neglected African schools in recent years, less money has been allocated to formerly privileged white schools. This funding formula has allowed well-resourced white schools with parent communities that could afford to pay school fees to preserve a privileged schooling system (Fataar, 1997). The emerging African middle class do send their children to these selective white well-resourced schools. However, the majority of African children are still educated in segregated and poorly resourced African schools. The challenge for the South African government is to ensure that quality education is available for all citizens not just the selected few.

CONCLUSION

South African policies on education carry much promise for the future. Due to the country's wealth in natural resources, South Africa's prognosis with regard to redressing educational disparities is good. Rault-Smith (2008) reported that while advances have been made in education and training provision in the past two decades of democracy in South Africa, there is awareness that many of the consequences of the past have not yet been rectified. For instance, access to educational opportunities is still a dream for many African students.

One of the many challenges facing education in South Africa is the preparation of highly qualified teachers for different content areas, especially the sciences. The implementation of inclusion has also been plagued by lack of resources. The disparities that existed before apartheid are still evident in many parts of the country, particularly in rural and farm schools. Because of the legacy of apartheid, the highly unequal character of schools persists despite comprehensive reforms since 1994, in pursuit of equal education for all (Government Gazette, 2009). For example, the unequal education of the past is still evident today. Fataar (1997), contended that White and Indian education are generally well-endowed. Colored education is in a parlous state, while African education is by far worst off (Fataar, 1997). According to Compton (2008), despite policy changes in South Africa, in terms of real transformation, most African schools are still overcrowded with lack of basic resources and poor preparation of teachers. This observation is supported by Abdi (2001) when he reported that as far as black South Africans are concerned, the effects of disempowering educational systems are still being felt

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Unlearning Schooling in Autocracy

Otrude N. Moyo with Ms. Vuyelwa Langelihle Sibindi

Abstract: Dr. Moyo and Ms. Sibindi's narrative explores the history of education in South Africa and Zimbabwe, specifically the prefect system. Acknowledging that schools in both South Africa and Zimbabwe have traditionally been designed to promote obedience, Dr. Moyo and Ms. Sibindi discuss the need for a new approach in schools, one that promotes independent thinking and freedom. Historically, schools in Zimbabwe and South Africa reflected the power hierarchy of the apartheid and an unjust society, where Africans, and those who are poor were conditioned to be subservient to the powerful few. Dr. Moyo and Ms. Sibindi draw on the principles of Schooling in Capitalist America (Bowles) as well as their own experiences of the prefectship program while they were students. Comparing Zimbabwe's history of being an "autocratic political economy", these writers describe how the prefect system rewards students for obedience, conformity and allows for a few privileged students to manipulate their power. This narrative warns that school may be sold as a tool to help empower the poor in a capitalist society, but may actually just be a means to condition young students to become obedient workers, autocrats rather than empower them to develop their own voice and critical thinking skills. This narrative advocates for current schools in Zimbabwe to embrace egalitarian and Ubuntu traditions and values, not the outdated values of colonial Zimbabwe.

Introduction:

In today's global interdependent world, education has become the center of most of our lives. Most individuals and societies value education and connect education to individual and societal aspirations of progress. Whilst education is crucial in our lives there are varied and divergent views about educational institutions' role in societies. Within a functionalist and systems perspective, the belief is that people gain literacy through schooling in order to become informed citizens to actively participate in the presumed democratic world (Morapedi & Jotia, 2011). A structuralist analysis of education systems in capitalist democracies highlight the hidden agendas of capitalist democracies arguing that education basically evolves to mirror, support and reproduce the hierarchies and social relationships fundamental to the capitalist workplace and necessary for profit (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Yet, others see the purpose and role of education as a way to improve equity and socio-economic advancement of a society. Increasingly, education is seen as a way to socialize citizens to promote those globally shared egalitarian ideals of peace, therefore schooling is seen as a platform to socialize the younger generation to become future leaders contributing to building a culture of equality and peace. Still, others see education as a way for skills development specifically for young people to join the workforce as workers, and/or in self-employment as entrepreneurs, in turn contributing to economic growth. Missing in these discussions are dialogues about the role of education in transitional political economies emerging from the aftermath of colonialism, neo colonialism, and enduring neoliberalism. Further, missing in these dialogues is the centering of indigenous ways, like Ubuntu within the education system.

We have wondered how many of us as students, teachers and political leaders have become self-questioning about the role of education within Zimbabwean society? How many of us are attempting to question and rearticulate the role of schooling and in turn, education in our lives? We have not been part of this conversation, so in our limitations we presume it is not happening. Of course we are familiar with the literature. For example, the Universal Period Review (UPR) of the Republic of Zimbabwe (2011), outlines the problems of irrelevancy of the primary and secondary schools curriculum to the needs of the country. We are familiar too with "*The Development of Education National Report of Zimbabwe*" by the Ministries of Education, Sport and Culture and Higher and Tertiary Education. Implicit in our wonderment is the question: Does the prevailing education system within the Zimbabwean society align with progressive, egalitarian values and does it center indigenous ways like Ubuntu?

This paper is about our reflections of our school experiences, and broadly, our observation of schooling in Zimbabwe – post independence. The basis of this reflection is our experience of the prefect system as a sub-institution in the schooling system in Zimbabwe and its implications to transformative education. This reflective paper came about as a result of the first author's mentorship of the second author. The first author had attended the same boarding school in the 1980s, which the second author attended after the economic meltdown in late 2000s. This article came out of our shared reflections of both our schooling experiences. Vignettes from our experiences are used to connect schooling experience of the prefect system with the broader political economy of Zimbabwe, which we language as autocratic capitalism. In both our reflections we were struck by the continued similarities in our schooling, therefore our keenness to analyze the impact of our education system from our experiences. As a reflective paper, we are desiring a dialogue about the role of education in present day Zimbabwe. On the other hand, we are engaging in a dialogue about transitional political economies – specifically unlearning cultures of inequality, instead of fostering independent and critical thinking, personal growth and an agenda for citizenship and leadership that is based on relational ethics that value all people.

Defining the Workings of the Prefect System in Education

Whilst the prefect system is embedded and prevalent within the education system in Zimbabwe, very few commentaries are available about this sub-institution. A major resource has come from the experience of the Prefect System and the democratic process in Botswana (see Morapedi & Jotia 2011) and about South Africa (Mathebula, 2009). These authors investigated the efficacy of the prefect system in promoting democracy in Botswana secondary schools.

What is this prefect system? These are students selected by the school administration to maintain an orderly atmosphere among the student body and in the school system in general, through supervision and punishment of other students. In most cases, prefects are nominated/selected by the teachers and the school administration. In cases where students have an input on the selection, sometimes the existing prefects screen those who are to succeed. This process tends to be self-perpetuating, in that prefects select students who share similar thoughts, attitudes and actions about how to run a school. The prefect system is prevalent in most of southern Africa and continues as the backbone of primary and secondary education system in Zimbabwe. Ideally, the selection to the prefectship system presumes the highest character and honors those students by recruitment to the prefect system. Therefore, it presumes meritocracy. But, the question remains, can authority placed by adults who are not peers be fair and advance egalitarian relationships within a school system? Prefects are given the rights and responsibility to punish students who are not seen to be following rules and regulations. From our experiences, the prefect system is an extension of hierarchies in the education institution where student leaders are appointed by teachers and school administration to uphold administrative rules. Both authors went through this system with great trepidation, thinking this system is unpalatable and promotes inegalitarian values and relationships in a school environment. Both public (government sponsored) and private (mission/religious schools) schools use this system. However, through our dialogue we moved from a sense of frustration to facilitating a dialogue about the pros and cons about this prefect system, and begin to consider alternatives. This article is written in the spirit of engaging alternatives.

Despite the dramatic transformation of the Zimbabwean society to improve national literacy rates and the numbers of students graduating from high schools and tertiary education, the school climate in Zimbabwe continues to reproduce colonial status quo, especially with regard to the prefect system. We argue that Zimbabwe is an autocratic political economy, meaning that there is prevalence of the consolidation of political and economic power to a few, who then use their authority to direct political voice and resources to their own benefits, withholding basic necessities from the majority of the population. Autocratic capitalism as a system has several interconnected parts and mental constructs in Zimbabwe, exemplified by the (B)Vakuru culture (big men and big women of the ruling party), meaning those who use their political authority to amass public resources and dole out privileges to their cronies in the charade of electoral process. Long arms of political authority cultivate institutions and relationships that maintain this status quo as we will see below. Similarly, the education system in

Zimbabwean as exemplified by the prefect system tends to mirror autocratic political economy.

To situate our discussion, we draw insights from Bowles and Gintis's seminal work on "Schooling in Capitalist America", but for us the problem is described in the vignette below, Schooling in Autocratic Capitalism Zimbabwe. Let us summarize Bowles and Gintis's argument about Schooling in Capitalist America and show how their thesis is important to our discussion. We are more interested in Bowles and Gintis (2002) framing of the "hidden curriculum" of this capitalist education system, the intermingling of equality of opportunity in education, where education is the mechanism of social control and schooling is something done to and for the poor. On the one hand, schools are seen as the leveling of the playing field for the poor, and yet the reality of experience in schools contradict this. Are schools sorting places for who will become upper middle class and who will remain poor? Instead of emancipatory learning – rote learning and testing is emphasized. Compliant students are rewarded for following orders and students who are independent and creative are devalued. Following our vignettes we will attempt to use Bowles and Gintis' lens to explore the contradictions of education in Zimbabwe today.

Vignettes:

Experience A

My high school was a mission (religious) boarding school. Historically, when public education was not available to all citizens, mission/religious schools provided education to Africans. A boarding school means that as students, we are confined to this institutional environment for at least nine months of the year, with about three and a half months in a term. Our school year had three terms. Institutions have their own cultures. In my four years of high school education, procedures and process for selecting prefects were not transparent. There was no application process to provide opportunity to all eligible. Not only was the process not transparent but there was no prefect profile so that all students had a shared understanding of the qualities required for prefectship. The criteria used for selection was not shared with students, the qualifications for selection were never clearly articulated. In the four years of my high school education, students were just nominated by the school administration and presented to the student body. Basically, no student input was taken nor were the previous prefects openly consulted about the next prefects. In my view, no student's feelings or ideas were taken into account to the running of our lives as students in a boarding school. Entering our boarding school was like joining a miniature prison with uniforms, scheduled meals, scheduled play, study time, lights off and control of friendships. As students we dubbed it "iJele"-the prison. In this prison like environment it is difficult to pose the fundamental question: why are we doing things this way or that way? Since there is no break from this system that our parents mandated us to attend, the societal expectations, the rules and orders of the institutions are quickly accepted as "normal", even as this order violates one's rights and dignity. In this school environment we had become programmed to accept authority without question. But, as human beings we are creative and devise ways to resist, to work with and/or against the system. Within a prison like system called a school, I learned how to survive in an exploitative environment that was molding me to be compliant to ideas that I did not agree with. Everyday our young voices were silenced. Those of us not awarded the privilege of prefectship lived in harassment and fear of prefects and their punishment. Punishment meted out included picking thorns (ubhima) with bare hands for horses. A traumatic experience that still lives with me!

Vignette B:

My story goes like this-beginning of my A-level year, I too was nominated to the prefect system. A seemingly honor, and the excitement of being a young adult among the chosen ones! Even in this excitement it remained troubling to me that the selection process was a secret; no application, no interview, no voice from my peers about my leadership qualities. As a teenager, in a uniform dress code, the prospects of wearing a different uniform from the rest of my classmates was exciting. Within a couple of days of this elation, the repressiveness of the prefect system quickly began to express itself. Other students-those not selected-were being negatively treated

by "us", the new prefects. I began to notice my peers being punished for things they did not do; minor infractions from being late for meals; it was like this whole prefect association had this unearned power, but also that those prefects were beginning to be bullies. Within a couple of days, I had questions about the behaviors and actions of my peers, now the chosen prefects. The ways we, the "prefects", were supposed to be working as prefects, went against my own values and cultural upbringing, whereas my peers were bullying other students to obedience. Any disagreements, and my peers were supposed to be punished. I witnessed bullying by the so-called prefects on a day-to-day basis. One day I could not hold it in, so I talked back to the prefects and to the head girl about their actions and behaviors towards other students. As a prefect I began to have serious questions about a system that was controlling other students through punishment and fear. From the uniforms onwards to the ways of working, the prefect system was creating unhealthy hierarchies within the student body. Those chosen where made to feel superior by the teachers and administration. This was unpalatable to me. I started talking back and asking questions about this prefect system. I began to actively engage my peer prefects about the workings of the prefect system in my school. I argued that the way things were, the school was becoming a place of deadening the spirit instead of awakening our spirit! I wondered daily if my fellow students really engaged in self-questioning about the purpose of education in their lives. My desire for education was liberation. I am a young idealist, desiring to live those egalitarian practices. Not to disrespect adults, but I questioned a system that selects student as part of student governance without students' voices. Among my peers, this questioning was perceived as "disrespectful" to the school administration and the order of prefects selected. I was supposed to be adhering to rules and mechanisms designed to keep us all in check. When I questioned the unfairness of the process where student leaders are selected out of favoritism and their authority not questioned, I was demoted. The reader may presume that I write out of bitterness or victimhood-no-I write out of liberation. It was a great thing that I was not part of this system and I could keenly observe, witness its workings, and in turn begin my talking back to power.

As a young woman, whose identity and self-esteem was still forming, the demotion was hurtful. But the most painful part was to live and witness an education system where hope is supposed to grow, but instead it grows hate and spitefulness. What was most painful to witness was my fellow classmates turn into merciless bullies, demanding unearned respect through threats and punishment of other students. But, all this made sense to me when one considers the broader political economic system we live, where power is consolidated to a few who hold authority, to deny the many their basic necessities of food, work, water etc. It was troubling that my education, which is supposed to set me free, was actually holding me at ransom.

In my school, the prefect system was used by the school administration to enforce interests of specific groups of people, and to maintain control of students through fear. Fellow students as prefects used their authority to settle scores. There was no differentiation between bullying and maintenance of order. The school atmosphere was stifling and without care of students' well being. Through my horrendous experience I conclude that what this school and many others are cultivating through the prefect system are corrupt leaders, who have no sense of humility, nor respect for themselves or their fellow students. Students were believed to be above the rules themselves as they are the rules. My wonderment: shall we continue to uphold such an autocratic system and to what end? The spirit of "Ubuntu" from our value system as the Ndebele phrase says "Inkosi yinkosi ngabantu" – "one is a leader because of assent of the people, not subjugation!" My experience brought me to ask: whose culture are we cultivating if we do not respect our own culture and the words of our forefathers?

This somewhat adverse experience helped me realize my voice and that I could use it to advance fairness. I grew up as an only child. I was raised by my maternal grandparents who cultivated in my that I own my own voice and my choices. Therefore, I try to be responsible for my actions and live fairly on a day -to- day basis. However, what I was experiencing in the prefect system in my school, was contrary to my values. As I write this, I believe this is a voice of the many defenseless students all over Zimbabwe who hope for a change in the prefect system in schools. We as Zimbabweans should seek to promote freedom and empowerment, not disempowerment in schools. As schooling is sold to us as a mechanism to progress, it is therefore imperative that schools cultivate student leadership that is democratic, respects differing viewpoints, and supports education beyond passing examinations. Students in schools should learn to speak without fear and trust that their rights as human beings

are protected.

I understand that the prefect system is embedded in the historical experience of Zimbabwe, but this system should be transformed so as to advance egalitarian ideals where leaders are chosen by their communities; where leaders serve the interest of their communities, not vice versa, people serving the leaders. Power is a paramount thing in all societies, but how we distribute power across societies should be the order of cultivating ethical politics in the schools, not an anti-politics machine. This goes to the broader society as well.

Examining the Issues with the Prefect System

Our concern for writing this reflection is to engage in a conversation about the role of education in Zimbabwean society. Our understanding of education post-colonial rule is that education is supposed to decolonize the mind and cultivate transformative consciousness towards empowerment. Given this presumption, the education system should attempt to decolonize the mind and draw its knowledge(s) and values from the indigenous ways of understanding, taking into account that indigenous knowledge is not static, but a continued negotiation of a shared vision of our humane relational existence, at the core, Ubuntu. We see decolonization as reparation of our own cultural knowledge and ways of being. At least this is why I went to school. This is why we continue to self-educate beyond schooling, made possible for us through capitalist democracy or autocracy!

The main thesis of *Schooling in Capitalist America* is that schools reproduce the inequality desired by the capitalist system. Schools prepare young people for adult work rules by socializing people to function well and without complaint in the hierarchical structure of the modern corporation. Schools accomplish this goal by the correspondence principle, namely by structuring social interactions and individual rewards to replicate the workplace (Bowles & Gintis, 2002, p. 1). In our prefect system, the school prepares young people to function in autocracy where leaders are not questioned. Like factory workers who work for their pay -checks, students produce work for grades, which has limited relevance to their lives.

Further, Bowles and Gintis argue that schooling in America has a strong bearing on the economic status of parents rather than the educational effort of individual students. And, the success and future of children in this environment relies on the parental status, not student effort. Students from particular ethnic groups, from particular political parties, from particular households get to be the school leaders not because of their own leadership qualities and efforts.

The Prefect System: The Cradle of Autocracy In Zimbabwe's Education System

Within the Zimbabwean society today as described in the vignettes above, the educational climate continues to be steeped in cultural imperialism and undemocratic processes. First, autocracy thrives within capitalism. Currently, the education system is situated within a mindset that capitalist arrangements are equal to democracy. However, there is a clear contradiction because education in Zimbabwe remains highly undemocratic. As explained in the vignette, the prefect system outlines the undemocratic nature of school systems. The prefect system as experienced was controlling other students instead of cultivating critical thinking and liberation. The education system was actively creating hierarchies in the student body where those chosen by the administration were made to feel superior. The voices of those not chosen were stifled. Those chosen as prefects were the ones mentored for "greatness" and these students were the ones having unearned privileges, thereby cultivating an undemocratic culture.

Second, the selection process to the prefect system had no clearly articulated procedure or process. The lack of transparency of the process means the process comes from above and cannot be questioned. This idea that things come from a higher authority is archaic and is detrimental to school leadership, particularly to the growth of young minds, where societal structure is not questioned. In such an environment there is no collective responsibility, but those in authority have an unquestioned authority and they appoint their own people. The

presumption is that these prefects are selected on their merit, but what is merit when the process of earning that merit is not clear to all?

Third, we argue that an education system, where knowledge, values and skills are disconnected from the aspirations of students, is destructive. Unlike Bowles and Gintis's "hidden assumptions" about the roles of education, there are no hidden assumptions in the Zimbabwean education system. Zimbabwe as exemplified in the prefect system is explicitly reproducing credentialed people to grease the autocratic political economic system; this is observed in the ways that credentialing is given to ruling party "big women." Currently, the broader political economy runs on channeling the material prizes to those closest to the seats of political power. In our view, the school system, especially the prefect system, mirrors the broader polity where leaders self appoint and demand worship, instead of proving their leadership qualities in serving others. As in the political economic system of Zimbabwe, the long arm of government reaches out to tax even the poorest of the poor to sustain itself. The prefect system is used in the similar manner to keep the school administration in power for its own sake, not to further student well-being. In an autocratic political economic system, those in power are only generous to themselves and to those closest to them. People who are poor continue to be taxed to extend the power of the ruling. Those who are poor are harassed-they are considered disposable beings whose very poor circumstances created by an unequal order are used against them to keep them in check.

This has become acceptable as the way things are! A society where only 20% of the labor force is formally employed, often without pay, what is the purpose of education? For those who gain access to the positions of employment, often times it is through cronyism and then they only use their positions to exhort resources from those poorer. As mirrored within the prefect system where there are no applications, no procedures for students to prove themselves as leaders in the school system.

In the example of the vignette above there were no clear guidelines for students to be selected to the system. No interviews for candidates to ensure equity and fair process. Moreover, students were never encouraged to develop persuasions to win the votes of their peers as in an electorate democracy. The prefect candidates are not asked or required to reflect and review their own qualities for suitability in school governance. Because someone is coming from a particular environment does not make them an automatic positive leader. The school environment – like the political economic system – those in leadership positions are not supposed to prove themselves in working for the public, but prove themselves in maintaining a system of inequality. So, in the prefect system leaders are born and preference is given to those students from particular environments, for example those whose parents are wealthy and are able to purchase their way; those students who are materially poor whose schooling expenses are paid by the school, so that gratitude to the school is forever maintained. An elitist and cronyism system is thus maintained.

The Zimbabwean education system is designed to reproduce the autocratic system where everyone is made compliant to the consolidated power of the few who have authority to withhold from others what they need! Our lived experience of schooling mirrors clearly the reproduction of an autocratic society that is hierarchical, fears dissent and sees opposition as nothing but a threat to the establishment. In such an environment, schooling is about passing examination not the cultivation of critical thinking beings!

Autocracy is currently cultivated in Zimbabwean education system – the school that we are the product of is based on the transmissionist model where learning is authority received from textbooks and modules. Learning is authority-based, focused on rote knowledge geared towards examinations and credentialing. It is heavily based on cognitive learning and all the other "learning" is subverted. In this environment, students are still expected to grow up to do menial jobs. We ask the question where democratic practices are not cultivated: are students expected to gain social, emotional, cultural learning by osmosis? In an educational environment where passing of examinations, not creativity, is the whole framework of the Zimbabwean education system, parents pay the money for students to pass examinations as these are the sorting mechanism of who gets the privileges of higher education, and who does not. Now with the heavy privatization of the education system, even if you were able to

pass those examinations, the availability of money becomes the new mechanism of sorting – who gets an education and who does not? Zimbabweans are familiar with this sorting game so that they are increasingly buying their certificates, diplomas and doctoral degrees, but does this mean they have an education? The remaining critical question: What role does this kind of education system and these outcomes have on the society as a whole?

Furthermore, in these parts, whilst schooling credentials have been valued, education in these parts does not quite matter when it comes to wealth making, as success in business is politically doled out. Even if graduates became successful business people, the conditions of the place are such that one has to pay their political homage for their businesses to thrive. Paying homage to the Bakuru (big men and women) to let you play! The political process is the decider on who will enter what businesses; who will hold what wealth and who will pay to keep the autocratic system afloat through their labor; who will become part of the torturable classes and disposable persons to us, as education in Zimbabwe becomes just posturing to that global world. Within an autocratic system, which Zimbabwe is, fairness is a word that has no meaning. There is no hidden agenda about this one – one has to pay the Bakuru for one to play – have a business! In this case, Zimbabwean education has become a sham to pick mostly poor people's pockets for promise of credentials, jobs and upward mobility that can not exist for all but only a few who have ascribed statues. Indeed, considering the colonial experience, it has always been like this, it is not surprising that the fruit did not fall far from the tree!

From our experience we see the prefect system as embedded in the colonial education, which is still dominant even to this day. This system was first brought up to maintain discipline and good relations among students; however in its historic and current form it grooms future leaders of an autocratic system. Its legitimacy is maintained by the order and membership of those who were prefects and went on to assumed leadership roles in various societal institutions. For Zimbabwe, what is ironic is that it is the grooming of leaders to consolidate power and have authority to punish without question. In Zimbabwe, students in most schools are not given the exposure to participatory democracy – for instance to have young people select their own leaders. The prefect system does not give a chance to students to elect their representatives or their leaders. Their leaders are chosen for them. This lack of student involvement in electing their leaders was also observed and noted in Botswana by Morapedi and Jotia (2011). The denial of children to participate in their own student leadership is part of an autocratic system where consolidation of power is given to the school administration who then chooses who is to represent the administration in the student body.

Decolonizing the Mind: Promoting Relevant Education System through Ubuntu

We see decolonizing the mind through dialogues about *Ubuntu* as our African value system and knowledge as critical in transforming the school system. Some people hold archaic knowledge and value systems – for instance that children should be seen and not heard, a corruption of *Ubuntu*. This translates to the broader societal outlook – things have historically and are currently done in a very paternalistic way and the children and general public have no way of pointing out that this is counter productive to liberation.

We believe that student leadership in schools should advance democratic ideals not autocratic ideals as seen within the Zimbabwean case. It means recognition that all people matter. A need for participatory and deliberative practices is essential in decolonizing the mind and the systems that make for a society. We see the decolonizing of the mind and system as crucial if it incorporates dialogues that engage indigenous knowledge and values like *Ubuntu*. The dialogues about *Ubuntu* do not necessarily mean assuming dogmatic things about what is perceived as indigenous, but it means a discourse in schools that engages the aspirations of future students about their own lives. As we have outlined, our aspirations are for an egalitarian education system that is inclusive and advances our potentialities as individuals, communities and societies.

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Development of Agriculture or Is it Underdevelopment?
Advocacy for a Return to Small is Beautiful in Agriculture in Zimbabwe

Martin P. Moyo

"The guidance we need…cannot be found in science or technology, the value of which utterly depends on the ends they serve; but it can still be found in traditional wisdom of mankind." (E. F. Schumacher, 1973.)

Abstract: Martin P. Moyo's narrative calls on the need to redesign the current agricultural system in Zimbabwe. Historically, a loop sided economy, with a formalized sector for a few and informal sector for the many meant that ,Zimbabwean communities encouraged families to grow their own food, and promoted cooperation among farmers. The economic crisis in 2008 left the agricultural infrastructure less stable and also precipitated a drop in socio-economic and political stability in Zimbabwe. Land availability for growing crops has been limited, overly dependent on rainfall, based on urgent needs and driven by the largest profit available from corporations rather than what will feed people. Food production has decreased and much of the population is not receiving adequate food supply. Dr. Moyo describes how small scale farms can be the most efficient way for growing food. Dr. Moyo discusses that focusing on bringing farmers together to support one another to meet the demands of the market is more socially and ecologically responsible than the current system. As Ubuntu tradition of earlier times focused on the holistic wellbeing of communities, earlier agricultural systems also focused on what farming methods would be best for the most people. Farmers pooled resources in order to increase each other's agricultural production and lent out cows to poorer families to support food production and crop growth. Adaptations of these earlier farming strategies can help with unemployment, improve sustainability and increase food security for communities.

Introduction: Development of Agriculture or Is it Underdevelopment?

I grew up growing some of the food we ate and keeping livestock. In another environment my parents would have been "hobby farmers" because they had "day jobs." But in Zimbabwe they were subsistence farmers, keeping livestock and growing their food using rainfed agriculture whenever possible. They were not alone in their practices, these are livelihoods for many people in southern Africa. As long as I can remember, each year when the rain clouds gather, I watched my now elderly parents prepare their best seeds stored from last year's harvest and prepare their fields by spreading manure to welcome the new growing season of their rain fed agriculture. Each year they have worried about availability of seeds, manure, sometimes floods and then the severe droughts challenging their food security. Not only this, but the encroachment of science and technology the value of which utterly depends on the ends they serve (Schumacher, 1973); today, genetically modified seeds; factory farmed chickens and other livestock and the threats of pests and pesticides.

Since graduating with my undergraduate degree in Agriculture in 2001, I have worked with rural farmers in southern Africa who pride themselves on growing the best of everything from nature itself! I have experienced the wisdom of subsistence farmers on one hand, and on another I have heard "expert talk" about underinvestment in southern African agriculture; inefficient internal markets and the possibilities of genetically modified organisms having a potential for boosting agriculture yields and "climate proofing crops" (Draper, Kiratu & Hichert, 2009). I have often wondered with all this talk if it is indeed development of agriculture or is it underdevelopment? Schumacher's quote above reminds us that there is indeed wisdom in learning from subsistence farmers augmented by science and technology that serves the improvement of quality of life. It is without a doubt that farmers like my parents are indeed worried about climate change but also their fate with genetically modified organisms, the negative effects of synthetic fertilizers, and heavy use of pesticides – these technologies, while convenient and likely to increase yields, have long term negative effects. For example, horribly tasting foods that are nutritionally deficient, increased environmental risks like ground water pollution, disruption of ecosytems and increased toxins, allergens and carcinogens that cause immune system disorders and fertility issues, etc. So the

pertinent question has been: Is it development when businesses are dousing people and the environment with toxins in the promise of improving plant yield? These are complex issues facing the development of a financially successful agriculture sector in southern Africa that is socially and ecologically responsible.

My elderly parents once had day jobs-they were once teachers and education administrators before the collapse of the economy. The lesson learned in this whole ordeal is that my parents have always been rooted on the land, even with their day jobs. What was their life experience telling me? With the collapse of the economy their experience speaks to wisdom to trust the self-sufficiency that comes from being socially and ecologically responsible. Their trust and loyalty in their own self-sufficiency has been unwavering. Making sure that they plant their first crop; keeping and maintaining their own varied livestock has mitigated their loss of those economies tied to the ebbs and flows of the money markets, which they have always been on the margins. It took me time to realize that my parents, like most Zimbabwean small scale farmers, had been rooted on the land not just as property but the land as the giver of life and livelihoods, never mind changes in science and technologies. Each year my dear parents cast seeds on the earth to grow their own food and each year it is a memory for me to not lose their wisdom, lest I become a "desert" myself.

They pride themselves on growing and eating the "real" stuff – nature grown crops, grass fed livestock, still in nature. Now, growth of factory farmed chickens, genetically modified everything – these are the complex questions about the development of agriculture in southern Africa. My efforts have been: How can I improve the quality of life of these people who have so much wisdom from their practice experience? I have gone on to complete my doctoral studies in agriculture with a focus on climate risk management and improving crop yield for rural farmers, and in turn ensuring food security. Currently, I work for an international agricultural research institute where our charge has been to use best practices to improve rural farmer's crop yields. In this regard, my efforts have been in livelihoods, social development and improvement of food security for southern Africa. This narrative will focus on my work specifically in Zimbabwe. The article is not testing a hypothesis but is a reflection of my observation about agricultural experience in Zimbabwe as it relates to improving quality of life.

The Place of Agriculture in Southern Africa

Agriculture is a very important sector in southern Africa as it contributes about 35% in terms of GDP; provides 70-80% of employment; and contributes significantly (up to 30%) in foreign exchange earnings (Kandji et al., 2006). In Zimbabwe, the agricultural sector has long been key to its economic stability and growth. It forms the basis of the direct and indirect livelihoods of almost 70% of the population and economic growth is also directly linked to the performance of this sector (Anseeuw et al., 2012). The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2005) reveals that agriculture contributes about 17% of Zimbabwe's GDP. The importance of agriculture to national GDP is also confirmed by the link between rainfall and fluctuations in GDP growth.

Agriculture in Southern Africa (Zimbabwe, included), has been described by Draper et al. (2009) as a complex, uncertain and "messy" topic to address. The issues related to agriculture are not static, linear, rational or stand alone, yet they have massive impacts and consequences to general quality of life (Draper et al. 2009). As stated above, one of the major factors noted across developing economies is the predominance of the share of agriculture to the economy. Second, is the co-occuring poorly functioning and/or non existent factor markets (Unal, 2008). In Zimbabwe this is true too. We see that agriculture consist of a substantial share of the economy, and at the same time problematic factor markets. What is meant by factor markets? Factor markets (refer to services that maintain the main factors of production) particularly for capital goods, are the defining characteristics of a market economy. However, historically in Zimbabwe, attempts to create a socialist economy meant a substitution of factor markets with central economic planning, often competitive with factors markets. Why is this an important factor to understand? According to Unal (2008), the intersection of a larger share of agriculture in the economy and poorly functioning factor markets produces the widely commented on inverse relationship between farm size and yield per acre. It means that as farm size gets bigger, more capital inputs are required. However, in conditions where capital inputs are small, yield gets smaller (Unal, 2008). Indeed, the relationship between farm size and

yield has long been a focal point of agriculture economics but there is no conclusive understanding of why it occurs. However, the critical part to understand is that this inverse relationship between size and yield has far reaching implications to social development policy, i.e. to employment, land reform and market efficiencies.

Looking at the farm size and yield in Turkey, Unal (2008) outlines the prominent implications, first, if in developing countries there is an inverse relationship between size and yield, it begs the question: Was the Zimbabwean government justified to engage in redistributive land reforms? While it is not the purpose of this paper to examine the extent to which land reform in Zimbabwe was redistributive, the issue here is that if there is an inverse relationship between farm size and yield, the drive to correct land inequities is justified since small is beautiful! Indeed land reforms has played an important role in economic transformations, creating agricultural surplus, growing consumer demand, and creating political stability to maintain rapid industrialization for countries like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (Heltberg, 1998 quoted by Unal, 2008).

Another implication of the inverse relationship between farm size and yield are the implications to employment. Sen (1999) quoted by Unal (2008) argues that the choice of technology in agriculture is crucial for resource allocation and employment, since in most developing countries, the majority of the population is employed in agriculture. Further, Sen (1999), argues that certain types of technologies are more appropriate for countries in which labor is abundant, relative to other factors of production. Since labor is abundant, small scale-farming is more favorable for labor intensive farming than large-scale farming that requires more capital inputs. In this regard, a focus on small scale farming for Zimbabwe seems the most practical, given the abundant labor as opposed to capital improvements that are scarce.

This inverse relationship also causes environmental deterioration and disintegration of communities. Unal (2008) argues that land concentration, combined with mechanization in agriculture, creates landless laborers who lack alternative means of procuring a livelihood, either cultivate ill suited and environmentally sensitive tracts of land in forests and arid lands, or migrate to other places in search of employment. Due to its policy implications for employment, efficiency, equity and sustainability, IR has been one of the most important and hotly debated topics in agricultural economics. However, still there is no consensus on what causes it. Again, in this paper we are not testing this inverse relationship but are sharing our observations and experience to provide commentary on what has happened to the agricultural experience in Zimbabwe.

The Current Status of Agriculture in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's agriculture is currently facing serious challenges of productivity. In recent years, productivity has declined drastically and the country is unable to feed itself. Over the past 15 years, Zimbabwe has also gone through a period of socio-economic decline and political instability, with land tenure a major issue. The unplanned and chaotic land reform is sometimes blamed for food shortages. However that may not be the case, as 80% of maize, the staple crop, has always been produced by small holder communal farmers. While government and donor programs have provided free or subsidized inputs in recent years, they tend to be provided in insufficient quantities to drive productivity improvement and noticeable increases in income.

The current challenges in Zimbabwean agriculture could be blamed on government policies, many of which lack technical support, processes, and systems to support implementation. As mentioned earlier, the lack of development of factor markets to an economy that is largely agrarian means the cementation of that inverse relationship between farm size and yields. Yields are a function of the inputs – if these are insufficient then a decrease in yield is expected. To exacerbate the situation, Zimbabwean agriculture has continued to rely on rain fed agriculture, but in light of climate variability and change, droughts have been prevalent, negatively impacting yield. In addition, the national agricultural extension service lost many of its experienced extension officers during the economic crisis years, and lacks resources to effectively reach the more than 1.5 million communal farmers. This results in low productivity gains as new technologies to support farmers are not shared.

Over the past 15 year s there were four major channels for assistance to agriculture development in Zimbabwe. These included the government, the United Nations group (coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for agriculture), the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), and bilateral initiatives (the Protracted Relief Programme (PRP), although was atypical – although it started as a bilateral programme of the Department for International Development (DFID), it eventually involved several donors) (Anseeuw et al., 2012). Anseeuw et al. (2012) notes that although each sphere was well coordinated (except for the government, where project implementation was mainly ad hoc) there was little coordination between these different entities. The main reasons for the lack of coordination were the different approaches to assistance, different political stances towards Zimbabwe, and donor visibility. On the ground, separate and fragmented implementation led to less coordinated and limited (scattered funding) initiatives (Anseeuw et al., 2012). Programs were varied to support the varied agricultural sectors. Given the political environment, consolidation of land and particularly the prime agricultural land destroys agriculture. On one hand the prime agricultural lands became under utilized resulting in decreased agricultural capacity. FAO's approach has been to consolidate land to yield higher productivity in agriculture.

Economic problems with what many called an economic meltdown were severe, with the country's official inflation rate being quoted at a staggering 230 million percent (%) in 2008 (Shumba, 2010). Zimbabwe has a population of about 12.7 million people and is among the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) worst affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic (CSO, 2012). HIV prevalence among adults 15 years and above in Zimbabwe was estimated to be 23.7% in 2001, 18.4% in 2005 (Malaba, 2006) and further declined to 15% in 2012.

The resulting loss of livelihoods, increased poverty, reduced food security, and decline of the formal economy have resulted in millions of Zimbabweans needing emergency support primarily provided through donor funded, NGO implemented programs. Social and economic systems have collapsed, decimating the productive capacity of actors at multiple levels

Rohrbach *et al.* (2004b) suggest that the labor constraints associated with the HIV/AIDS pandemic has a major bearing to the farming system, limiting affected households' capacity to produce crops and herd animals. Price-Smith and Daly (2004) concur and point out that HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe is shrinking productivity, leading to a decline in the growth of human capital, and killing the productive working class. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2007) also reveals that HIV/AIDS and emigration due to economic conditions undermines the capacity of households to gain access to and produce food, depleting agricultural labor, which depletes the time and resources of care givers who might otherwise be able to produce food. Productivity is low, which is related to a low level of capital endowment, leading to a restricted uptake of productive farm technologies and, subsequently, to low yield and output (ZimVAC, 2009). However, it is also important to explore and note the impact of remittances on agricultural gain, since those who have emigrated also continue to somehow indirectly support agriculture.

The national average yield for maize production has ranged between 600-700 kilograms/hectare in recent years, with the national average reaching 850 kilograms/hectare in the 2013/14 season due to improved rainfall conditions. Reliance on government or donor input programs and production of maize or other low value crops, often with very little surplus, has trapped smallholder farmers in a cycle of poverty, food insecurity, and dependency.

Does a market oriented agriculture approach improve food security and productivity?

Zimbabwe has had a mixed farmer agricultural system, with large scale commercial farmers, small scale commercial farmers, rural/communal farmers, subsistence farmers and urban farmers. Since 1980, public research focus has been on developing sustainable crop and livestock production systems for the low rainfall areas. Today, often talked about is the promotion of a market oriented agriculture approach that could improve both food security and productivity. A market driven/oriented approach according to ICRISAT (2010) is one that enables the poor smallholder farmers to capture larger rewards from markets, while managing their risks. This approach

assumes that markets will provide the
"pull" or demand for goods which will then enable the smallholder farmers to capture rewards, in this case raise income of farmers who provide these goods. The rewards and the demands of the markets motivate adoption of innovations and stimulate agro-enterprises that raise rural incomes and create opportunities to invest in and beyond agriculture (ICRISAT, 2010). It is critical to note that the market-oriented approach recognizes women and youth as key role players. This type of approach is currently lacking in Zimbabwe, and there is a need to enable farmers to be part of this development process. But, the major questions remains: Can a viable agricultural system develop without those factor markets? Can a socially responsible and ecologically accountable agriculture system emerge in Zimbabwe?

Currently, in Zimbabwe most of agriculture interventions remain emergency-oriented, being time bound, rainfed, and thus very limited in scope (Anseeuw et al., 2012). There is a need to improve public investment, as well as research and development investment in agriculture – which is currently lacking, by ensuring that any development funds availed are well spent (Draper et al., 2009). There is a need for a policy shift by the Government and the role of government in the sector (providing a sustainable and suitable environment for investment in the sector) should be clearly defined. There is a need to deal with the current situation where there is a lack of a relevant and well-defined policy and institutional framework, leading to an ill-defined overall development strategy and unstructured institutional entities (Anseeuw et al., 2012). In this vein, supporting a market driven approach as a development strategy where farming is seen as a socially responsible and ecologically accountable business could be part of the solution.

Linking farmers to markets is critical for improved livelihoods of smallholder farmers as research indicates that they currently face disadvantages in marketing their produce. Communal farmers' primary marketing constraints are due to their inability to consistently supply the large quantity as well as high quality produce for the market. Regional farmers' organizations could emerge as the hub to bring together farmers to discuss, share ideas, network and sell their products. It is imperative to support farmers to gather, share and find solutions to local farm issues. This farmer network could become a catalyst to developing best practices in farming.

The big corporate farm mentality is one to unlearn for Zimbabwe. Historically, this approach resulted in small holder farmers being bypassed in the process of transformation of agriculture and agri-businesses. The big corporate farm mentality looked down on traditional solutions to improve productivity. A recent baseline study by ICRISAT (unpublished) of two irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe (Silalabuhwa in Insiza District and Mkoba in Gweru Rural District) reveals the subsistence nature of farmers/irrigators. ICRISAT notes that there is a big task in working with farmers in trying to overcome market impediments, as well as in identifying new markets. Farmers have known how, although noting the existence of potential (better) markets for farmers, the study notes that a number of impediments exist, which prevent farmers from accessing them. These are identified as: I) they require reliable supplies and farmers are not able to consistently supply the market with the desired produce; ii) access is associated with high transport that dissuades farmers from supplying to that market; and iii) these markets need produce on a regular basis which the "subsistence" nature of these irrigation systems currently cannot meet. The study reveals that farmers need to take farming as a business concept seriously, so that they can realise the potential income available at these markets and help farming to be a profitable livelihood option. A market driven agriculture approach that is socially responsible and ecologically accountable could therefore even drive improved productivity. For Zimbabwe we argue for a market driven approach that is socially responsible and ecologically accountable, mitigating the problems experienced by other parts of the world, such as heavy use of synthetic fertilizers, heavy use of pesticides, loss of soil resources, deforestation, and loss of identity and culture of farming. Land reforms as part of improving access to land for farming for most people has been somewhat accomplished in Zimbabwe. The critical question is: How can a financially successful agriculture sector that is socially responsible and ecologically accountable be supported for the future of Zimbabwe?

Learning from Farmers :Strategies for Sustainable Food Security

In Zimbabwe if not for people being subsistence farmers and doing their own thing – producing their own food, the economic meltdown could have made the most severe impact on the population. But because Zimbabwe is a country where subsistence agriculture is the mainstay – this should be where the country focuses for improving its economy and food security. Currently, my observation is that Zimbabwean agriculture support has not provided that symbiotic wisdom – learning what local farmers produce and why. There is a need to broadly work with farmers, symbiotically using their indigenous knowledge (from the local subsistence farmer) and the best practices harnessed from the scientific world.

My personal experience with rural farmers and research in the area of increasing crop yields achieving food security; where all people, at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life (IFPRI, 2002). Small scale farmers, including rural and urban farmers, have historically provided their own livelihoods first, and then they sell whatever else is surplus. Sustainable food production as an agricultural and social development approach is inspiring in the sense that local needs, nutrition, and preference crops could be harnessed for the well-being of people and then as surplus for markets. The market driven approach where people matter may provide more opportunities for farmers, as it may broaden the choice of enterprises which communal farmers in the marginal areas could use to ultimately improve their incomes.

The communal areas have social dynamics that could lead this market driven production system. In an environment where resources for farm implements have been hard to come by, particularly with the prevailing economic hardships, households, families, and communities have historically pooled resources together to prepare the fields, store seeds, plant, weed and harvest together. I came of age at post independent Zimbabwe but still today some rural communities set aside a day to work together for the common good (*amalima*). These practices are dying out but they are the cultural pride of Zimbabwe's agriculture that could be incorporated n income generation in communal areas. Still today, in some communities the *amasiso* concept is practiced (where cattle are lent to poorer households, for milk, for manure, and for draft power!). Although this is a dying tradition in some positive situations, it provided equitable use of resources – so that all households, even the poorer ones had some self sufficiency.

I want to emphasize that subsistence farming is the mainstay of southern African economies – it should be encouraged and improved, not criticized. Indeed, Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* makes sense for Zimbabwe's agricultural approach, but this also has to be driven by broader interventions. The promotion of small scale and subsistence agriculture, if managed with best practices, can not only offset food shortages but helps off-set high unemployment by providing land for people to work for their own upkeep. It ties to local nutritional needs; health and environmental stewardship are great positive possibilities. It has been my observation that small farmers continue to maintain their autonomy and self-sufficiency to provide their own food. Working in large commercial farms means workers have less autonomy to produce their own food, since they have to produce export crops yielding well deserved financial gains only to a single corporation. Moreover, even the wages of most commercial farm workers are too low for these workers to purchase their own food, which is a basic necessity.

What could be done to improve agriculture in Zimbabwe?: a Return to Small is Beautiful - Agriculture as If People Mattered

There is no silver bullet intervention to improve agriculture in Zimbabwe. The country needs a structural paradigm shift and a transformation towards sustainable agricultural production, based on in-depth structural and broad policy changes. Rain fed agriculture predominates these farming systems and there is need for a shift in mind set among farmers to consider food security and then, income generation from their farms. It is clear that "Business As Usual" approaches are not yielding desired results and changes. Development interventions have tended to focus mainly on the problem of the farmers' capabilities or discreet value chains, with weakly

coordinated responses involving large amounts of training and capacity building around those two areas.

There is a need to focus on strengthening systems – to focus on the "whole system" in which smallholder farmers operate, placing particular emphasis on facilitating market systems that are competitive, inclusive and resilient. By "whole systems" I refer to all actors and stakeholders that affect the different parts of the economic environment in which small holder farmers participate. This includes the farmers themselves, government partners, donor agencies, non-government organizations, private sectors players (buyers, input suppliers, transporters, financial service providers, etc.) and various players at community, provincial and national levels. There is a need to improve those factor market approaches to advance profit and market systems development strategies to increase agricultural outputs. We should work on applying farmer-centered approaches to increase the production capacities of smallholder farmers whilst improving farming techniques and practices through business/ enterprise-based models.

Helping small farmers get access to farm inputs like financial loans, technical support and land rights can have a catalytic effect on improving the productivity of small farms. Small farmers are keen business people, given opportunities they are able to manage risks and diversify into better markets. But, this opportunity is severely hampered by lack of free flow of information, ideas, resources to make for efficient markets.

Zimbabwe must not only look at and rely on foreign direct investment in the sector but creating a domestic local environment that creates, develops and support local investors. It is vital for Zimbabwe to re-engage social development. Both government and donors have to shift from an assistance-aid approach to a developmental one. There is also a need to learn from the Malawian experiences – where input subsidy was too expensive for the government and relied heavily on donor support. When donors pulled the plug, the sector collapsed (Draper et al., 2009). In Zimbabwe, the rural market economy collapsed because of the economic crisis, as well as constant chaotic interventions by the state and donors. This led to the collapse of input and output markets and efficient price-setting mechanisms, among other things (Anseeuw et al., 2012). Who the farmers are is important. In many cases women and young people are denied access to inputs where these are doled politically according to region, ethnicity, party politics etc.

There is a need to initiate capacity building programs of rural farming communities for sustainability of various agriculture interventions. One of the major impediments to agriculture growth in Zimbabwe has been a lack of efficient and effective support to agriculture, mainly a lack of research and agricultural extension services, leading to a limited transfer of technology from research and restricted dissemination of productive farm technologies. From my work in rural areas, I have noted that farmers are generally risk averse and they strategically cultivate crops for family subsistence and survival. Historically (through the location of communal areas in poor climatic and poor soils regions), they have been forced to acquire technical skills needed to cultivate crops that are reliable and less risky (such as small grains) but not of high value. This trend needs to change and the government (and donors) needs to invest heavily in training of young farmers and providing resources to research and extension institutions to conduct quality research and provide technical support regularly. Draper et al. (2009) raise a valid argument that international agricultural research projects with substantial payoffs for a large number of beneficiaries should be given investment priority.

Deteriorating infrastructure and lack of adequate and suitable infrastructure is one of the major constraints in resuscitating Zimbabwe agriculture. Most of the farming areas are inaccessible (for marketing and movement of produce) due to lack of or dilapidated infrastructure. There is therefore an urgent need to improve rural infrastructure such as roads, telecommunications, fuel supplies, electricity and input manufacturing industries (to reduce the high costs of production).

Agriculture interventions need to be oriented towards broader integration of the agricultural sector (agribusiness development, manufacturing and industrial development, financial sector development etc.), and wider macroeconomic and governance restructuring. Placing "social development" at the center near land where local

people build communities that create new economies that can counteract the devastating effects of globalization. Currently, most of agriculture interventions focus narrowly on food and agricultural production (Anseeuw et al., 2012). There are very few financial institutions that provide any financial support to smallholder farmers. There is therefore an opportunity to have a policy backed by legal framework that works towards cooperation between government (also dealing with the new tenurial situation) and financial institutions in providing financial support to small holder farmers with tacit support and involvement of extension services.

Lastly, there is a need to make use of traditional community systems that have been used in food production and in smoothing out drought eventualities. In the past I heard that there used to be community "chests/*iziphala*" - where individual households contributed to cultivation for meeting of community needs to mitigate droughts and storing of seeds for next crops. As indicated earlier, people also used to set aside a day where they worked for "the common good" – this could be another way of making sure there are crops set aside for communities in times of drought. It is critical to note that these social institutions only cater for food security. Socially responsible agricultural businesses will be income generating but also producing surplus to be sold as part of community oriented businesses. To conclude, there is also a need to develop enterprise combinations, which include the communal farmers' food safety crops (small grain crops) as well as high value crops, which are economically viable and technically feasible for the communal areas. Local and community grounded economies where small, local and organic farmers work together is the future for southern Africa's agriculture. To conclude, E. F. Schumacher reminds us that people who live in highly self sufficient economies are less likely to be involved in large scale violence than those people whose lives depend on global systems of free trade.

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Window to Everyday Experiences of a Social Development
Auxiliary Worker in South Africa

Nenekazi Melody Gxashe

Abstract: As social workers, we are driven by an intention to help and support those with less resources, but sometime the "professionalization" of this helping career leaves otherwise capable individuals overly dependent on professional social workers to "fix" or rescue them. Ms. Gxashe's narrative addresses this very dynamic within the social work field and reflects how we may unintentionally encourage people to not take ownership of their own problems. Additionally, she notes that the social work profession may view clients as "the problem" rather than victims of a larger, unjust system that perpetuates oppression. Ms. Gxashe suggests that embracing principles of *Ubuntu* when working with clients may enable us to look at how the functioning of the bigger system contributes to individual suffering. In other words, we can use the spirit of *Ubuntu* to see individual problems as not the fault of the individual only, but symptomatic of a broader societal dysfunction.

Introduction

My position is complex and multilayered moving from basic administrative work, case updates, filing and making appointments; to actual follow-up with case interventions and legislative developments. I recognize that my position entails both care and social control. In this respect, I share the dilemmas that I encounter in my work as an auxiliary worker and in my aspirations to become a professional social worker. I continue to ask questions about the relevance of the social work profession in the light of the vast problems of poverty, unemployment and everyday violence experienced in my community. I will return to share the programs undertaken by the department of social development as well as my roles and functions. I will end the reflection with a composite of my typical day to highlight my experience.

How did I Become a Social Auxiliary Worker?

I became an auxiliary worker out of necessity. It was in October 2007, I came across the Daily Dispatch (Eastern Cape newspaper), which was a friend's newspaper. Notice that it was difficult to buy individual newspapers. Out of necessity we have cultivated a sense of sharing. To cut the story short, I usually try to find a newspaper among the ones circulated within the community. The one who is able to afford a paper purchases it for the day and circulates the paper among neighbors. This is the way that I grew up connected to the world around me, even at a time when papers did not write positive things about people like me! As I was perusing the Daily Dispatch back in 2007, I noticed the advert for the position that I currently hold – social auxiliary worker. The advert basically required a 12th grade certificate and completion of social auxiliary work courses. For the most part, the training has been on the job. Social auxiliary workers support social workers and often times perform the functions of social workers when professional social workers are scarce.

I have always worked in my community one way or the other, but without direct pay. Supporting community members as neighbors, friends and relatives, was part of my upbringing. Growing up in Eastern Cape where material resources are not easy to come by, most people work to support each other outside of formal employment and outside the formalized support system of the social development department. In an environment with high unemployment, I consider myself fortunate to have held a paid position. However, the work place is often at odds with my own lived experiences.

Dilemmas of Social Auxiliary Workers

As a social auxiliary worker, one is perceived as a paraprofesssional. Categorization of social auxiliary workers as paraprofessionals captures a narrow slice of experience. Paraprofessional work is part of "modernity" building.

Such progress, as outlined by western experiences, is part of the new South Africa. It therefore entails contradictions to reconcile the past with the present. In my experience the contradictions of the past and present tend to be reproduced in the work and aspirations of social auxiliary workers. I work in the Eastern Cape but my environment has been greatly influenced by the ways of consumerism and capitalism, which come to us through the media.

Professionalization of social work in turn social auxiliary work

I have strong passion for my work. Since my hire in 2008, I have demonstrated exceptional ability to learn and do the work presented to me. But dilemmas abound, particularly in my aspirations to become a social worker. I have noticed that the work we do as social auxiliary workers is really about intervening, not so much in the people who experience societal problems but most often in the lives of those perceived as the problem by others. So, that role to control those "others" who are perceived as problematic is an active part of my work. For example through my current work, we noticed that children who were in our foster care system were not completing their high school or furthering their education beyond high school. We were able to gather relevant stakeholders, i.e. Department of Education, universities, and children themselves, in order to work to motivate the children to complete their high school. Whilst this was a success, our attempt to regulate and control the lives of these foster care children became a priority, more than the broader care to ensure that all children are motivated and have opportunities to complete high school and move beyond. This is one dimension of my dilemmas with the social work profession. Particularly, in the environment like Eastern Cape where social problems are vast and dire, the focus on social control as the way we often work makes it difficult to do the broader care work for a just community and society.

Further, I know and often say that my mission is to become a professional social worker and make a difference in my life and the lives of the poorest of the poor. But the idea of social work as a profession with structured training and in particular, differentiated ways of engaging with so called "clients", presents challenges in making a difference in people's lives. The commitment to the profession ends up being a commitment to an institution, not to making a difference in the lives of those that we are supposed to serve. It begins with credentialing, and therefore weeding out, workers like myself away from particular kinds of approaches. These approaches become reserved for the qualified social worker. We too in South Africa have a hegemonic social care system propagated and sustained by the so-called professionals. Who, in my view, are perceived of possessing the know-how to fix social problems, but do they? As an auxiliary social worker, I am so conscious of the two-faced role I play. For example, learning departmental policies, governmental acts, keeping up with the bureaucratic functions of my job and the demands for social control, and on the other hand, the care I have to provide for the people who are requiring help. It is also interesting that many who come into the field of social work think of themselves as having passion and duty to care for the people that require their care. But as an auxiliary worker, I also find that my work entails things that are not necessarily care, in actuality, they may be opposite to care. Many times my job has meant maintenance of a system in which care presumably occurs. Don't get me wrong, there is care in the work I currently do. But I realize that the work I do prioritizes seeing individual's failings rather than the poor conditions that impair their quality of life and overall functioning.

Professionalism comes with power and more control over other people's lives. A definition of societal problems and how these problems will be alleviated often usurps the initiatives of ordinary people to solve problems. The professional approach is different from people in a community coming together to solve their "own problems." Often times, our agencies define the problems and the way we should approach those problems. Our current, social work environment is still heavily driven by the professionals not the people who we are serving, I believe things will change if people facing issues employ social workers. Historically in South Africa, things were done for people in a patronizing way. Now, the professionals' control of social problems as social workers define them. The authority that comes with professionalism, brings back the same old notions- that someone else has to do the work, rather than communities doing the work themselves, with their own knowledge and skills. As a social auxiliary worker, I have been interested in the politics of professionalism-how ordinary people become dependent on entrenched professionals; this system demands that we find alternatives to this kind of conventional social

work, where people are seen as problems, instead of the environments that create those problems.

I have this dilemma about the social work that I aspire to. I ask how far is social work empowering people to do what they want with their lives today? What will be the roots of the social work I practice in the Eastern Cape? Does this social work draw from my lived experience – as I mentioned I used to work in my community for my neighbors, friends and relatives – does the social work I aspire to take into account Xhosa ways of doing things? Apartheid defined people like me, in my community, as "problems"Our existence was perceived as the problem, and today, that mentality of people as the "problem" has not gone away. We continue to define and see others in our communities as "problems" for the target of social work professional expertise. As I am working in the Eastern Cape, I have noticed bewildering approaches. The Department of Social Development was changed from welfare to social development; increasingly government has extended social grants as ways for people without incomes to live. Many people in the community view this as government creating a dependency syndrome. Given the prevailing consumer society, what alternatives exist to redress this presumption of dependency? As social development workers, we introduce community development projects, women's co-operation and youth projects, however we encounter lack of interest. But, the big question is: Does this aid really help people become self-supporting members of society? Or, is it just a temporary measure to control the people who would otherwise cause harm if they did not have it? The South African social grants continue along the pathways of the aged – described as deserving individuals – who have encountered misfortune through no fault of their own, and are given the social grants as economic support. What about those who are presented as "undeserving" how do they get assistance? In South Africa today very few people have chosen poverty, most people have had hardships thrust upon them by an economic system that has not been responsive to meeting basic human needs including work that pays a decent wage.

Is a social work approach steeped in social control rather than care, such as in South Africa? Currently, the South African White Paper on Welfare defines Ubuntu as: "the principle of caring for each other's well-being and as a spirit of mutual support. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the right and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well being" (South African Government Gazette, 20/02/1996). Can a social work profession that approaches work through individualization of social problems and individualized interventions achieve the spirit of Ubuntu? It is important to begin to see how we are transforming social work given our lived experiences.

My Job as a Social Auxiliary Worker

My current job is to provide support to social workers in the rendering of social work services with regard to the care, support, protection and development of vulnerable individuals, groups, families and communities through the relevant departmental programs. It means conducting basic observation for assessments aimed at identifying conditions in individuals, groups, families and communities that justify relevant intervention. In critical terms, I do see my job as "processing" those perceived as deviants, the seemingly problems of society, who undermine the good workings of a capitalistic society. In the communities, I work with social workers to attend to any matter that could result in, or stem from, social instability in any form. As a supportive role, my job is to collect and provide information to identify the appropriate intervention required to address particular conditions; I also assist with the development and planning of programs to render the recommended interventions efficiently, effectively and economically. Further, my role is to support social workers facilitate the implementation of intervention by providing continuous support, basic counselling and guidance to the affected individuals, groups, families and communities. I also monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the recommended interventions, report on progress, and assist in identifying the need to amend the interventions, depending on the conditions. In addition, I disseminate basic information on legislation, policies and procedures in the social work field; collect and provide information for the performance of statutory functions by the social worker including:

- Implementation of the recommended interventions
- Produce and maintain records and data of interventions processes and outcomes.
- Conduct promotion, prevention, protection, rehabilitation, outreach and empowerment initiatives in the social work field.

I am supposed to keep abreast with new developments in the social work and social services field as part of continuing personal development in the field. This means that I have to read publications in order to ensure that I incorporate new developments into my role. Because of the changes in the legislature, my role is to monitor and study the social services legal and policy framework continuously. I attend meetings, workshops, symposia, conferences and any other relevant developmental activities, in order to be cognisant of the latest development in the relevant field. Overall, I perform basic administrative support functions in support of social workers as required of the job – provide examples updating case notes, filing and setting up appointments.

My Role in Social Development Programs

The department of social development has programmes that are as follows:

- Child care and Protection services
- HIV and Aid
- Victim Empowerment programme
- Services to Older Persons
- Services to People with Disabilities
- Social Relief of Distress
- Care and support services to families
- Under each programme I have key functions to perform

Last year in the beginning of June 2013 until to date, I requested to assist the NPO Unit on processing of claim forms in the area office where I perform the following duties.

A. Receiving of claims:

- 118 NGOs submitting claims within the first four working day of the month
- Responsible to check authenticity, budget and correctness
- Reconciliation of expenditure and receipts/invoices
- Reconciliation of register with the number of children approved
- Verify and confirm elements of under spending
- Capture all 118 claims on the system (MIS)
- Submit for manual recommendation and approval (signature) by the management
- Submission of claims at the provincial office for the processing of payment

B. Ensure all newly funded NGOs are registered on BAS system:

- Assisted newly funded NPOs on completing application forms with relevant documents
- Opening of each file with all the relevant documents (NPO certificate; banking details; exemption letter; correct Facility number)

C. Submission of files at the provincial office:

- All files must have facility names and numbers outside
- Every file has NPO representative's contact details

D. Capturing of beneficiaries on MIS:

• Make sure that all the relevant documents are in a file

E. Printing and distribution of monthly claims:

• On a monthly basis, I print claims from MIS and distribute them to the service offices

F. Signing and submission of service agreements:

• Ensure that all NPOs information is captured and scanned on facility module
• Ensure that NPO budget allocated are captured and approved on system
• Ensure that all documents are signed

All this effort makes it easy for everyone, including the supervisor, to understand what is happening in the file without asking. Therefore, I ensure that my files are in place and updated.

Caseload

On a daily basis, I attend to at least 50 clients that visit the office. Indeed, I deal with different people every day – this is the joyous part of my job. The people, the relationships built on tasks that are as mundane as opening an intake, or a new case file. I visit funded projects including non profit organizations to conduct monitoring, attend meetings, and workshops. When working with a large client case load, one has to develop strategies to manage the high volume. For instance, I have developed reminding cards for foster care files to know when review dates are due. I tend to outline my work plan for the year, then do my weekly plans to meet due dates. Time management becomes an important part of the job.

My Everyday Experience as a Social Auxiliary Worker

No two days are the same in my position. The following is a step-by-step account of a typical day in my work as a social auxiliary worker in social services. This is actually a composite of days to give the reader an understanding of what I do.

Working in Adelaide is not easy – let me give you a brief overview of where I am coming from, in my home in Alice, to Adelaide. I am coming from a rural area where people still have respect. People are independent and still believe in development and education. People in Alice still maintain their principles and still keep Ubuntu. For example, in my location there are no foster homes or children's homes; people still believe that every child deserves to have a home and they can raise children without any social support from the government. They believe in doing things themselves instead of relying on interventions from the government.

Adelaide is a semi-rural area; there a mix of cultures as people came to Adelaide to work as farm workers. Adelaide whilst surrounded by wealthy, mostly white farms, has extreme poverty, high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, high unemployment and substance abuse, to identify a few prevalent problems. Because of eroded self-sufficiency, Adelaide people are dependent on social grants as their source of income. I have also noticed that the more mortality there is, the higher the number of orphans and vulnerable children there are, and the foster care case load increases. The further people are dislocated from their communities and have limited abilities for self-sufficiency, the more their systems of support are eroding, so that people feel pressured to say, "I will raise my grandchild with or without any social assistance." In these cases, extreme poverty, a lack of capabilities to decide one's life means children are being used as a source of income. In these circumstances, there is no love or care about the child, they are just keeping the child or children for income.

5:30 a.m. I wake up to get ready for my commute on a taxi to Adelaide. My commute to work is 80km per day and there is no public transportation. We rely on private vehicles used as taxis. Before I leave for work I have to take care of my children, make sure that they are ready for school and assist them with getting their transportation to school. I wait by the roadside for a taxi that is going to take me to town so that I can get a lift to Adelaide. The transportation to Adelaide is scarce, and sometimes lifts are difficult to find, especially during school holidays because most people who travel to Adelaide are school teachers.

7:30 a.m. I take a taxi to work. On my arrival at about 8:45, the first thing I do is to go straight to the waiting room where I greet clients as some of them visit the office as early as 7:00 a.m. I ask them to my office one by one to conduct a screening, refer those that are seeking social workers for further help, and assist those that are coming for the little things that can be solved within the screening area. This is my everyday life at work, every day when I arrive in my office.

11:00 a.m. The number of clients decreases, so I follow-up on previous cases or conduct home visits to gather information per the social workers' request. As a preventative measure, sometimes I would go and look for hot spots where I would find small boys abusing drugs and conduct awareness so as to educate them about the dangers of substance use.

Sometimes I revisit files to check review dates and remind clients and social workers about their reviews in order to avoid lapsed cases or any back log.

12:45 p.m. It's lunch time until 1:30 p.m. but what I have noticed about the social development workers in my working area is that they don't have lunch; we have lunch while we are busy working.

1:30 p.m. I go back to the office to do admin work, open new files, capture on Orphans Vulnerable Children database and forward the information to the Child Care Control Unit and HIV and AIDS units. I also refer files to the social workers per area of operation.

4:30 p.m. Time to go home.

5:00 or 5:30 p.m. On my arrival home, I help my children with school work while at the same time preparing food for supper.

Concluding Remarks: What would I do differently?

I am a relationship builder by nature. The critical aspects of my current job are care, passion and commitment to work alongside my community to dismantle oppressions. That passion for change is what keeps me going, as I continuously have had to self-educate throughout my whole work life. Ask critical questions about how can we engage social work and make a difference? I learn with the people that I work with most of the time. I interact with diverse groups of people and this has increased my relationship building skills and my continued love to help people change their own lives. My aspirations are to obtain a social work degree and make social work relevant to the environment I live. I know that I am part of the solution for the people who come for help in the social development office. I have enjoyed working on community awareness campaigns. One critical campaign is collaboration with health care clinics to share information about HIV/AIDS. Another area of support has been building community support groups for people who are living and/or caring for someone with HIV/AIDS.

In Xhosa we have a saying: "The past is something that had happened and the future is one which we are going to make happen" – the only thing we can learn from the past is the mistakes, so that we don't continue to make the same mistakes. The past gives us lessons and the future gives us opportunities for change. I prefer to stay positive. I want to make my future better by utilizing my present. Indeed South Africa inherited injustices of apartheid, but it is up to us now to empower ourselves and depend on our abilities to chart our futures. I feel most accomplished

when I work to encourage people to believe in themselves so that they can arise above their situations by starting to make small differences. Part of the change comes with developing a mental attitude of doing your own things. My role in my community has been to cultivate this mental attitude of not waiting for help but starting up something, and believing that one will get help along the way to achieve what they want (i.e. not wait for things to happen to them, but make things happen), as that mentality will create opportunities that will help our country. Building social work approaches that are based in experience is what I desire for my work. This will not only require a change in how we practice social work, but a change in knowledge systems about social problems such as knowing that not all problems emanate with the individual. Until this is realized, the approaches to social work we currently pursue tend to begin and end with the individual. Further, the values and model of science in which the profession is based needs to change to consider indigenous knowledge and experience. These changes will in turn change how we broadly practice social work.

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Capabilities/Abilities as a Way to Social Justice for Southern Africa

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Abstract: Thandi S. Tshabangu-Soko discusses social justice efforts to address hunger and poverty in Zimbabwe from 1990-2000. Ms. Tshabangu-Soko notes that there may be many different approaches to social justice, such as a utilitarian approach or a redistributive approach. Tshabangu-Soko applies Sen's (1983) capabilities/abilities framework for explaining the government of Zimbabwe's efforts to address social justice issues during the time she is employed as a Drought Relief Officer in Zimbabwe. Also she calls on her experience as a project manager for Plan International, a non-governmental organization, during this same time period (1990-2000). As Zimbabwe was struggling to adapt to the demands of being an independent country, it faced obstacles including hunger, food shortages and financial issues. The government instilled some work for food programs while some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided food without work requirements. The government and Plan International both had different philosophies and approaches to helping those affected by the drought and food shortages, yet both aimed to empower Zimbabwean people. Tshabangu-Soko notes that her work as a social worker during this time period was essential to linking the work of government and non governmental agencies in addressing the needs Zimbabwe's citizens. Helping people to use their own capabilities and abilities is an essential part of social work. This narrative offers the unique experience of Ms. Tshabangu-Soko as she worked for two very different agencies that were working towards the same goal in Zimbabwe from 1990-2000.

Social justice is a term that has been given various definitions. As a social construct, some scholars define social justice from a utilitarian approach, the notion that any action should be judged by its consequences (Mill, 2007, pg.9). One example is if villagers are displaced to pave way for a dam, the rightness or wrongness of that action should be judged by whether the villagers' happiness is increased or decreased. Others approach social justice from a redistributive approach, the claim that every person has an equal right to basic liberties, that opportunities should be open to all without discrimination, and that any inequality should be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged in our society (Rawls, 2001, pg.42). In this social justice approach, Rawls suggests that liberty is paramount, followed by equality, and lastly consideration for the least-advantaged. In the above example of displaced villagers, Rawls would advocate that they be at liberty to choose for or against the dam, they be treated equally during the displacement process and that special attention be given to the least-advantaged among them. Sen (1993, p. 271) sees social justice within the lens of capabilities/abilities, concerned with ". . . evaluating a person's capability in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve various valuable functioning's as a part of living." This approach differs from Mill's (2007) utilitarian approach and from Rawls's (2001) non-utilitarian approach, in that it looks at the potential within a person to achieve human "functioning" (Sen, 1993, p. 227). With the varied definitions of justice, the implementation of policies and programs in social development become a challenge.

Within the prevailing conservative approach, people who are poor are perceived as not useful people at all, they are supposed to die out. Their circumstances are perceived to be a result of their depraved conduct. Therefore, instead of contributing meaningfully to society, they become a public charge and are blamed for all social problems. Alexander (2008) notes that historically, poverty and famines have been thought to be a consequence of lack of food production and problems of supply of food in the region (pg.55). However, Sen (1983) in his seminal work *Poverty and Famines* argues that while food production and supply is critical, famines are due to loss of capabilities/abilities purchasing power by a population.

Using Sen's capabilities approach to social justice, I explore how the Zimbabwean government introduced Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ELAP) on recommendations from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These had adverse impact on the Zimbabwean economy. In the late 90s, land reform and drought caused food shortages and had a negative impact on the economy and involvement with the Democratic Republic of Congo cost the country more money. As purchasing power eroded, many sold their

livestock to make ends meet. The government later introduced a one trillion dollar currency note. When the economy collapsed, the Zimbabwean currency lost its value and in the process, many Zimbabwean's ability to purchase goods was eroded. Many companies closed businesses because of inflation which led to rampant unemployment. Due to runaway inflation, those in rural areas were adversely affected when they could not purchase agricultural inputs.

Hunger and deprivation are associated with food production and availability of food, but also with distribution to the economic, social and political arrangements. These can directly influence people's capabilities or abilities to acquire food and to achieve health and nourishment. For the purpose of this paper, I will discuss how capabilities/abilities were extended in the 1990s in terms of wealth, opportunities, and privileges in Zimbabwe. I adopt the redistribution of resources as the definitive lens to explain my activism and service as a social worker in Zimbabwe during the period 1990 to 2000.

Zimbabwe as a newly independent developing country was struggling to provide basic services like health, education, housing and jobs. Stakeholders involved in this endeavor included government departments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civic organizations. While some progress was made with education and housing, challenges still remained in the health sector, in the provision of jobs and distribution of welfare services. This paper is therefore a narrative of my service and activism while employed in Zimbabwe by the government under the then Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, and by Plan International, an international non-governmental organization, and by Bazaar Group, a local non-governmental organization. In these three organizations, I was employed as a project manager, tasked with supervising the distribution of services and resources to rural communities.

As a Drought Relief Officer:

During the 1990s, drought and food security in Zimbabwe became a big issue. Drought relief was one of the instruments used by government to ensure equal distribution of resources to the poor. I was working as a social worker in the department of social welfare at the district level, which included coordinating drought relief activities. The department of social welfare worked with local government where councilors through ward and village committees submitted lists of people who needed food (maize).

Villagers participated in food-for-work programs such as clearing land before construction of a road, bridge, dam, clinic or school building. In exchange for their service, they received a certain allocation of bags of maize, depending on the size of their family. Communities, through their leaders, would identify a need in their area. My job included assessing the feasibility of the project and the commitment of local leaders in seeing the project through. My department would often liaise with other non-governmental organizations who did not require them to work for it. For this reason, there were instances when few people would show up in our food-for-work programs, preferring instead to get maize handouts from non-governmental organizations rather than work for it. Only when these NGOs moved away from an area did we see an increase in the number of participants in our "food-for-work" projects

The Zimbabwean government's approach to the building of capabilities was to differentiate the population, so that those with means, or those that are advantaged, are continuously compensated. In rural areas with meager resources, the work for food programs were implemented. As offered by Sen (1979) "…the recognition of the fundamental diversity of human beings does, in fact, have very deep consequences, affecting not merely the utilitarian conception of social good, but others as well…" (pg. 202) In essence, the diversity of people should be considered when discussing social justice using the capabilities/abilities framework. Those who are poor would be easily satisfied by being provided with basic services like food and shelter, while those well off would probably be satisfied by having laws that protect their property rights. This could be the same community but due to class difference, the notion of social justice takes two different meanings.

The rationale of these projects was to instill in communities the capabilities/abilities for their problems and ownership of the solution process. This also encouraged communities not to expect the government or the donor community to come and repair a road damaged by rain or bridges washed away by rains. At first some communities did infer "the donor will come and fix" these problems, and often donors did. When donors left for other countries like South Africa, Zambia and Mozambique, most communities then became more active in "food-for-work" programs. The introduction of such programs motivated communities to solve problems through cooperation and through use of locally available resources.

Research confirms that drought relief programs were effective in providing poor people in Zimbabwe with relevant and timely assistance during the drought years of the 1990s (Monro, 2006). During this period there was a government commitment to get communities to be less dependent on donor support for development in their communities. It took some time for some communities to get off of donor dependency. Government could not always provide drought relief when needed, and with a weakening Zimbabwean economy, and the lack of foreign direct investment, government implemented major budget cuts and the drought relief budget was severely affected (Dhemba et al, 2002, pg 137).

The department of social welfare in Masvingo, as part of the Child Welfare Forum, coordinated the Zunde raMambo (Chief's Granary) activities in conjunction with the local leadership. In this scheme, members of the community would contribute food during harvest season, to a central granary under the supervision of the Chief in that area. This was a community practice and initiative to help and protect widows, orphans and the poor in times of famine (Dhemba et al, 2002, pg 137). I often worked with local kraal heads to ensure orphaned children got food through this initiative. This concept had a major impact in reducing hunger among poor families.

As a project manager:

Plan International, a non-governmental organization, had health programs whose aim was addressing health issues. Ruger (2010) presents a theory of health and social justice, which she calls the "health capability paradigm." She submits that ". . . all people should have access to the means to avoid premature death and preventable morbidity" (pg.3). Ruger also offers a rich explanation of the essential drivers of health, such as surveillance, preventive measures, clean air, safe drinking water and nutritious food (p. 3). One health program spearheaded by PLAN International was safe delivery of babies whose goal was to reduce maternal mortality. Most rural women delivered their babies at home with the help of traditional midwives. Each community had such resources – usually older women who helped deliver babies in the community. PLAN's programs trained these traditional birth attendants (TBAs) to deliver babies safely and to check for complications during pregnancy, and if necessary, refer cases promptly to central hospitals. In the advent of HIV, TBAs started practicing safe health practices like using one razor per patient when it came to issues like cutting the umbilical cord and many other functions that needed use of a razor. These safe clinical skills contributed to better health standards and practices.

In the field of education, PLAN International built schools and clinics with villagers contributing bricks, labor and other resources necessary to put up building structures. Social justice in education is defined by Adams, Bell and Griffin (2007) as both a process and a goal. They submit that "…the goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs . . . it includes a vision of society that is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (pg.5). Pursuant to these goals, PLAN International introduced projects that required community participation. Communities understood and embraced PLAN International's model of community participation. The community would identify people who would dig the foundation, mold bricks and provide skilled labor in these projects. On its part, PLAN International would supply cement, gravel, roofing material, windows, doors, etc. Communities would also supply water, river and pit sand to mold bricks. All projects undertaken were based on this model of dual partnership between the community and PLAN International.

Health, Education and Business development

In addition to health and education, PLAN International also sponsored business development programs. These included cattle fattening projects, where poor families were helped to buy cattle and provided with stock feed until the cattle were ready for the market. Sale proceeds were reinvested to buy more cattle and the operation cycle continued. This helped families pay school fees and buy other implements that could ease the back breaking burden of farming. Young people and women who could read were trained in sponsorship activities where a family donor, (sponsors) usually from overseas, would donate a specific amount towards a community fund which would benefit the entire community where this child lived, e.g through building a school, clinic, or water and sanitation system for that village. These cases required continuous feedback from the sponsored children and their families to maintain the donor/sponsor's continued support.

My team also engaged communities and had them identify projects they wanted and debate which ones to prioritize among many suggested. Local leadership made up of councilors at district, ward and village levels were always part of the planning committee. There was a difference among councilors, some always strived for new projects for their communities and others never had any. A lot of times, it depended on the hard work of the councilor and team. Hard working and motivated councilors always finished projects and delivered on set goals. As a result of this quick uptake of projects by some communities, development workers went to those areas first and those were the areas that became inundated with new projects and new developments. All the identified projects had to be within the mandate and focus of the donor organization.

Women's Participation

During my time as sponsorship manager, I observed that women would not participate vigorously in decision making even when the project directly affected them. While they attended these brainstorming meetings, very few spoke or were drawn out to suggest their ideas. During the 1990s drought, rivers, ponds and wells dried up and there was an urgent need to drill new boreholes and for communities to rehabilitate existing ones. PLAN International funded some boreholes in the Kwekwe District Village, committees called meetings to discuss which projects to prioritize and in the case of water programs, they chose where to site the boreholes. A few seasons later, in some areas women continued fetching water in the streams and ponds where they used to get water before the boreholes were drilled. Reasons given were that either the borehole had dried out or it broke down and no one knew how to fix it, or the borehole had been cited in a place that was not convenient for the women. One example was of a borehole cited in a place where it was tiring for the women to carry water and climb the steep path to their homes on the other side. Further probing revealed that during the planning meetings, men had chosen those problematic sites. In one particular case, a borehole had been installed near a business center where there was a store, butcher, beerhall and a bus terminus. Some women were of the view that new boreholes were planned to be at a place convenient for men as social gathering places. However, these same places were cumbersome for women who fetched water. It was downhill when going to the borehole but uphill when coming back and they slowly stopped going there and reverted to their easily reachable ponds. It was a lesson for development workers to include women's ideas and voices in crucial planning meetings. In addition, there were very few women community development workers and it took forward thinking and a courageous development worker to include women and get the men's buy in to not make decisions for services that they usually do not use, such as water. Needless to say, such poor technical decisions led to the continued use of unsafe water with its associated health risks in some areas.

In some communities, development agencies built boreholes and pumps, and had local people trained to maintain the equipment. This empowered communities who did not have to wait for donors to come and repair these pumps. This reduced the community's dependency on donor agencies.

One of the major developments in health promotion in Zimbabwe was the introduction of the Ventilated

Improved Pit (VIP) latrines adapted from Zimbabwe's Blair Research foundation. In Kwekwe, PLAN International helped communities build these pit latrines. This was a revolutionary sanitation program that reduced the number of children showing up at local clinics with diarrheal diseases, and probably reduced the number of diarrheal deaths too. Community participation in this program meant contribution of bricks and finding builders to build the latrines. PLAN on its part, donated roofing material and the wire mesh placed at the top of the ventilation pipe and health promotion training. Problems arose when many of the young men who helped in the building of these latrines found themselves proficient, and left their villages to look for employment in urban areas. Eventually communities trained women as builders and this strategy paid off as women builders did not leave their villages. They stayed as they were the fulcrum of their households and in the process built more latrines and improved sanitation ensured.

Conclusion Remarks:

This paper adopts Sen's capabilities/abilities approach to addressing problems of hunger and starvation during a period of drought in 1990s. I have shown that the Zimbabwean government and non governmental organizations differentiated the population by wealth, opportunities, and privileges and providing work for food programs for the poorer segments of the population. Within a society, it does not matter how big the size of the cake you get, as long as it satisfies your need – then justice has been served. For a developing country like Zimbabwe, social justice for the poor boils down to provision of basic services like food, health, housing and job creation. In such an environment, social workers define their victories in terms of numbers of communities that have basic health services, clean water, schools and jobs. For this reason, the provision of basic services has implications for human rights, and social and economic justice for all. Without food, shelter and health services, poor communities cannot bargain with powerful politicians. The profession of social work, in linking government and non-governmental agencies, plays a crucial role in extending empowerment and social justice for all in the 21st Century.

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