Populism & Social Work

Nationalist Populism and Social Work

The Challenge of Right Wing Populism for Social Work

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Another exciting edition of social dialogue has now been completed drawing together articles on the rise of populism and its impact on social work. While its impact is only just beginning to be analysed by social workers across the globe, one thing is certain is that its impact will have dire consequences for our profession and its human rights and social justice agenda if the more obvious issues and consequences are not addressed more forcibly now.

This new culture of post truth where lies and half facts can be peddled as true (despite evidence to the contrary), where truth is manipulated (blatantly now, without fear of rebuke) where political gain and personal and familial power are sought with little pushback then there is much to fear about the sustainability of our democracy, for the ‘rule of law’ and ‘separation of powers’. This is especially concerning when executive decision-makers (e.g. presidents or prime ministers) assume more and more powers outside the democratic process of debate and review. Where the political class use vulnerable people such as refugees, asylum seekers, LGBTQI communities as well as indigenous peoples right to their land, clean and safe water and key global issues such as terrorism and conflict matters in general (e.g. North Korea, Syria and Iran) as many of the reasons to be afraid.

Activists who are raising concerns about abuses of human rights and the increasing level of violence against marginalised group as well as the planet ability to sustain itself in the future are seen as undermining the security of the state and its people and are to be feared and in many cases vilified. Rather than tackle these issues, the political class present this manufactured fear as the very reason we need popular leaders and their agenda of restricting our democratic rights to freedom of association, freedom of the press, protection of whistle-blowers and ‘truth-tellers’ and the right to engage in the advocacy of resistance. We need their protection for our own continued safety and protection of our way of life. For those who see through this manipulation and the vested interests who are peddling this fear argue that George Orwell’s dystopian novel 1984 is fast becoming a reality for many people in the remaining so called democratic countries.

These events, as predicted, raise important issues for social work. A critical social work analysis and practice presents social work with a feasible critique for an urgent response. While more debate is needed this issue of social dialogue is presented as an attempt to bring these issues to the fore. Enjoy!
Dear Colleagues,

We are here with another exciting volume of Social Dialogue online magazine. The last quarter was marked by several significant activities of IASSW. I would like to highlight the initiatives relating to World Social Work Day. The 2017 world Social Work Day has been celebrated in different parts of the world with many initiatives focusing on the third pillar of the Global Agenda: Working toward environmental and community sustainability. Social Work day in Geneva-IASSW and IFSW, in collaboration with United Nations agencies, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland – Social Work, Geneva (HETS) and UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNIRISD) have organized the “Social Work and Sustainability” conference with the participation of many representatives of UN agencies, academics and NGOs. This was held on March 21 and 22, 2017 at the prestigious Palais des Nations, Geneva.

The key note address was presented by Lena Dominelli (Durham University, UK and former IASSW President). Reflecting on “Green social work, environmental justice and the global agenda”, Lena Dominelli emphasized the human impact of climate change and environmental disasters and the roles that social work needs to play in prevention, mitigation and sustainable development. The conclusions were prepared by the combined efforts from Rory Truell, Anne Lavanchy and myself underling some commitments and possible cooperation between IASSW, IFSW and UN Agencies:

• Increasing the knowledge and visibility of social work approaches and capacity within UN Agencies (eg. form a body / network of social workers working with and within the UN agencies)
• Creating joint guidelines on how social work organizations can successfully engage with UN national and regional offices.
• Building into social work education and practice related policies information on the role of UN agencies, the SDG’s and bridging this with social work approaches • Establishing joint strategic research that enhances the role of social work in fulfilling the SDGs.
• Providing information on the role of social work in fulfilling the SDGs and creating job descriptions to support joint workforce development strategies

At the end of the 21st meeting there has been a launch of the book Getting to Zero. Global Social Work respond to HIV, chief edited by Mark Henrikson. This joint initiative IASSW/UNAIDS was undertaken by Vimla Nadkarni (Immediate Past President of IASSW) and Mark Henrikson after the WSWD in 2014.


Social Work Day at the UN Headquarters - New York

34th World Social Work Day was celebrated on April 4, 2017 at the UN Headquarters New York, which focused on “Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability”. The presentations underlined different experiences and reflections: on the topic from a variety of positions: the bangladesh Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Permanent UN Representative of the Mission of Bangladesh; John Ennis, Chief of Information and Outreach in the Office of Disarmament Affairs-UN; Terri Klemm, Associate Professor and BSW Program Director, Centenary University; Elizabeth Gustafson MSW Student from the University of Connecticut, Roberto Bonrero, NGO Committee on the Rights of Indigenous People. Shirley Gateno Gabel (IASSW) served as co-chair of the event with Robin Mama (IFSW).

As IASSW President, I had the task to wrap up the discussion and provide concluding remarks. The WSWD was attended by almost 400 people: professionals, students, teachers and the event was video recorded by the UN. http://bit.ly/2t63qjs

This celebration was followed by the Student’s Forum on “World Water Rights: Promoting Environmental Justice in a Globalized World”. These initiatives are very important to strengthen the link and the cooperation with UN, but also to make visible the social work commitment in the society. We are looking forward to receiving documents about initiatives that have been undertaken in different countries so that regional observatories can prepare a comprehensive report about the engagement of social work in promoting environmental and community sustainability.

We are working hard to have future World Social Work Day celebrations also in UN Bangkok and Nairobi headquarters. We hope to have more representatives globally and make it truly international.

I will be writing more updates in the next volume of Social Dialogue magazine, hope you will enjoy reading this volume. 😊

With warm regards,

Prof. Annamaria Campanini
President, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)
Definitions

While there are many definitions of populism and populist leaders moving from the left to the right spectrum of politics there are some common factors in the search for a definition that many scholars agree on:

- Populism arises in the context of a political crisis, when legitimacy of institutions is questioned, and when the political status quo seems incapable of responding to populist demands.
- Populist movements are headed by strong charismatic or messianic leaders who have the fate of the nation in (mostly) his hands.
- Populist leaders more often come from outside the political class, that is they are outsiders to the ruling elites. Their appeal is that they are from the ordinary population and uncontaminated by the political class and their long term enshrined interests.
- Populist leaders appeal to the need to restore what appears to be missing, eg national pride, strong hand against violence and /or political disarray, or a return to honesty, strong leadership, push for more effective social change/social justice etc.
- Populist leaders make a strong appeal towards nationalism both domestically and as a stance on the international stage.
- Populist leaders expose the traditional elites as the enemy of the ordinary people.
- Populist leaders attach and discredit traditional civil society organisations and political parties who are seen as unnecessary, and useless to the restoration proper power back to the people.'
- Populist leaders seem to create followers rather than informed citizens.

The reasons (most often cited)

- Economic inequality.
- Anti-immigrant attitudes (fear new migrants/the Other).
- Mistrust of global and national governance.
- Support for authoritarian values.
- Growing anger from the people left behind by progressive tides of cultural change which they do not share (eg older generation, men, The religious, ethnic majorities, less educated).
- Generational conflict, and
- Left-right ideological placement (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Moghadam, 2013; Torres, 2006).

Paul Ham (2017) in his article “So you want to rule like an autocrat; six-step guide to putting your country first” gives a good overview of strategies to expose the how you too can be a populist leader in the current political flux. Here is a summary of his excellent article.

Tools (ready-made accessories)

- “A handy scape goat (Muslims, refugees, asylum seekers, the alt-left, Mexicans, women).
- An angry, elderly while majority with a distrust of foreigners.
- An easily mocked ‘elite’ of harmless academics, writers and liberals (and progressive media and whistle-blowers).
- A list of lies posing as politics.
- A billionaire hedge-fund manager or person with access to unlimited cash.
- A thuggish foreign regime keen to sabotage your democracy (if one isn’t available make it up!).
- A complicit press or complaisant press, and
- An ideological poohbah with an apocalyptic message” (Ham, 2017, p.28).

Method (for implementation)

- “Choose your scapegoat and vilify them (can make it up as well).
- Tap your rich donors and crony regime (eg right-wing leaders from any country or puppet leader your government supports).
- Appeal to your press pals (nudge right-wing bloggers with track record in scorn and ridicule and who are known and accepted as serial fabricators eg Shock-jocks).
- Weaponise the internet and subvert your democracy (anti-terrorist laws, increasing police powers, restriction on who and how to protest, increase in surveillance laws).
- Lie and pollute media with these bald-faced lies and fake news (and repeat them until they become ‘facts’).
- Stoke fears of war and issue apocalyptic threats” (Ham, 2017, pp.28-35).

Introduction

In this short article, I attempt to gather some ideas that might help address the question: what is this new thing called populism? and give some suggestions as to how social work might respond to the challenge it poses. Mudde (2007) suggests that populism is loosely grouped ideas that have at least three features: anti-establishment, authoritarianism and nativism, and is once again on the rise across the globe. Populist parties, leaders and politics are accused of disrupting and unsettling previous compromises of the past left and right politics during the last century. So, what explains this phenomenon?

What is this new thing called ‘populism’?

Carolyn Noble
Associate Dean
(Social Work)
ACAP Sydney, Australia

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Social work challenges and response

According to Fazzi (2015) the rise of populism and its more right-wing aspect has yet to be tackled and investigated by the social work profession. Concern focussing on the impact of globalisation and the reorganisation of social services in a depleted and underfunded welfare state because of the unchecked rise of neo-liberal economic, social and cultural policies has resulted in the rise of populist politics and leaders going under the radar of critical analysis and public commentary (Fazzi, 2015). As well as the demise of the welfare state Fazzi (2015) notes that the progressive growth of populist's political ideologies poses further attacks on social works role as protector of human rights and as proponents of social tolerance and a just society. Paralleling further attacks on the welfare state and its universal service provision is the connection between the rise in populism and the demonstrable increase in prejudices against immigrants and members of minority/marginal ethnic groups. Briskman (2016) warns social workers about the challenge the rise in demonising migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are having on the profession and Latham (2016) asks the question about the rise in Islamophobia, e.g. whose side is the profession on?, noting its silence in the public arena. Both these activists challenge practitioners to call attention to the drift towards xenophobia and the victimisation and violence these minority groups face daily.

Another challenge worthy of attention is the temptation of overworked and under resourced practitioners to use populist discourse as an easy 'escape route' to find answers to the almost insolvably social issues stemming from rising wealth inequality and the profound changes transforming the workforce and society in post-industrial countries. Blame a ready-made victim (eg Muslims) can be an easy solution especially for overworked professionals who depend on conservative and populist government funding for their services. Further, reflecting a deep discontent with loss of autonomy, deep spending cuts, restructuring of public services and the move towards privatisation and increasing political interference in their work especially their work with asylum seekers and other marginal social groups can result in little appetite for resistance and social action. The ‘do nothing’ or ‘keep heads down’ option can engender a dangerous erosion of the ethical and cultural base of the profession (Fazzi, 2015, 604).

However rather than succumbing to the potential destructive influences of the current expression of populism these scenarios described here can provide social work with another opportunity to regenerate a radical practice response. In summary, a radical social work response would include practitioners and scholars to;

- Work in solidarity to develop and support a humanise society;
- Affirm and recommit to a practice with a human rights agenda and as proponents of social tolerance and a just society;
- Re-commit to anti-racist, anti-oppressive and critically informed social work practice;
- Give witness to the human toll of subjugation, oppression, racism and structural disadvantage;
- Challenge the ‘dual loyalty’ dilemma (clients’ rights vs government policy of social control);
- Publicly fight for political accountability, transparent democracy and social justice agenda in policy and human service practice, and;
- Join unions and challenge populist policies wherever they manifest themselves (Briskman, 2016; Latham, 2016; Fazzi, 2015).

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Populism in the Asia: What role for Asian Social Work?

Introduction

Mizuno and Phongpaichit in their book Populism in Asia (2009) have argued that across Asia, “populist” leaders have emerged on an unprecedented scale around the start of the 21st century. We argue that this has many implications for Asian social work. This article discusses some of these implications.

What is Populism?

Populism is a mode of political communication that champions the common person. It is a political program that is centred on creating a contrast and conflict between the ‘common man voter’ and a real or imagined group of ‘privileged elites’(political class). Populism usually combines elements of the left and the right, opposing large business and financial interests but also frequently being hostile to established socialist and labour parties (see https://www.britannica.com/topic/populism ).

In the 21st Century, the term populism is most often associated with an authoritarian form of politics. Populist politics, revolves around a charismatic leader who appeals to and claims to embody the will of the people in order to consolidate his/her own power. In this personalised form of politics, political parties owe their electoral relevance. The (democratic) elections serve to confirm the leader’s authority rather than to reflect the different allegiances of the people.

The waves of populism not only in the
Asian region but globally is evident of the re-emergence of new type of global and regional dynamics of power, populism and politics. For example, in 2017 the British people voted in favor of the United Kingdom (UK) exiting from the European Union; the longest running political party, Angela Merkel in trying to gather the popular vote is calling for a partial ban on the burqa; the unexpected rise of Donald Trump to the US oval office; the fall of Italian Prime minister Matteo Renzi. The rise of politics in India give some indication of the rising populism across the globe. Social work should take note of its development and assess its impact and, either nationally, regionally, or globally, respond to its impact on the citizens, the state and communities.

In its most democratic form, populism seeks to defend the interest and maximize the power of ordinary citizens, through representative politics. Exclusive populism focuses on shutting out stigmatised groups (refugees, migrants for example), and is more common in Europe. Inclusive populism demands that politics be opened up to stigmatised groups (the poor, minorities). The western populists like that of Donald Trump have used the rhetoric of exclusive populism, while the Asian leaders like that of Modi in India have used inclusive populism. At the end of the day both have captured the power and voters loyalty.

While the rise of a populist movement is not new and has taken many forms over the last century its re-emergence in the new millennium needs some attention. The question we are interested in is; What are the issues? What role are social workers playing? And what role can Asian social workers play in creating a response? The relationship between (the political) populism and social work has not been well investigated, and hence this edition of Social Dialogue Magazine is particularly timely. How do we as social workers respond and what are the implications of populism for our profession?

Asian Populism

The rise of populism under Ferdinand Marcos, Joseph Estrada Thaksin Shinawatra (who is currently in jail), are examples of populist leaders in Asia. The Philippines was ruled under dictator, Rodrigo Duterte. Under Rosenberg there are a clear role for social workers to engage with the idea, policies and methods of populism and politics. As a result, more people are excluded from the democratic process and feel the need to respond. Social work can be a powerful catalyst to resist populism, working towards pluralistic societies that can resist populist politics that are mainly based on divide and rule. Social workers should be involved in grassroots organizing and helping people to understand the party politics and policies of populist polices and form alternative policies to counteract this development. Hence there is a clear role for social work in the region to empower people with information and policy knowledge so as to make right choices in electing peoples representatives who in turn are accountable, not only to their voter citizens but also to the entire population that includes refugees, migrant without papers and other disadvantage groups in the Asian Society.

Asian social work can be a powerful catalyst to resist political populism. Asian social workers and organizations working towards pluralistic societies that can resist populist politics that are mainly based on divide and rule.

Populism or Pluralism: What Role of Asian Social Work?

The 21st century is witnessing more of populist policy making, leading by a single muscular nationalist leader leading the way. The contradiction is that these autocratic tendencies to incite exclusion and division are also autocratic in thinking that going power and rights violations to name a few that have helped these leaders capture power and political stardom in the first place. Political populists have managed to weaken the position of the traditional political parties and used societal fears of anti establishment, aggravating populistic anxieties like that of globalization, and nuclear threats to name a few to launch their successful populist electoral campaigns. The rise of populism has been both powerful and destructive. The use of fear has been a powerful mobiliser the populist vote! This form of Asian populism may rise further and also reappear or spread across other countries in the region. This is due to the general disillusionment and increasing poverty of the general public who are losing confidence in the State as the main provider of services and care take of their lives. They rather believe in populist leaders and give their vote and democratic power over to them to rule.

Why should social workers be concerned about, understand and analyse populism? Is it because many Asian societies are still impoverished and are experiencing severe violations of human rights and minimum standards of living? In assuming more power and trying to tackle corruption and crime, populist regimes are further weakening civil rights movements and increasing the economic hardship for the most disadvantaged in our communities leaving social workers puzzled and powerless in Asia (and probably in the west too) as to how to respond. We argue then, from the examples above, that populism and politics be opened up to stigmatised groups (the poor, minorities). The western populists like that of Donald Trump have used the rhetoric of exclusive populism, while the Asian leaders like that of Modi in India have used inclusive populism. We argue then, from the examples above, that populism and politics be opened up to stigmatised groups (the poor, minorities). The western populists like that of Donald Trump have used the rhetoric of exclusive populism. For example, in 2017 the British people voted in favor of the United Kingdom (UK) exiting from the European Union, the longest running political party, Angela Merkel in trying to gather the popular vote is calling for a partial ban on the burqa; the unexpected rise of Donald Trump to the US oval office; the fall of Italian Prime minister Matteo Renzi. The rise of politics in India give some indication of the rising populism across the globe. Social work should take note of its development and assess its impact and, either nationally, regionally, or globally, respond to its impact on the citizens, the state and communities.

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Further reading

Recognition as a moral yardstick against nationalistic social work practice

Introduction

The desperate situation of people seeking asylum continues for many reasons. The root reasons to flee from the countries of origins are not addressed enough as focus is on coping with the actual numbers and the possible impact on the country receiving them. The EU and other areas from the Global North want to reduce the numbers of asylum seekers by trying to block mobility to their territories and many nation states are making it much harder for asylum seekers and refugees to get residence permits, even if granted temporary sanctuary. While the European Union shows a lack of solidarity to share the responsibility of processing the asylum applications and taking care of the asylum seekers countries, like Italy, are trying to cope with more and more people trying to reach their borderlands. Consequently, asylum seekers have to seek out more dangerous routes and turn too more stronger (and possibly more dangerous) smuggling networks, which, as we have seen, result in thousands of people dying while trying to find refuge.

The situation of asylum seekers raises a fundamental question of the role of social work with and for people seeking refuge. Social workers are often employed by the public sector and are required to enact the current policy and practices of the national agenda whose aim is to reinforce a national unity often with little regard to understanding the needs of asylum seekers and transnational population in general. Thus, social work practices may become nationalistic and exclusive to asylum seekers. In furthering the national agenda social workers may (wittingly or unwittingly) take part in processes of othering, which can exclude those who do not fit into national ideals (e.g. Keskinen et al., 2012; Anis, 2008). At worst, social work practice can become ethnocentric and ‘chauvinist’ if social workers follow the national framework and accept without question the moral panic linked to the influx of refugees and asylum seekers without understanding the global nature of social problems and transnational processes of (forced) migration (Wallimann, 2014: 19).

Social work ethics has a clear demand for working with and for the people whose human dignity is threatened by the inadequate policies including those of the nation states as well as those of the international communities. According to social work ethics, social workers have a moral and professional responsibility as practitioners to work for and with vulnerable communities such as asylum seekers and refugees. Further there are real aiment needs which must be addressed. If asylum seekers are not recognized as legitimate refugees and they choose to stay undocumented in a country their immediate needs may remain unmet due to their marginalisation and exclusion. The moral issue here is that the hostile treatment and lack of support and empathy for asylum seekers indicates that their human rights and right for protection by the international community are ignored, even violated. Social workers could be more active in this space by focusing their attention on harnessing the moral community which could take care of them as human beings that deserve respect and protection (e.g. Turton, 2003.) The moral community could mean those networks to whom the demands of sense of obligations are recognized. Here I look at the theory of recognition (Honneth, 1995), which can give some moral yardsticks for social work with asylum seekers.

Why the theory of recognition as a source of ethical demands

Axel Honneth’s (1995) theory of recognition focuses on a normative criterion of a good society where normative issues and interpersonal relations are interrelated. The recognition theory has three dimensions, which are the interpersonal relations of respect, esteem and care. Persons are justified to expect these relations or attitudes from each other in mutual relationships. Thus, in a social space of mutual respect, esteem and care, people can grow to be persons with healthy self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence. In other words, these self-attitudes contribute to a person’s ability for self-realisation. If a person cannot get recognition in a mutual relationship with others, their ability to govern themselves may be harmed. (Ikaheimo, 2003: 125-140.) In social work, the relations of recognition can provide a ‘prism through which social workers can “tune in” to ethical imperatives’ (Houston, 2009: 1288). Besides, when people are treated as persons in social relations, it enables trust formation between service users and authorities (Turtiainen, 2012). In a good society, and especially in social work encounters, ‘the social’ cannot remain just bounded by the good will of the people as the social can play a more fundamental role with normative claims (Niemi 2014). Next, I discuss the social work with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in the theoretical frame of Honneth’s relations of recognition.

Respect

Respect as one relation of recognition means that people have juridically institutionalised rights and entitlements. For asylum seekers, it is hard to be a moral equal with other residents without having rights and other entitlements. Second respect takes place in interpersonal relations because other people are needed to respect and confirm that persons are competent agents and capable of making justifications (Ikaheimo, 2003; Seglow, 2016). Therefore, rights give a moral basis for contributing healthy self-respect, which secures persons’ agency through authoring their lives. In respect of self-realisation, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are extremely vulnerable as without a residence permit they do not have the ability to claim rights in any nation state that rejects their claim for asylum.

Social work with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants cannot use only national and popular sentiments to inform their practice with asylum seekers and refugees but must base their work on ethical principles informed by a human rights agenda as a framework beyond the dedicate of a particular nation state in which they work (e.g. Staub-Bernasconi, 2014). In practise, social workers must find a way to be co-authors with their clients in forming their practice responses by listening to them and helping them through advocacy to acquire citizen rights from which they are currently excluded. Sometimes working with human rights activists and undertaking direct political action could be one way of counteracting the national or nationalistic measures of evaluating who deserves citizenship and protection and what kind of rights and entitlements refugees can claim (e.g. Briskman, 2014).

To make his happen social work practice should get the mandate from the people not having rights and if possible in combination with (global) civil society (Staub-Bernasconi, 2014: 31-32) act in solidarity to protect them and help them receive protection and safety.

Care

Care as a relation of recognition concerns human beings being valued for their own sake. It means that people must be taken care of regardless of who or what kind of persons they are (Ikaheimo, 2003; Honneth, 1995). Recognition of the needs of migrants, especially asylum seekers and refugees, is often considered
as instrumental for some other goals, usually economic such as skills shortage or need to cheap labour, not just persons deserving protection and good life in and of itself, I understand care as a relational concept has both private and public dimension.

In practice, asylum seekers’ private care relations are transnational. Asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have often enormous life stressors in the countries of origin, such as war and family disintegration and undergone much hardship in their transition from country to country. Many have suffered torture and trauma even before they arrive as refugees. Therefore, social workers must take into these personal hardships as well as environmental concerns (money food, shelter) while assessing and planning interventions and evaluating the services (Hunter et. al. 2010). Based on the ‘ethics of care’ any human being who is in a vulnerable state should have unconditional access to social and state care. In practice, undocumented migrants do not have access to long-term health and social care. Such exclusive structures requires social workers to step out from the state mandate that excludes them from such care in order to fight for the right for these people. Therefore, care as a relation of recognition overlaps the relation of respect.

Social esteem

Social esteem as a relation of recognition has at least three dimensions. First, social esteem concerns personal accomplishments, such as goals, education and work, which need to be recognised in a community (Seglow, 2009: 68). Asylum seekers and especially undocumented migrants lack this kind of recognition in a society and they become easily abused by the employers. From the social work perspective, personal relations to asylum seekers are important in order identify the potentials and visions of persons and also to maintain hope and develop strengths and opportunities in a society. Second, social esteem is a value that we give to each other in terms of our speciality, as capabilities or achievements (Honneth, 1995; Ikäheimo, 2003). In this sense, esteem can be a valuable contribution to the common good. Possibilities for contributing to a new society is vital in order to have agency in the new situation. For undocumented migrants, this goal is strongly dependent on what, if any, particular rights they have in a new society such acknowledgement of their migrants, this goal is strongly dependent on what, if any, particular speciality, such as capabilities or achievements (Honneth, 1995; Ikäheimo, 2003). This is important as rights they have in a new society such acknowledgement of their migrants, this goal is strongly dependent on what, if any, particular speciality, such as capabilities or achievements (Honneth, 1995; Ikäheimo, 2003).

Conclusions

Asylum seekers end up in nation states which often defend their sovereign interest in the domestic and recognizing people seeking refuge and protection as people who are in an extremely vulnerable life situation. As employees of the state with national agendas, which divide people for those who are worthy to get recognition in a new society and those who are unworthy and are left without care, respect and social esteem social work can find itself in an ambiguous situation. While the concept of ‘relations of the recognition’ are not new in social work practice re-invigorating its contribution to work with refugees and asylum seekers may contribute to social work practice by providing the sensitivity required to evaluate complex situations and modes and understandings are those maintained by the group and understandings are those maintained by the group. In this sense, this is an ambiguous situation that the “new” must always mean themselves against the criteria of the “old.”

References


Integration or Inclusion? Defining Terms in the Context of Refugee Resettlement and Right-Wing Populism

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Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in internationally displaced persons, which now stands at over 60 million people worldwide. Currently, approximately 20 million people (one-third of the 60 million) are considered refugees (UNHCR, 2017). As individuals who are refugees migrate to another country and/or are resettled, question emerge about how to ensure that they are able to safely and adequately settle into a new cultural, economic, and legal context. The two terms we see used in describing this process are “integration” and “inclusion.” At a recent conference in Landshut, Germany, we engaged in a concerted dialogue about what these terms mean and how they are applied in different countries. One of our areas of discussion was how the rhetoric used to describe (un)succesful refugee resettlement potentially intersects with right-wing populist arguments which demonize refugees as a security threat or which portray immigrants of any kind a threat to national identity.

“Integration” has become the hallmark of resettlement work in the U.S. and the U.K. without a concrete definition of what it means (Ager & Strang, 2004). According to the dictionary, integration is “free association of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds” and “incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups.” These definitions suggest that people in a group or society work together to allow for incorporation of new individuals. Integration requires a reference frame that specifies the norm of a society. However, the frame may mean that norms are not specified at first and how a frame is designed depends on those who have the social power to define it (BrokAMP 2016). This reference indicates that refugees coming to a new society must take a place within a given frame of work for which they have no reference point. Sometimes this happens easily and without challenges because there are benevolent advocates from the established group, but in most cases there is a “struggle” because the established structures and understandings are those maintained by the group with existing privileges. With regard to access to a society, this means that the “new” must always measure themselves against the criteria of the “old.”

“Inclusion,” a term more recently used in Europe, radically alters this view by dispensing with a defined reference frame and taking a closer look at the society as a whole – and acknowledging all of its various kinds of diversity. The dictionary defines inclusion as “the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.” This frame suggests that newly arriving individuals can become part of the whole, which is the reference framework. This framework refers to an ideal open society, which rejects dividing society into multiple closed spaces for which special access criteria apply. It is no longer necessary to look at why the
“newcomers” do not meet the existing access criteria, and what support they need in this regard, rather than the negative effects that they have on themselves are questioned. This term and its understanding have radical consequences for systems such as a college/university, which is built around structural barriers for accessing the system (for Germany see MKM 2015).

Country Frames

To clarify how these terms impact refugees resettled in different regions of the world, we provide three case examples: Finland, Germany, and the U.S. All three countries have political parties in which nativist arguments are invoked by right-wing populist political actors.

Finland

Finland has traditionally been an emigration country and the population is considered more ethnically homogenous compared to most other European countries (Heikilä & Petelon, 2002). The recent migration of Middle Eastern refugees (32,000 asylum seekers entered Finland in 2015/2016) has introduced yet another layer of ethnic-cultural diversity into Finnish society. As a signatory state, Finland is fully committed to the UN Refugee Convention 1951 and takes a relatively legalistic approach to immigration and humanitarian issues (Tanner, 2016). The Ministry of Labor is primarily involved in the integration of refugees, and the local authorities have participated in a formal integration plan provided by the Labour Office or municipal social security in order to receive benefits. Successive Finnish governments have not been successful in fostering a diverse and socially inclusive society for migrants and nationalist, anti-migration and populist views persist. Finnish research (Anu, 2012) on Russian, Somali and Kurdish immigrants reports significant health inequalities for migrants across key determinants of health, mental health and social wellbeing (Anu, 2012).

It was no coincidence that at time of the so-called refugee crisis the Finns Party won the Finnish vote in the 2015 elections and joined the government coalition as the second-largest party in Parliament. The Finns Party actively propagates nationalist sentiments as to the virtues of being a true Finn alongside anti-immigrant rhetoric. Finland has witnessed an increase in right-wing protests and physical attacks against asylum seekers. The reasons for this crucial shift towards a more negative climate on immigration are many. The rise of social media has offered an anonymous platform to express previously unpublicable or politically incorrect ideas (Tanner 2016). Populist, xenophobic and nationalist sentiments have been fueled in part by an economic downturn in Finland. Asylum seekers are among those who receive well-publicized benefits and show poor levels of integration, often become the scapegoat for many domestic social ills.

The profession of social work in Finland plays a structural administrative role in the social assessment and resettlement of refugees (Valtonen, 2001) and the Settlement Movement (based on the original work of Jane Addams) has a rich tradition in social and community action. These practices promote social inclusion within local communities. However, Finnish social workers find themselves pressured into more legalistic roles in promoting the integration of refugees with little or no resources available to facilitate more integrative interventions and structural social work – whilst the communities in which they practice are shaped by contradictory humanitarian and populist views.

Germany

How can the efforts to include refugees in German society be categorized? Do these efforts call existing barriers to access into question? The answer varies. Few of the many measures or projects implemented in Germany (for example concerning the acceptance of refugees see DAAD 2016) fulfill the criterion that existing barriers to access are questioned. Existing measures can still be described as a kind of “integration” because incorporation/assimilation into the logic of the majority society is still the focus of integrative practices.

On the other hand, in the first few months of the “refugee crisis” in 2015, a major part of society tried to change this integrative perspective. For the first time, it could be observed that actors who have the power to determine access began to incorporate the perspectives of other “cultures.” Rules which had limited access began to be stretched with the aim of minimizing institutional hurdles, who were pressured into a process of trying to assign a special status to refugees and then attempting to integrate them into an existing frame of reference, actors attempted to rethink how various groups are perceived and how receiving societies can adapt to a more flexible refugees resettlement framework. This was a fundamental shift which is better described as inclusion than integration. By first rethinking the basic criteria through which access to a society is granted, other barriers to access can be identified. This understanding of the process permits the criteria to be rethought and allows the articulation of further necessary steps through which “real” inclusion can be achieved.

For Germany, one can conclude that refugee resettlement has evolved into a more integrative process. The world was in 2015-2016 opened society up to contemplating how integration can be incorporated into the perspective of new immigrants. For some communities, inclusion is almost impossible. Welcoming America, a non-profit agency in the U.S., has begun to define what means in the context of resettling immigrants and refugees—furthering a discussion about welcoming that may allow communities to identify methods of creatively promoting dialogue to better understand how receiving/hosting and resettling communities can work toward integration, and possibly inclusion, together.

United States

In the U.S., resettlement agencies strive toward refugee integration. “Successful” integration is when individuals are employed and can pay their own bills. This definition is based on federal expectations and what services programs supported by federal funding should provide. According to Ager and Strang (2004), there are 10 indicators of integration: employment, housing, education, health, social bridges, social bonds, local and cultural knowledge, safety & stability, and rights & citizenship. While these indicators are important, it is unclear how to measure these indicators in the context of integration (Tantor & Lichtenstein, 2016). The process of integration is placed fully on newly arriving individuals and not on the receiving/hosting communities. In addition, in the context of the 2017 Executive Orders issued by President Trump, there is an effort to marginalize certain refugee communities, which further reduces the options for people of Muslim backgrounds to integrate into U.S. society. Inclusion, as described above, is not on the radar for the U.S. and structural barriers are in place to ensure that integration is difficult. For some communities, inclusion is impossible. Welcoming America, a non-profit agency in the U.S., has begun to define what means in the context of resettling immigrants and refugees—furthering a discussion about welcoming that may allow communities to identify methods of creatively promoting dialogue to better understand how receiving/hosting and resettling communities can work toward integration, and possibly inclusion, together.

Conclusions

In the three national contexts briefly explored above, refugee migration and integration is a political social and cultural challenge. The world of “integration” in all three contexts seems to describe a top-down governmental practice of demanding adjustment from refugees and a basic willingness to adapt to a new political, legal and social context. While adjustment and adaptation are part of any process of migration, adherence to an integrative framework also may strengthen systemic and structural barriers which limit the full inclusion of refugees into professional and civic life. These integrative barriers include adherence to an “integration plan” in Finland, gatekeeping procedures to university admission in Germany, and the highly controversial 2017 Executive Orders in the United States.

In the context of refugee integration and national politics, it is difficult to separate out which elements of integration rhetoric reflect the nationalist beliefs which political scientist Cas Muddé argues are significant for right-wing populism, and which elements of integration rhetoric reflect a populist ideology which pits a pure and homogeneous people against a corrupt elite (Muddé 2007). Nationalists demand to integrate may target a space in which nationalism and populism can seamlessly overlap. “Integration” thus might prove to be a way of conceiving of resettlement that is especially susceptible to manipulation in right-wing populist rhetoric. Finnish political denigration of refugee welfare benefits, German unwillingness to question structural barriers to access, and U.S. federal legal restrictions on refugees to receive social benefits offer us an example of how different refugee communities themselves all reflect obstacles to the process of refugee resettlement through a lens of inclusion rather than integration.

References


Understanding migration

It is indisputable that as a fundamental part of human experience, migration is widely believed to be intrinsic to human nature. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2015) gave an estimate of 972 million migrants globally. Of these, the minority, 232 million, were international migrants reportedly living in high-income countries, while the majority, 740 million, were internal migrants moving within their own countries, mostly from rural to urban settings. The reasons why people move are multiple and varied; people often moved in pursuit of better socioeconomic opportunities, though migratory patterns may also result from civil conflict, political persecution, development activities, and natural disasters (International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), 2012).

Indeed, people fled their countries to escape from violent conflicts, the results of economic failures, autocratic regimes among other reasons. Thus, it would seem that human insecurity played a significant role in population movements. This has led to migrants being viewed as helpless and persecuted people fleeing from violent conflict while at the same time some regard them as strangers from a distinct or foreign culture who are notorious for violating national borders and rules, breaking into countries, and putting pressure on impoverished communities. Witteler-Steipelmann (2009) noted that uncontrolled migration influenced the countries’ stability by:

- Flouting sovereign territory and border control, while extremists sought safe havens for planning assaults and recruiting supporters.
- Threatening economies by increasing competition for local resources and already-overstretched infrastructure and social services.
- Causing conflicts that hampered development.
- Threatening cultural identities, especially in closed ethnicities, where it led to discrimination and the suppression of minority interests.

Spiralling population growth, political instability, escalating ethnic conflicts, persistent economic deterioration, abject poverty, and environmental woes are all factors in migration (Adepoju, 2008). Refugees comprised a distinct group set apart in international frameworks, policies, and discourses and distinguished from those believed to have a choice in their migratory decisions. This distinction is problematic as the question of ‘choice’ and ‘force’ is a vexed issue. The binary between ‘economic migrant’ and ‘refugee’ continues to be challenged and is actually believed to be false. For example, it has been noted that assumptions of a dichotomy between voluntary, economic, and migrant, on the one hand, and forced, political, and refugee, on the other (Holmes, 2013, p. 17) have not proved helpful in the study of the complex phenomenon of migration. The emergence of several divergent theories to explain migration has given rise to the need for an integrated framework to achieve its holistic understanding. Nonetheless, considering its prevalence in public and official debates of displacement, it is important to consider how it manifests within migratory discourses.

Global overview

Globally, there were 65.6 million forcibly displaced people in 2016 (United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2017). This group comprised:

- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) (n=40.3 million), that is, people who have been forced to leave their homes due to violence or disasters but remain in their country of origin (UNHCR, 2017).
- Refugees (n=22.5 million), that is, people who have been forced to flee their country of origin due to fears of persecution (UNHCR, 2017).
- Asylum seekers (n=2.8 million), that is, people who had lodged applications for international protection in countries in which they hoped to settle (UNHCR, 2017).

Of the 22.5 million refugees recorded at the end of 2016, 17.2 million fell directly under the UNHCR’s mandate while the remaining 5.3 million were Palestinian refugees under the aegis of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) (UNHCR, 2017). Refugees, asylum seekers, and trafficked persons tended to attract most media attention, though this varied across contexts. In Australia, for example, the media and public debate focused on so-called ‘illegal migrants’, referring to people who arrived by boat and who were in offshore detention centres (Lidberg, 2016). In South Africa, xenophobic violence had directed attention to migrants from African countries (Hickel, 2014), while, in Europe, the Syrian refugee and migrant crisis was the centre of public attention (Syrian Refugees, 2016).

Preoccupation with negativity

There has been a tendency to focus on the negative aspects of the complex phenomenon of migration. People described migration through metaphors such as, influxes, tide, and flood. The emphasis on migration as a problem overlooks possible positive aspects of migration for migrant-producing countries, destination countries, and migrants themselves (O’Reilly, 2012). This gap is increasingly being addressed in both scholarship and public debate, which identifies the benefits resulting from migratory flows at levels of the individual, community, state, and transnational relations are identified (Tevera & Chikanda, 2009).

The European experience

Boros (2016) observed that new populist actors and the refugee crisis had dominated European politics when an estimated 1 million asylum seekers arrived in the European Union (EU) in 2015. Apart from these asylum seekers, it was believed that there were other migrants numbering several hundred thousand who also arrived in the EU as they took advantage of weak border controls and the fact that many governments appeared to be ill-prepared to deal with an influx of migrants at such an unprecedented rate. As such, Wolf

Renowned for being a type of politics whose main intent and purpose is claiming to represent the opinions and wishes of ordinary people (Hornby, 2010), populism is present in different nations and for a multiplicity of reasons. It has been in existence for quite some time although attention to its deleterious effects on migration is relatively recent and has often focused on the election of one controversial populist politician, Donald Trump of the United States, Brexit, and the European migration crisis that predominated the EU and its member states in 2015/16 (Wolf, 2017). For instance, increased migrant and refugee flows have resulted in anti-immigrant sentiments soiling mainstream politics in a number of countries with populist politics said to be on the rise in Europe, the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific. There can be no doubt though that there has been scholarly neglect in so far as the venomsous effects of populism are concerned particularly in parts of Asia and Africa. What is even more worrisome is the peripheral role that social work continues to play in the field of migration. The prime motif of this treatise is to underscore that populism has serious effects of populism are concerned particularly in parts of Asia and Africa. What is even more worrisome is the peripheral role that social work continues to play in the field of migration. The prime motif of this treatise is to undersco...
(2017) was of the viewpoint that the 2015/16 migration crisis had demonstrated beyond any iota of doubt that the EU and its member states would be dealing with increased immigration in the future. Wolf further argued that the migration crisis would have two consequences in the Western world. She believed the crisis would lead to religious pluralisation and cultural heterogeneity and the rise of populism throughout Europe, with populist movements riding on people’s social and economic insecurity in their attempt to advance right-wing policies.

Boros (2016) observed that the migrant crisis had increasingly become a question of solidarity though some continued viewing it as an issue of identity, economic threat, and security with the anti-migrant, nationalist mood strengthening following the rise of populist politicians, their strength and even election to government in 2015/16. Resultantly, a country like Hungary, for instance, accepted only a few refugees in 2015 with the overall social acceptance of pro-refugee policies reportedly on the decline. These developments were blamed on and largely attributed to the fence erected on the southern borders of Hungary, government-funded anti-refugee publicity and xenophobic government propaganda (Boros, 2016).

Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, wrote Ocho (2009), asylum seekers and refugees face serious challenges. Though some of them are skilled, well-educated and are professionals, they are reportedly working for peanuts since they have little recourse for fear of being refused. Rising unemployment exacerbated by poor economic performance has worsened xenophobia in some African nations. Some populist politicians have been blamed for fueling xenophobia in these countries. In South Africa, Johannesburg Mayor, Herman Mashaba, was accused of inciting violence against migrants in Gauteng Province. Reports accused Mashaba of saying that illegal immigrants were holding South Africa to ransom and that he would be the last South African to allow it. Following his remarks, South Africans marched to the homes owned by foreign nationals and burnt them under the guise of fighting drugs and prostitution (Masinga, 2017). Many foreigners are now living in fear as a result.

Implications for the social work profession

In conclusion, it cannot be overemphasised that populist politicians are on the rise and that their populist philosophy is having serious negative implications on migration governance and management. As such, the social work profession should not be left out when it comes to addressing the serious challenges that populism is causing. Going forward, the social work profession is expected to delve deeper in generating knowledge on populism and its effects on migration. This knowledge will undoubtedly deepen our understanding and knowledge of the complexities of this phenomenon. It is also expected that social work educators will play a vital role in producing competent professionals who will take up leadership positions within the professional community. With its focus on the cardinal principles of human rights and social justice, there is no doubt that the social work profession has an obligation to influence laws and policies that have bearing on the social welfare and individual wellbeing of migrants and their families. These are the opportunities that exist for social workers who dare to make a difference and leave an indelible imprint in this world.

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Populism and second language acquisition amongst Middle Eastern women living in Eastern Finland

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Second language education has become a commodity often traded by nation states for refugee’s access to social benefits, citizenship and in some cases, basic human rights (Edelsky, 2006). As a requirement of integration policy, migrants and refugees are often required to attend language classes in exchange for receipt of benefits. The number of language courses, programs and policies have expanded raising questions as to the quality, ethics and outcomes. This article highlights the highly political nature of language education and its role in developing and maintaining the nation state (Pennycook, 1990). Learning a language is connected to issues such as multiculturalism, bilingualism, minority education and internationalism and yet the inherent political and culture issues are relatively ignored by government and language education services. The acquisition of a second language is essential in achieving social equality however language education may unintentionally serve to facilitate the reproduction of social inequalities within a society.
In many European counties, the emphasis on language acquisition reflects populist and nationalistic sentiments placing unrealistic pressure on migrants to demonstrate their willingness to assimilate and conform to the dominant culture and language. The reality is that large groups of refugees face server challenges and difficulties when acquiring a second language. The following case study illustrates how populist notions as to language acquisition must be challenged by social and communal efforts to improve the opportunities for Middle Eastern refugees and women in particular.

Refugees in Finland

In 2015 over 32,000 political refugees fled to Finland for political asylum and every year Eastern Finland receives quota refugees. Accurate regional or municipal data on refugees granted asylum in Eastern Finland is however difficult to obtain. The National average indicates that only 2% of population in Eastern Finland are immigrants. In Eastern Finland, migrant population groups have settled mainly in Kuopio, Mikkeli and Joensuu, the biggest cities of Eastern Finland.

The research project PROMEQ New Start Finland! initially sort to scope the impact of social marketing interventions on the health and wellbeing status of refugees granted asylum and quota refugees in regional Finland. As a result, an intervention program was piloted and evaluated. Refugees face significant barriers to equity and language acquisition plays a pivotal role in access to educational opportunities, employability and social inclusion, which result in negative health and wellbeing outcomes (Davidson et al., 2008). The effectiveness of service interventions to meet the needs of new refugees in regional Finland is under researched and largely unknown although the international literature demonstrates that new and more participatory approaches are needed to facilitate the integration of new refugees for the mutual benefit of all concerned (Buhin 2012; Kuusela 2014.).

Language acquisition

According to Finland's official integration strategy, for immigrants to integrate effectively, refugees must gain sufficient language skills for education and work. Immigrant integration into Finnish society is steered by the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (Seppelin, 2010) however, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy admits that not enough is known about the effect of language acquisition on immigrant employment, education and social participation. The ability to speak Finnish is instrumental for gaining regulated and meaningful employment, applying for university courses and extending one's personal and social networks. The Finnish government and local municipalities provide language instruction for registered refugees. However, access to language acquisition is not equal for all refugees. Stay-at-home mothers, older refugees and refugees who have recently moved to Kuopio from other parts of Finland, experience difficulties accessing courses because they are outside the active labour market, not registered for an integration plan or just have difficulty getting motivated.

The language project PROMEQ New start Finland! targeted Arabic speaking refugee women. Refugee women face difficulties participating in language courses. A complex set of gendered, cultural as well as socio-political factors, act as barriers for refugee women to gain access to language education (Watkins et al. 2012). Studies (Riggs et al. 2012) have demonstrated that refugee women are willing and well-motivated to learn, but at the same time find it difficult to attend classes, because of domestic and caring responsibilities. Other barriers include the availability of culturally appropriate childcare and the gender mix of the language classes considered inappropriate by the women's husband or other family members. Women may also be concerned that part time study affect welfare payments. It is common for refugee families to prioritize attendance at language classes for the male of the family. (Riggs et al. 2012.)

Many refugee women from Middle Eastern countries have no previous access to formal education and are illiterate in their own language. Women's opportunities for education in their country of origin may have been limited because of the socio-political situation and cultural practices and gendered roles, i.e. traditional expectations locate women's role within the home. Besides taking care of children at home, women often have the responsibility to take care of elderly relatives and manage household finances, groceries and maintenance. Limited educational experience mean that some women may be unfamiliar with basic skills such as holding a pen or unable or using a dictionary. Such limitations restrict women's successful engagement with formal language programs rolled out by the state as part of Finland's social integration policies. A recent study by Naif (2017) found that adult Arab learners' face significant challenges when learning Finnish as a second language. By combining reading and writing the lack of communication due to the reserved character of Finnish people and difficulties in integrating into Finnish host society are considered as motivation to learn. Communication with native speakers is an essential ingredient for better second language learning. However, communication opportunities with natives are rather limited for Arab learners.

Inclusive promotion of health and wellbeing

In Finland, there is a recognition of barriers to health and wellbeing for refugees. Thus, refugee language acquisition is promoted by the Social Workers, Integration Unit, City of Kuopio. The first pilot commenced, May 2017 with the recruitment of six Arabic speaking participants with assistance from the Kuopio immigration unit social workers. Social work involved making it possible to target and reach out to stay-at-home mothers who had not had an opportunity to participate to language course previously. Recruitment strategy involved inviting women personally and offering childcare services during the course. Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlementt Pujila programs and promoted by the Social Workers, Integration Unit, City of Kuopio. The first pilot commenced, May 2017 with the recruitment of six Arabic speaking participants with assistance from the Kuopio immigration unit social workers. Social work involved making it possible to target and reach out to stay-at-home mothers who had not had an opportunity to participate to language course previously. Recruitment strategy involved inviting women personally and offering childcare services during the course. Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlementt Pujila enlisting Finnish volunteers to provide the childcare for participant's children. Native Finnish speakers conducted courses with assistance from Arabic interpreters. Using bilingual research assistants is an effective strategy to achieve cross-cultural linkages between professionals and ethnic minority participants to ensure their views are heard and needs identified (see Lee, Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson 2014).

The aim of the language program is to promote social and Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlementt Puijala. The research project PROMEQ New Start Finland! piloted and evaluated. Refugees face significant barriers to equity and language acquisition plays a pivotal role in access to educational opportunities, employability and social inclusion, which result in negative health and wellbeing outcomes (Davidson et al., 2008). The effectiveness of service interventions to meet the needs of new refugees in regional Finland is under researched and largely unknown although the international literature demonstrates that new and more participatory approaches are needed to facilitate the integration of new refugees for the mutual benefit of all concerned (Buhin 2012; Kuusela 2014.).
Language teachers and professionals involved in the program felt that they were effective in addressing some of the barriers women experience in engaging with language courses. The most significant challenge the professionals faced in delivering the course was limited time. Program activities were time consuming for many reasons; some of the participants were illiterate and were not familiar with studying or had to feed their babies during the course activities. It was felt that a 30 hour program was insufficient to achieve measurable outcomes given the complex needs of group. However pilot, has been significant a trigger for exploring and developing alternative course programs. Over the next two pilots professional will have the opportunity to further develop and improve the program using an action learning approach to language teaching. The second group starts in autumn 2017. Already the new pilot sessions will be lengthened and themes reduced to make the course more effective to participants. The social marketing approach has had a constructive impact on the way language courses are being designed and delivered to the Middle Eastern refugee women. This study confirms that refugee women wish to learn language for very practical everyday activities and results mirror similar studies on other countries (Riggs et. al. 2012).

Conclusion:
This study confirms that refugee women are best motivated to acquire a second language based on very practical everyday activities and needs (Riggs et. al. 2012) and that the agenda of government or service providers. The findings defy populist beliefs that refugee women are reluctant, lack motivation to attend programs, or not supported by their husbands to attend such courses. The gender test sessions will be lengthened and themes reduced to make the course more effective to participants. The social marketing approach has had a constructive impact on the way language courses are being designed and delivered to the Middle Eastern refugee women. This study confirms that refugee women wish to learn language for very practical everyday activities and results mirror similar studies on other countries (Riggs et. al. 2012).

References
The rhetoric against migration and asylum seekers in Germany: implications for social work.

The rise of conservatism and nationalism is a visible trend around the world and this is often argued to be a response to rising levels of migration and an increasing influx of refugees and asylum seekers in almost all parts of the world. In this paper, I will present how this conservatism and nationalism finds political expressions in Germany, particularly in view of the recent incoming of refugees and asylum seekers since 2015 in Germany and the implications of this for social work.

Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers in the political Landscape:

In 2015, Angela Merkel opened Germany’s doors to Refugees and Asylum seekers, in response to the Syrian Crisis. Since then, Germany had received 441,899 applications for asylum, a sharp rise compared to 41,332 asylum applications in 2010 (BAMF, 2016). As Chancellor, Angela Merkel has stood firm on her politics of leaving Germany’s doors open, even as the mood in other EU countries (Hungary, Austria, Poland, UK) was largely negative with many rejecting the call for solidarity and to sharing the task of accommodating refugees and asylum seekers. The mainstream reaction to refugees/asylum seekers has however not been as negative and most Germans seem to support their country’s commitment to help refugees fleeing from war and persecution. Germans has matched their attitudes with action with huge numbers of Germany participating in supporting refugees with housing, help in finding employment, and providing essential services as well as donating resources. Nevertheless, it is also clear that this refugee influx has also led to soul searching, recognition of problems and the difficulties of integration and perhaps not surprisingly, while the welcome culture still exists, there is also an increasing concern about the implications of this on the welfare state, housing and infrastructure (Studie Deutsche Willkommenskultur, 2017).

In 2015, at the height of the crisis, asylum seekers had to be accommodated in emergency shelters temporarily set up in sport-halls, churches, schools and hotels across the country. There were clearly not enough resources to offer language courses or even to support unaccompanied minor asylum seekers appropriately. Minor unaccompanied asylum seekers spent days in tents and temporary shelters without any access to education or other facilities. It was clear that the administrative capacity was at its limit and faltering. Merkel had famously said ‘wir schaffen das’ (we will manage this) but a clear strategy of how this was to be managed was unclear.

In an attempt to further streamline asylum seekers, a pact with Turkey was made to limit unaccompanied refugees from entering Germany and other parts of the EU. Furthermore, to further manage the asylum seeking process, administratively and financially, Merkel’s government further limited support for asylum seekers and laid down additional conditions and responsibilities on asylum seekers and refugees in terms of where they could live, who could access support for education and living, and under what conditions as well as conditions under which punitive measures could be taken for example: reducing support for lack of participation in integration / language courses. Furthermore, attempts have been made to categorise countries as ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’, such that persons applying from Asylum and Refugee could be identified and processed accordingly. Finally, there has been increasing commentary in terms of what ‘Asylum’ under the law means, including ‘who can be legally given asylum’ and attempts have been made to categorise different reasons for immigration such as: those seeking refugee, those seeking asylum and those seeking protection. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), those fleeing political persecution can be granted asylum while those fleeing war are eligible to apply for refuge and protection but not necessarily asylum. There are thus three different kind of protection that Germany offers ranging from Refugee Protection, Entitlement to Asylum and Subsidiary Protection (BAMF, 2016a).

Recent developments indicate that applicants are more likely to receive subsidiary status rather than asylum status (Neue Asylpraxis beim BAMF, 2016). Subsidiary status however, limits the period of stay in Germany, access to resources as well as the right to bring families to join persons who are in Germany. These measures, however, have received much criticism as failing to recognise the context of asylum seekers, categorising persons in terms of ‘who is and should be protected’ and who does not need or should not be protected and criminalising or punishing them.

In either case, voices criticising Chancellor Merkels’ ‘open door’ (open to refugees and asylum seekers) policy as well as her attempts to manage the situation have become louder.

Furthermore, sexual harassment during New Year’s at Cologne, terrorist actions perpetrated by supposed asylum seekers/refugees have further sensitised the German public to the risks of letting refugees into the country where complex administrative and legal systems make it often difficult to recognise possible terrorists and to take action against them. Finally, the very real difficulties of integrating people from a different culture and land are increasingly coming to the fore, posing central questions about German identity, culture, what ‘outsiders’ need to adapt and should integrate to. This has led to interesting calls for recognition of particular social norms and actions along with the constitution and respect for human rights, that, according to De Maizière, forms the fundamental basis of Germany. Within this context he makes it clear that “Germans are not ‘Burkha’ (de Maizière, 2017). This was heavily criticized with some maintaining that German culture is laid in the constitution and others seeing this as a guise to further monitor right and Islamist groups and stress integration. Merkel’s own statement of what German culture is, highlights a multiplicity of cultures, historical and regional influences (Merkel, 2017).

With the ruling parties and its members emphasis on drawing sharp differences between ‘practices of Muslims and the general majority population of ‘Germans’, it is clear that populism is increasingly becoming visible in mainstream politics in Germany, as it is everywhere else in the world. A turning point in German mainstream politics is also the rise of the extreme right wing party, the Alternative Für Deutschland (AfD). The popularity of AfD has risen so much, that polls predict that they will enter the German parliament as an opposition party in the 2017 German elections in September.

A key focus area of AfD is Germany’s commitment to provide refuge to people fleeing from war and persecution and asylum seekers/refugees. Furthermore, they fear the usurpation of German values, culture and history through the influx of Muslim migrants and refugees, particularly since most Muslims from Syria and Iraq and Afghanistan are Muslims. Thus AfD’s agenda is not only racist but very clearly Islamophobic. AfD leader Frauke arguéd for shooting at refugees at Germany border, in order to halt entry of refugees into Germany (Germany’s right leaning AfD, 2016). AfD rhetoric often emphasises points of difference between Muslims and Christian/ German ways of life, and propagate fear of a cultural takeover through Islamism. They demand a head scarf and an insistence that immigrants pledge their loyalty to German law and acceptance of German ways of life.

The next upcoming elections in September 2017 in Germany, partly theory elections with regards to immigrants, Islam, Asylum seekers and so on. Immigrants are portrayed as criminals and persons threatening the security of the nation. AfD propaganda, in particular refers to ‘immigrant’ and ‘Muslim’ societies, they celebrate Birkhas as opposed to Burkha’s and hail the reproduction of ‘German’ kids instead of ‘Immigrants’ (Kamann 2017). Other right leaning AfD, also vie for resistance against the hate rhetoric and seek to promote tolerant living respectively. The issue of increasing deportations and definitively managing the number of refugees is also a political issue for the current ruling party Christian Democratic Party (CDU) (Merkels party) that is set to win. Though right wing parties like the AfD are keen to link migration, refugees and Islam to national security issues, other parties have resisted this simplistic connection, even though issues of Security, taxation, and benefits remain important issues in this election.
The role of social workers:

Dealing with needs of special groups such as immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers has never been an easy task. These are cohorts of people with multiple needs, little social/emotional support, often traumatised and who must navigate their way in a foreign land without clear legal status or secured long term perspectives. I, myself worked with unaccompanied minor asylum seekers for a year, when the initial rise in asylum seekers took place in 2015 in Germany. The work was challenging, sometimes contradictory and got me to self-reflect on the intersection of immigration, culture, differences, communication, multiple times. I experienced internal racism, frustration, questioned myself multiple times when Muslim colleagues and Muslim young people who were my clients refused to shake my hand explaining that their religion did not allow them to do so as I was a woman and that this was a sign of respect that they had for me. I participated in discussions as to whether a female colleague could wear shorts in summer during Ramadan. These led me to self-critique, to question my own values, to talk with others, to work constructively to find solutions. Whilst this was challenging for me, I imagine that it may be equally or even more difficult for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Such persons are often voiceless and have little access to express themselves in the mainstream culture without the potential for being misunderstood. It is not only important to hear these voices but also to be able to contextualise them. In my opinion, this missing is clear that the road to integration is not easy and there are possibilities, success as well as challenges. There is little room to understand these in their totality; the view on these issues from multiple perspectives is missing. Social workers can and should play a role in creating these spaces for such dialogue because they are often the ones in direct contact with persons in vulnerable situations and are in a position to provide a contextualised narrative rather than a seemingly fact based argument. I do not think that a one size fits all solution is possible. Social workers do not need to provide answers - these answers have to be found together in democratic dialogues (Parekh, 2006) that may be fundamental to a participatory and deliberative democracy.

References:


Radical transformation and its likely impact on the racial population groups of South Africa

Introduction
This paper, endeavours to discuss the populist notion of radical transformation and its implications for the majority of citizens of South Africa. Among its central tenets is the conflict of interest between the objectives of radical transformation and what has been termed monopoly capital. It also considers the paradoxes which are inherent in institutions of governance and the ongoing debate concerning decolonisation. The authors endeavour to probe the dichotomy between the use which is made of the plight of the poor for political gain and the apparent lack of political will to take meaningful steps to alleviate it. It concludes with a discussion of whether the social work profession should also undergo radical transformation.

Background
In their discussion of transformation to an equitable socio-economic dispensation, Mangaliso and Mangaliso (2013) suggest that the dream to abolish apartheid would bring prosperity to the majority of South Africans has proven to be an elusive one. The economic power still remains concentrated in the same hands in which it was concentrated before 1994. In addition, the levels of unemployment are growing progressively higher, while those of poverty are worsening, particularly for the poor black majority.

Malikane (2017) defines radical transformation as the product of the output which is produced by the economy of a country and existing patterns of ownership and control. The questions which could be generated by this assessment concern those who own and control. The questions which could be generated by this assessment concern those who own and control the product of the output which is produced by the economy of a country and existing patterns of ownership and control. The questions which could be generated by this assessment concern those who own and control.

White monopoly capital and paradoxes in institutions of governance
Southall (2017) maintains that while some would query the integrity of the term ‘White Monopoly Capital’ (WMC), its introduction to South Africa’s contemporary discourse is healthy for politics. This is because it points out that the inequalities in terms of wealth, income and opportunity are not only extreme but highly racialized. The White minority continue to dominate the most productive parts of the country. Southall (20170 argues that the White minority and their privilege and status is behind the anger and frustration felt by most polarized black people. This is a frustration that any form of politics can take advantage of and manipulate at the expense of the needy and vulnerable.

The ongoing debate concerning decolonisation
The debate concerning decolonisation has swept through many of the corridors of learning in South Africa, particularly those in the domain of higher education. As there is a great deal of confusion concerning how the concept should be understood and interpreted, there is also a possibility of overlooking the ‘Other’ (Sewpaul, 2013). As a consequence, endeavours to decolonise can arouse intense emotions and be perceived as destructive if they are not carried out within professional and humane parameters. Essop (2016) points out that the decolonisation debate raises concerns with respect to the relationship between power, knowledge and learning. However, there are two categories of dangers which are inherent in most decolonising enterprises. The first concerns the tendency to prompt racial essentialism, in accordance with which white is replaced by black or Freeman by Fanon. The second concerns manifestations of social conservatism, which pit modernity against tradition. These dangers can be avoided through an acknowledgement and an acceptance of epistemological diversity. Broadbent (2017) explains that it would require a great deal of thorough critical scrutiny to decolonise knowledge in a meaningful sense. Critical decolonisation entails accepting the possibility of error and also considering whether indigenous knowledge systems may contain certain truths which have been inaccessible to western science. However, it could also entail accepting that indigenous knowledge systems may be flawed or wrong.

The plight of the poor as a focus for political rhetoric and not for actual attention
In his discussion of the dilemma which is presented by widespread grinding poverty in Africa, Hope (2004: 127) explains that the poor are afflicted by a lack of purchasing power, a predominantly rural culture, exposure to risk, insufficient access to social and economic services and few opportunities for generating incomes in the formal sector. However, it is abundantly evident that the plight of the poor becomes an abstract political concern in the messages of political parties, while their actual concerns are far from those of the people on whose behalf they purport to speak from their political platforms. A great many people have been given cause to wonder how politicians are able to continue to deceive large swathes of the populations.
of countries such as South Africa, while doing very little which effectively alleviates their shared plight. A cynical response to the question may suggest that politicians of all ostensible political persuasions feel no compassion at all for the poor and simply exploit their plight to garner votes for their parties.

**Should social work undergo radical transformation?**

In the light of the potential implications of radical transformation for the different population groups of South Africa, should the profession of social work undergo radical transformation? In its professed desire to become a developmental state, the government of South Africa after 1994 moved from a social welfare approach to a social development one, which is defined by Midgely (2013:13) as “a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole, within the context of a dynamic multifaceted development process”.

The adoption of the approach entailed increased amounts of state funds being invested in social grants as a means overcoming poverty. Although social grants provide assistance to the poor, their actual value has frequently been questioned, mainly in terms of their sustainability, for both their intended beneficiaries and also for the state. This year, for reasons which have yet to be properly identified or resolved, the state was unable to pay out social grants to those who were eligible to receive them. It is from this perspective that Maserumule (2012) maintains that there will always be endless conflict concerning the form which the nation will take in the future. The uncertainty which was experienced by the beneficiaries of social grants would inevitably have sent shock waves through their perceptions of the sustainability of the measures which the government has taken as an expression of its commitment to providing a better life for all.

In the light of the enormous numbers of South Africans who receive social grants, it could be asserted that the pressure to provide state funds across the sector has proved to be detrimental to the implementation of other developmental social services and also to the social work profession. An example could be provided by the present state of NGOs in South Africa, whose funding the government saw fit to drastically cut this year, which resulted in some retrenching many social workers and many services closing down. It could be speculated that the funding of NGOs had been cut as a result of the financial burden becoming too great for the state to carry. It is in this context that Penderis (2012) asserts that the financial burden of social security keeps increasing, to the detriment of other developmental social services. The effects felt by the social work profession are, in turn, felt equally acutely by the poorest population groups, which are left with very limited access to free social services as a direct consequence.

In the light of the present predicament of the social work profession, it could be maintained that if its main thrust were to be transformed to embody the objectives of critical social work, the social benefits for the disadvantaged populations of South Africa could be maximised. There is a great need for social workers to understand the position of the oppressed in the context of the social and economic structure in which they live (Payne, 2015). Sewpaul (2013) maintains that neo-liberalism has affected small-scale community-based initiatives adversely, leaving them without authority to challenge the power of corporate capital, centralised governments and big financial institutions. It is for this reason that Payne (2015) emphasises that social work practitioners should use critical social work to practise in ways which promote social change, rather than confining all their efforts and activities to problem solving and empowerment. Critical social work strives to achieve social justice and to challenge systems in place. It also encompasses an understanding that in its endeavour to remedy the plight of the marginalised, radical transformation also has the potential to create other groups of marginalised people.

**References**


**Introduction**

Not so long ago, political commentators confidently declared that Western economic and political liberalism had triumphed and that viable systemic alternatives had been exhausted. The victory of Western consumerism was interpreted as “an endpoint in mankind’s ideological evolution” signalling an “end of history” (Fukujama, 1989). It was just a matter of time until Western liberal democracy would affirm itself as the “final form of human government” (Fukujama, 1989). The two major ideological challenges to liberal democracy – communism and fascism – no longer harboured popular appeal – communism because its lack of viability and fascism because of its lack of success (Fukujama, 1989). Fast forward two decades and the fact that some placed in the political force of liberal ideology seems to have been utterly misplaced. “The Arab Spring”, while at least initially giving rise to a range of democratic processes, ushered in a clash between communal, liberal, and populist religious factions that, aided by opposing geopolitical forces, annihilated tens of thousands of civilians and returned to rubble artefacts of ancient and modern civilisations. Citizens in Eastern Europe and Russia have seen a hollowing out of democratic processes and institutions and the rise of nationalist populism. In countries such as the United States, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, England, Italy, and Scandinavia, an increasing number of citizens no longer regard it as essential to live in a country governed democratically (Foa & Mounk, 2016).

The rise of conservative nationalist populism in countries such as the United States, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, England, Italy, and Scandinavia is increasingly perceived as a threat to the very liberal democratic fabric that only two decades ago seemed to be on the verge of becoming what Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan termed the “only game in town” (Linz & Stepan, 1996).
What happened?
A growing number of observers agree that we are witnessing a deconsolidation of liberal democracy (Foa & Mounk, 2016). This is, a growing number of citizens no longer believe that liberal democracy is the best way to govern a country and are increasingly tempted to embrace authoritarian alternatives. Indeed, some observers fear that this deconsolidation could endanger even wealthy and stable democracies that were, until recently, regarded as ‘safe’ (Foa & Mounk, 2016). Explanations as to why liberal democracies are deconsolidating focus on its inability to ensure material stability or continuity of culture and tradition. The former line of argument holds that economic and political liberalism have been too successful. That is, neo-liberalism aggressively undermined the tripartite agreement that mitigated the conflict between labour and capital and formed the basis of social democracies. Deregulation and austerity measures, the economic remedies of a post-Keynesian ‘welfare’ state now prescribed by parties on both sides of the political spectrum, render the lives of ordinary citizens increasingly precarious, unstable, and competitive. As a result, citizens find themselves less and less represented by established political parties. With a diminishing stake in liberal democracy, citizens find themselves more and more prepared to forgo human rights as well as democratic, and pluralist ideals in favour of ideological alternatives that promise easy solutions (Lanzone & Woods, 2015; McSwiney & Cottie, 2017).

Other commentators highlight the perceived threat to culture and tradition pointing at the rise of xenophobia in ethnically relatively homogenous communities faced by the arrival of immigrants and refugees groups dislodged by globalisation. As some have pointed out, this culturally defensive populism can take ultra-nationalist forms that radically re-shape ‘civil society’ turning it into a ‘surveillance’ society that monitors population groups that are earmarked to be ‘different’ for breaches of cultural norms (Fazzi, 2015). With people’s ‘Way of life’ under threat and social minorities become the target for scrupulous politicians who channel anger and frustration at the status quo (Altman, 2017) and who build their political platforms around the destruction of the idea of a state turning universal entitlements into privileges of increasingly restrictive citizenship (Standing, 2011).

Another relatively novel line of exploration focuses on the impact of new forms of communications and particularly social media (Dars, 2017; Dittmar, 2017; Speed & Mannion, 2017). This embryonic body of work posits that rhizomic, non-hierarchical forms of knowledge (Guattari, 1972) attached to social media can be manipulated so that they re-shape existing post truth facts, affix themselves to hierarchical machineries of ‘knowledge’ production whose structures are often barely visible to social media consumers. Further, social networks are more readily around anti-establishment issues and can be more easily identified, accessed, and mobilised by political entrepreneurs (Dittmar, 2017). In the absence of editorial policies and a lack of fact checking, social media content tends to be more readily aligned with networks associated with populist causes than with centrist ideologies (Hendrickson & Galston, 2017; Page & Dittmer, 2016).

Nationalist Populism and Social Work
The nexus between nationalist populism and social work has been poorly explored. Indeed, few researchers have systematically researched on the impact of new forms of communications and particularly social media (Das, 2017; Dittrich, 2017; Fazzi, 2015). The rise of populist nationalism seems to indicate that it is time to, in Dewey’s sense, re-shape political institutions and re-define citizenship to make them more representative. It may well be that mechanisms that allow for more direct access to the political system, such as DemocracyOS, a grassroots approach based on an App allowing its users to deliberate and vote on political issues, and its associated Net Party in Buenos Aires will form part of a re-invented State. It is also possible that political parties will have to be reformed to allow for grassroots participation that extends beyond canvassing and donations. While changes at the systemic level will be crucial to counter the rise of nationalist populism, social workers need to think about strategies at the mezzo and micro level of professional practice. Fazzi’s account (2015) highlights the role of social workers as moral and political agents making the point that social work education should include solid grounding in professional ethics as well as preparation in dealing with populist doctrines which would include pedagogical emphasis on community development and activism. Clearly, grounding social work practice in human rights (Gray & Webb, 2013) and anti-oppressive theory (Dominelli, 2002) and directing it towards activism (Noble, 2007) is crucial for novice social workers who find themselves within a context that challenges the core values of an inclusive society. Beyond a pedagogical approach, however, those who work on the ‘frontline’ of political activism may be supported by a network of like-minded, experienced social workers. The rise of national populism signals that now is the time to forge such networks and create linkages with civil society.
The Challenge of Right-Wing Populism for Social Work

Introduction

In recent years, we have seen the rise of right-wing populism across Europe and more recently in the United States following the election of Donald Trump on November 8, 2016. A decade after the 2008 financial crisis, the reality has shown that the economic and financial failure across Western industrialized societies have paved the way to political populism, militarization, surveillance and social control by law enforcement as a consequence of the failure of the current social order.

This article explores the dynamics behind political populism, in particular right-wing populism and its links to bigotry, hate, racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. It defines the values and commitments of social work and encourages social workers to speak up and denounce all kinds of violations and to uphold the dignity of people, social justice and human rights.

Under right-wing populism, the challenges have been rising to social work. The world is changing and the nature of social work must also change. The system is broken and those at the margins are calling for social work advocacy and activism, of their behalf. The patriarchal neoliberal ideology and its capitalist wave, the politics of austerity, the violation of human rights, gender-based violence against women and towards the LGBTQ community, the recent rise of bigotry, hate, xenophobia and racism fueled by right-wing political populism across different Western nations, the backlash against refugees and migrants moving across international borders who are fleeing from conflict and persecution or other life-threatening situations, and the violations of Indigenous rights and natural sources pose a tremendous challenge for social work (Duarte, 2017).

21st Century: The Revival of Right-Wing Populism

The post-cold war period based on the principles of multiculturalism, immigration, universalism, human rights, peace and prosperity has come to an end. Since the 9/11 events, the declaration of war on “Islamic” terrorism has given rise to a series of events of ethnic-religious violence. The hostility towards Muslims and the increase of social control measures have imposed a “surveillance society” and sentiments of insecurity and public fear led to the demise of the principles of democracy and human rights (Fazzi, 2015).

Following the cuts in the welfare state and the unprecedented rise of unemployment which occurred since the 2008 financial crisis, but also as a result of the refugee crisis imposed by the Syrian conflict, mainstream society across Western countries, particularly in Europe and the United States, started labelling Muslims, migrants and refugees as dangerous and undeserving.

The populist messages have been fuelled by politicians and conservative right-wing ideology, intended to legitimise the idea of superiority based on a certain ethnic and cultural origin, and characterised by a rhetoric of discrimination, bigotry, hate, racism and xenophobia which violates the principles of human rights and social justice.

Populism can be defined as a political style that pits people against the status quo (Judis, 2016a). The 21st century political populism has its roots in the 19th and 20th centuries. Throughout the history, political populism has always had a surge in the wake of economic recessions. Certainly, it cannot be defined exclusively in terms of right, left or centre. It includes both. Undoubtedly, there are right-wing, left-wing and centrist populist parties. Thus, in general, populism can be defined as a political logic – a way of thinking about politics. For the American historian Michael Kazin, populism is a kind of language used by politicians to speak with ordinary people, as if these people were a noble assemblage, not bounded narrowly by class. So, in the 21st century, what distinguishes left-wing populists such as Bernie Sanders (United States), Jeremy Corbyn (United Kingdom), Alexis Tsipras (Greece), Jean-Luc Melenchon (France) and Pablo Iglesias (Spain) from right-wing populists such as Donald Trump (United States), Marine Le Pen (France) and Nigel Farage (United Kingdom) among others in Eastern Europe?

The left-wing populists champion the people against the elite or establishment that hold or impose a system of oppression. Normally they tend to advocate for people’s rights, and raise the critical consciousness of society against the status quo. The right-wing populists champion the people against the elite or establishment by accusing them of favouring a third group such as immigrants (in general), Muslims, Jews, refugees or simply people of African origin or from other ethnic minorities. Right-wing populists also tend to accuse and discriminate other minority groups such as those who represent the LGBTQ people (Judis, 2016a; 2016b).

My aim here is to talk about right-wing populism as it is the one that poses challenges for social work and undermines the values of human rights and social justice. Right-wing populism has been a warning sign of a political and economic crisis. It aims to divide, not unify. It defends and expresses a set of moral values by assuming they serve all people. Therefore, the climate of intolerance across different Western countries has been exacerbated by right-wing political populism, such as the one put forth by Donald Trump in the United States or Marine Le Pen in France.

The Social Work Response

The foundational values of human rights and social justice have always been the core ideals and “right principles” of social work. Social workers are committed to promote human rights, social justice and address the root causes of poverty, oppression and inequalities. The “Global Agenda” launched in 2012 by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) has reinforced this commitment (IFSW, IASSW & ICSW, 2012).

The global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014) approved by the IFSW General Meeting and by the IASSW General Assembly in July 2014 which occurred in Melbourne, Australia, defines social work as a “practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing” (IFSW, 2014).
in collaboration with other allies, can be a vital force in advancing human rights and peace: The challenge for social work activists which can be employed at moments of right-wing populism: (1) exploitation of the margins of discretion of the public actors and parties.

Therefore, as social workers are positioned inside complex and refractory social relations, they must variously speak up at political and public arenas against discrimination, bigotry, racism, xenophobia, hate and Islamophobia in accordance with human rights principles and their own social work values and commitments (Duarte, 2017).

Fazzi (2015, p. 603) identifies four strategies of active resistance used by social work activists which can be employed at moments of right-wing populism: (1) exploitation of the margins of discretion of the public professionals who have the task of putting decisions taken at a political level into practice and work directly with those groups of people; (2) increase trade union political commitment; (3) build alliances within the third sector and civil society; and (4) establish dialogue with political actors and parties.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in the United States has also recently published a community resource called “Ten Ways to Fight Hate” (SPLC, 2017). Following the strategies proposed in Fazzi’s study, this guide can also be used by social workers to uphold human rights and social justice, promote tolerance and inclusion. The 10 principles are: act; join forces; support the victims of those vulnerable; speak up; educate yourself; create an alternative; pressure leaders; stay engaged; teach acceptance and dig deeper.

These strategies and principles can attract a wider support in order to overturn peoples’ consciousness and right-wing populism. Social workers, in collaboration with other allies, can be a vital force in advancing human rights and a social justice agenda (Lundy & van Wormer, 2007).

References


Lundy (2011, p. 52) reminds us that “social workers such as Jane Addams, Bertha Reynolds, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Mary van Kleek were leaders in the early human rights movements”, and in the political and social work activism (Duarte, 2017).

In the 21st century, social workers are the biggest organized social movement in the world concerned with the principles of social justice, human rights and self-determination. Undoubtedly, social workers play a crucial role in inspiring others and can also force issues on the political agenda, turning the impossible into the inevitable. Social work is rooted in community organisation and social activism.

Therefore, as social workers are positioned inside complex and refractory social relations, they must variously speak up at political and public arenas against discrimination, bigotry, racism, xenophobia, hate and Islamophobia in accordance with human rights principles and their own social work values and commitments (Duarte, 2017).
humility’, which is nothing like the anger and deception that is central to contemporary right-wing sham populism.

Community development theory and practice can offer an alternative vision of popular education and development, inclusive of structural analysis, making sense of complexity, and offering concrete hope in the form of action (not just rage). Possibly, the problem is that as community development theorists and practitioners we’ve offered little. Co-opted by a social planning and social service approach to community development, or conservative or reformist traditions at best, we have not been at the table with those who feel disenfranchised and are easily manipulated.

To be at the table – a radical community development agenda

First, clarity about the important site of ‘community’ as a place of struggle. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida argues that ‘community’ is a significant site of struggle – there are people who want sharper boundaries, excluding ‘the other’, and those for hospitality. So, one of the elements of radical community development, is that workers get into the local trenches and get involved in the struggle for hospitality, and against those who exclude others.

Second, there is a crucial role for community-based education and learning. When I was 19 years old I went to the Philippines and lived in a shanty town. I reflected on the question, ‘Can there be a just revolution? (an assignment for university then) and during my inquiry I learned of the 20 years’ work of the Catholic/ Base Christian Community movement, which invested in mass community-based popular education work, preparing the people for the revolution against Marcos. That was when I saw the power of non-formal, community-based education (Westoby & Shevellar, 2012).

Later, as a lover of cooperatives, I studied the Mondragon federation in the Basque country, Spain. The Mondragon co-operative movement has been an inspiration to co-operators around the world, with 85,000 member-workers in 120 cooperatives currently (Ranis, 2016). The unseen work is the time invested by Catholic Priest Father Arizmendi. He started community work in the region in 1941, yet only established the first co-operative in 1956. The in-between years were spent initiating community ventures, crucially facilitating more than two thousand study circles. It was in the context of such study circles that the Basques learnt how to [re]create themselves as associational people. Radical community development workers need to do popular education – creating space and places for people to learn.

Third, building a counter-veiling organisational force. Popular education is not just about learning, it’s about collective organising. Organising is crucial as a means of building a counter-veiling force in the ‘paradigmatic politics of community’.

I recently read the story of Nowra, just south of Sydney, in the Griffith Review (Adcock, 2017). Many people who’d lost their homes moved into the town showgrounds where they could camp for free and access toilets, showers, even power. Eventually locals organised to have them removed. In the Griffith Review account, there was a vocal council meeting where angry ‘anti-homeless’ people forced the Mayor to act on their behalf. There was no organised counter-veiling force. No-one had done this work. All the ‘local service providers-community development workers’ had been co-opted into service-delivery work. Radical community development needs to shift from service delivery to building organised counter veiling forces to fight for minority interests.

Such organising also needs to be linked to trans-local work. In Queensland, we call this meta-level work – forming networks, federations, and coalitions to ensure local issues are also articulated into concrete hope in the form of action (not just rage). Possibly, the problem is that as community development practitioners we’ve offered little. Co-opted by a social planning and social service approach to community development, or conservative or reformist traditions at best, we have not been at the table with those who feel disenfranchised and are easily manipulated.

In conclusion

Community is still a profound site of struggle. It is where much embodied violence and exclusion occurs. We need to be clear that populist right-wing sham nativism is destructive, but that populism isn’t all bad. Popular education initiatives have the potential to revive the radical education tradition in community development.

We also need to build an organising program as a counter-veiling force against those who love hate, and are willing to use violence, who opt for simple lies, and who don’t want to engage complexity.

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This article was first published by the RSW Collective (2017, 21 September) http://www.reimaginingsocialwork. nz/2017/09/a-community-development-response-to-sham-right-wing-populism/

The white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia over this last weekend is an important moment in American politics, symbolizing the ascendancy of the reactionary right and the collapse of “The Left”.

Anthony DiMaggio
Lehigh University

Fascism Here We Come: the Rise of the Reactionary Right and the Collapse of “The Left”

The white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia over this last weekend is an important moment in American politics, symbolizing the ascendancy of the reactionary right and the collapse of “The Left.”

The rush to judgement: stigmatising the homeless in Nowra, as the “discontents” of the reactionary right, symbolizes the ascendancy of the reactionary right and the collapse of “The Left.”

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This article was first published by the RSW Collective (2017, 21 September) http://www.reimaginingsocialwork.nz/2017/09/a-community-development-response-to-sham-right-wing-populism/
First, the incident reveals that right-wing fascisms has officially “arrived” on the American political scene, as seen in Trump’s refusal to condemn the murders. Trump knows he can’t afford to alienate racist elements on the right to get re-elected, and he doesn’t want to alienate them, since he himself is a racist and a bigot. Hence the refusal to use clear language to condemn the murders. His political reasoning here is completely transparent, as he’s spent his entire political career cultivating hate on the reactionary right. Although Trump eventually condemned the attack after receiving a large amount of negative press, his reversal is part of a broader trend Trump is known for, in which he initially signals to racists in his support base that he approves of their actions, thereby devaluing any later reversal as merely the product of political pressure, rather than principled opposition. The damage, of course, has already been done. Far-right fascists and racists know that the president supports their behavior when he goes out of his way to provide them cover. The second lesson from this tragedy relates to the futility of claims that Trump and his far-right supporters are the sort of people with which “the left” should be working. First, there’s the claim among numerous “left” pundits that Trump’s campaign represented the rise of working class populism, the implication being that Trump himself was a working class hero set on restoring America’s past economic greatness. Other nonsense abounded about Trump as a sort of anti-imperialist, but that rhetoric is contradicted by his administration’s beligerent rhetoric and nuclear threats toward North Korea, his militarism in Syria, and his embrace of increased sanctions against Russia. The rhetoric about Trump the economic populist is contradicted by his record since taking office of increasing corporate taxation, doubling the deficit, in which he initially signals to racists in his support base that he approves of their actions, thereby devaluing any later reversal as merely the product of political pressure, rather than principled opposition. The damage, of course, has already been done. Far-right fascists and racists know that the president supports their behavior when he goes out of his way to provide them cover. Three recent surveys raise alarm bells on the Trump-red alliance agenda by claiming that the far-right and the reactionary elements of Trump’s base, individuals who claim to support the left betray the long history of resistance to bigotry, prejudice, and oppression that has historically defined progressive social movements. Any sane person should want to have nothing to do with right-wing bigots or fascists, although this point has been obscured in talk of a “Brown-Red” alliance. Now some Green Party personalities and some of their “public intellectuals” supporters who are nominally on the left seek to make common cause with openly white nationalist reactionaries. This development demonstrates a serious intellectual decline in what counts for “the left.” By downplaying the severity of the racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic tendencies of the far-right and the reactionary elements of Trump’s base, individuals who claim to support the left betray the long history of resistance to bigotry, prejudice, and oppression that has historically defined progressive social movements. Any sane person should want to have nothing to do with right-wing bigots or fascists, although this point has been obscured in talk of a “Brown-Red” alliance. The decision by Cobb and McKinney to ally with fascists is a serious betrayal of progressive values. It harms the credibility of anyone on the left who still claims the mantle of the democratic, anti-racist politics. The Green’s alliance will not be forgotten by people of color, immigrant rights groups, and those opposing America’s Islamophobic turn. One can’t realistically “work with” right-wing nationalists one minute, then claim common cause with openly white nationalist reactionaries. This development demonstrates a serious intellectual decline in what counts for “the left.” By downplaying the severity of the racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic tendencies of the far-right and the reactionary elements of Trump’s base, individuals who claim to support the left betray the long history of resistance to bigotry, prejudice, and oppression that has historically defined progressive social movements. Any sane person should want to have nothing to do with right-wing bigots or fascists, although this point has been obscured in talk of a “Brown-Red” alliance.
neoliberal era. As public educational institutions have been dismantled and privatized, professors have been pressured and bullied by administrators and state officials to abandon advocacy work. And with the decline of American labor unions, productive venues for progressive activism have also begun to dry up.

Conspiratorial and extremist personalities have stepped forward to fill the left vacuum. “Left” thinkers embrace authoritarian false prophets such as Assad in Syria and Putin in Russia, and portray these faux revolutionaries as on the vanguard of “anti-imperialism” despite their repressive domestic human rights records because they are against American militarism. Others on the left fall into conspiracism, embracing 9/11/11 trutherism, and various “deep state” conspiracies such as claims that a secret intelligence apparatus was responsible for the JFK assassination and for framing Nixon for Watergate. Never mind that there is a federal recording (made by Nixon himself) in which the former president openly speaks about paying off the Watergate burglars with hush money; we wouldn’t want to let evidence get in the way of a good conspiracy.

With the rise of “Brown-Red” alliance propaganda, some “leftists” have thrown their lot in with truly despicable individuals. For example, McKinney and Cobb have recently sought to make common cause with noted Alex Jones groupies such as Mike Cernovich and Robert Steele, both with deeply troubled histories of embracing white nationalism. Cernovich shamelessly embraces the rhetoric of “alt-right” sexists, referring to men he deems insufficiently masculine as “cucks,” while embracing conspiracy theories such as Pizzagate, and advocating IQ testing for immigrants. He has claimed that date rape is not real, and has encouraged men to “slut shame” black women to avoid AIDS. Steele is a David Duke sympatheque who publishes commentary along with Duke about the dangers of the “Zionist deep state,” as tied to conspiracies about how Jews control American politics, media, and banking institutions. Steele gained infamy after an appearance on Alex Jones’ Info Wars claiming that NASA was running a child slavery ring on Mars. And Steele explicitly compares Jews to animals, although I will not do him or Duke the favor of linking to any of his repulsive commentaries. Echoing Steele’s anti-semitism, McKinney also has a long, sordid history of collaborating with blatant anti-semites, despite the presence of many anti-Zionist activists and intellectuals throughout the U.S. and the world who reject anti-semitism.

I’ve recently heard from numerous self-described leftists who defend the supporters of the “Brown-Red” alliance agenda, but the moral bankruptcy of these apologists’ claims have been stripped bare considering the wretched politics of individuals like Steele and Cernovich. Steele has reached out to me in the past, seeking to recruit me in his battle against “the deep state.” It was immediately clear that there was something very wrong with this man, which was apparent when he started spouting “deep state” conspiracies about Watergate, 9/11, and JFK. Not yet knowing about his anti-semitism, I politely told him I had no interest in anything he was selling. That Green Party leaders could be supportive of such a figure speaks poorly of their judgment. Marginalized from access to mainstream political, economic, or media institutions, some claiming to speak for “the left” have concluded that the path forward is in allying with fascist forces on the right. This act of desperation reveals the utter failure of the Green Party to make serious inroads with the public or in gaining power. But this Hail Mary is destined to fail. No progressive social movement is ever going to be built by propping up reactionary bigots and conspiracy theorists, who have zero interest in the fight against economic inequality, racism, and capitalism more broadly. Progressively minded people would be far better served opposing the relatively small number of Americans who openly advocate reactionary white nationalism, and instead focusing on millions of people of color, in addition to working with working class and poor Americans who are all increasingly left behind in an era of growing corporate, plutocratic power over politics. There is still time to return receptability to the progressive community in America, but this can’t happen so long as fascist enablers speak for the left.

Possible topic
The following topics are merely a guide:

- Health inequalities and social policy i.e. human rights, personalisation and consumer choice, organisational contexts, health care costs and funding
- Specialist fields of practice i.e. hospital social work, rehabilitation and ambulatory care, mental health, child and family health, youth health, palliative care, trauma work, community and public health care, aged and dementia care, migrant and refugee health
- Ethics and values in health care, cultural tensions and controversies
- New practices and use of technologies in health and home care, interdisciplinary teamwork and decision-making and health and social management
- Educating and supporting health care practitioners and emerging theories in health care

Instructions
Manuscripts are to be submitted as academic articles in the range between 5,000 – 10,000 words (including its title, biography, abstracts, key words, the main body, list of sources, explanatory notes). See the website for further details on the format (http://socialniprace.cz/eng/index.php) and instructions for authors (http://socialniprace.cz/eng/index.php?section=15). All submissions must include discussion of implications for social work practice, education, research, theory or ethics at the individual, community or policy level. We encourage prospective authors to contact the Guest Editor, Janet Anand, Professor in International Social Work, University of Eastern Finland at janet.anand@uef.fi

We are also looking for book reviews and research notes. Book review is the standard literary genre. So please observe all review requirements. In the end of review could be answer to the question – “In what way does the book contribute to social work, respectively to social workers and workers in practice, education or research?” Scope of review is set at 1,000 – 2,000 words. Reviews must contain the bibliographic data on the book (e.g. Daniel et al.: Vodáčková, Crisis intervention, Portal, Prague, 2002) and the name of the review author along with the contact. Please connect also copy of title page of the reviewed book.

Research Note is short text (1,000 – 1,500 words) about research activities on your faculty or department, about interesting dissertation thesis, project etc.

Submission Deadline
The deadline for submissions for this special edition is March 10th, 2018. Two copies of the manuscript should be submitted to the editor’s office, sent via e-mail to the administrator of the academic papers who will also provide additional information upon request. barbora.grudelova@osu.cz. One copy should be free of any information which would lead to the identification of the author/s. The other copy should be a complete version of the article.
Call for Abstracts

Building Networks and Frameworks for Global Social Work
Annual Symposium

September 16-18, 2018
Valuing Diversity in Global Social Work: Practice with People on the Move

Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kochi, Kerala, India

Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, University of Eastern Finland, University of Utah, and Hochschule Landshut invite abstracts for the 3rd international symposium on Valuing Diversity in Global Social Work: Practice with People on the Move. The symposium is one of a series of themed scholarly gatherings building on an emerging network of European, United Kingdom, Australian, Asian, African and USA academics. The challenge of diversity and people on the move is one of a number of emerging global issues, including population movement across borders, civil conflict and violence, populism, ageing demographics, environmental sustainability, which are placing new demands on the relevance of social work. The symposium is specifically targeted at social work practitioners, students and academics committed sustainable change. The symposium offers a balanced academic and social program so as to encourage opportunities for building networks. The venue for the symposium is Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (RCSS), located in the beautiful city of Kochi, Kerala India.

The themes for this symposium include

• Human rights and advocacy
• Emancipatory practices, strength based, reflection, critical
• Social work in response to populism
• Border crossings and people on the move
• Migration, integration and diversity studies
• Cultural studies and social work
• Transnational social work
• Internationalizing the curriculum
• Examples of international research collaboration

Guide for submitting abstracts and publishing an abstract:
The deadline to submit abstracts is 30 June, 2018. Abstracts should be 1000 words in length (Arial front size 10, 1.5 spacing). To submit your abstract, please attach your abstract as a PDF document (email title: SYMPOSIUM- YOUR SURNAME-ABSTRACT- TITLE) to rcsssymposium@gmail.com . This symposium is designed to be a catalyst for publishing research, theories, models and examples of best practice for the promotion of global social work. Abstracts should provide an opportunity to explore new lines of critical thinking, practice, and related global social work. Various disciplinary lenses will be considered, however social work provide the framework for the symposium. See the Sage publishing recommendations for authors: http://studysites.uk.sagepub.com/repository/binaries/pdf/SAGE_UK_style_guide_short.pdf.

Important Dates

• Deadline for abstract submission 8th May, 2018
• Symposium Registration opens 21st April, 2018
• Notification of acceptance 23rd June, 2018
• Symposium 16-18 September, 2018

For all general enquiries, please contact: anish@rajagiri.edu
language would better suit a practice research conference. Changing the language might be one way of signalling the improving partnership between practice and research.

These discussions crystallized a growing discussion in the steering committee about how to ensure greater continuity between conferences, and greater participation in setting the agenda for the 2020 conference in Melbourne, Australia. The steering committee was discussing mechanisms (special interest groups, online exchanges) to improve dialogue, at the same time as new participants became interested in coordinating and leadership roles.

This spirit of improved dialogue was also evident a new framework for the final summary session. Instead of a member of the steering committee identifying key themes, we convened a group of participants and asked them to take the floor during the final plenary and give their thoughts on what should be addressed. This is of course imperfect, as we had no mechanisms to ‘elect’ people to this role and could only rely on steering group members to identify people who might be willing to join a workshop just before the plenary to define issues from their perspective. Whatever its democratic shortcomings, it is nevertheless a first step to hearing a greater range of voices.

The authors of this article formed a group to address the final plenary. We were fortunate to have the participation of Florence Ka-yu Wu who offered skilled translation to ensure that people could use in their first language. The following section is an account by members of this group of the issues they brought to the closing plenary.

In the summary session of the fourth ICPR, Mike Fisher coordinated a group of participants, including the practitioners and researchers, to discuss the recommendations for the next conference. In the third International Conference of Practice Research (ICPR), the theme “Building bridges not pipelines: Promoting two-way traffic between practice and research” has already stipulated the importance of engaging the true collaboration between the academic researchers and frontline practitioner (Sim, 2016). This has laid the foundation for the Fourth ICPR to focus on “recognizing diversity, developing collaborations, building networks” of social work practitioners, practitioner-researcher, researchers, and service users. This discussion group confirmed the rationale of the fourth ICPR to build network and echoes with the theme of the Conference emphasizing diversity and collaborations.

The plenary session offered an excellent opportunity for exchanging ideas among stakeholders of the practice research as well. The group recognized the diligent work of the conference organizers to (1) have invited renowned scholars in the field of Practice Research to gain knowledge from the speakers and those insightful exchanges have stimulated the practitioners to pursue practice research further; (2) have included international participants to have like-minded people joining for sharing knowledge and skills; (3) have initiated different modes of engagement, such as workshops, plenaries and poster presentations, to enrich the conference participants’ understanding of practice research.

Apart from the positive aspects of the Conference, the discussion group also highlighted several challenges in conducting practice research as listed below.

(1) “Practicizing” the language

The change to a more direct practice language has undoubtedly improved the partnership between the researchers and practitioners. The meaning of “practice language” goes beyond the bridging between the academics and practitioners. With a broader international audience being engaged in the Conference, culturally and linguistically diverse needs should be attended to. Limited proficiency in English might have discouraged participants from sharing their ideas. Using their first language enables the participants to voice their views and opinions in discussions. All voices are ensured to be heard in different sessions if simultaneous interpretation and translation service is provided.

(2) Increasing practitioners’ capacity to conduct practice research

Members of the group, mostly composed of practitioners, have exerted much effort in implementing daily programmatic arrangements and administration at their workplace. Less energy has been put forth in conducting practice research even if the practitioners are able and willing. More guidance on how to conduct empirical practice research is expected. Members were concerned about the access, accuracy, reliability and funding resources for data collection as well as the possibility of publishing their results. Support from academics and publishers will help forge the practitioners’ engagement in research.

(3) Understanding the uniqueness of each driver of the research studies

Different stakeholders (people who use services; policy makers; government; funders; practitioners; academics) have different purposes in conducting practice research. The different and sometimes conflicting objectives of different stakeholders made it harder for researchers or practitioners to conduct research targeted at specific issue and providing concrete solutions. Members of the group are not asking for the consensus of research topics amongst the stakeholders. Instead, understanding the uniqueness of each stakeholder helps solicit outcomes that best cater for the needs of each party.

(4) Enhancing practitioners’ coordinating and leadership roles

The open dialogue between the academic researchers and practitioners has fostered the true practice-research collaboration. Practitioners are encouraged to coordinate or lead some interest groups to focus on practice-oriented questions and research question formulation. The increasing involvement of practitioners in leading roles empowers practitioners’ efficacy in continuing practice research in their workplace.

The Hong Kong Practice Research Conference started the process of improving the relationship between practice and research in the conference organization. We hope that Lynette Joubert and her colleagues planning the Melbourne Conference in 2020 will be able to build on these ideas.

Reference


Teaching cross cultural practices to social work students: A reflective journey

**Introduction**

This paper is drawn from my teaching experience and contributions to curriculum development within in Australian Universities. More recently a teaching team of three Lecturers began writing a new unit of social work study called SWTP217: Social work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, (CALD) for the accredited BSW programme at the Australian Catholic University. The core questions that we pondered were: How do we engage students in reflexive practice with diverse communities? This paper is based on my understanding of the collective learning that shaped teaching and planning of assessments and my teaching practice in this unit. Specific to SWTP 217 Unit, the intended learning outcomes, (ILOs), that students ought to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the Australian migration history, related social policy with an emphasis on how those policies impact on the experiences of a range of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker populations and how these communities fare. The second crucial objective is to have class room based opportunities to develop competencies in cross cultural practice and service delivery.

**Susan Alder’s approach of narrative inquiry (2011)**

Susan Alder, expects that the students undertake a personal review of their beliefs and biases; reflect over and duly consider how they may have already impacted on their knowledge of diversity (2011, p 620). However I raise a deeper question such as, how has this knowledge of the world distorted/influenced our perceptions of another individual’s reality or the truth. It is their truth as they perceive it. As a teacher my own epistemology strongly deploys such reflectivity. My narratives assist the students to grow intellectually and organically. This process is similar to Gramscian counter hegemony which suggests development of a transformation power from within (Pulla, 2017). In Gramscian terms, a thinking individual contributes to action. I see the role and purpose of social work teaching in preparing such ‘organic intellectuals’ that could work towards a fundamental transformation of society (Gramsci, 1987: 161-323, Pulla, 2016a, Pulla, 2016b, and Pulla, 2017).

Utilising auto ethnographic accounts and research findings based on grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2014, Pulla, 2016a) further assist me in helping students to delineate and deconstruct their own professional and personal experiences. Additionally it allows me to generalise and resonate with the lives of my audience and the lives of others that they know (Ellis 2004:194-195; Townsend, and Pulla, 2015). Through such constructivist agenda devoid of pre-conceived notions, opportunities are created for the learners to construct their own cognitive maps unique to their experience and their needs (Neuman and Blundo, 2000).

I consider self-awareness, critical reflexivity, and analytical thinking as being integral to social work teaching and practice (Urdang, 2010). Similarly I believed that reflexivity, positionality, privilege, situated knowledge and perceptions are intrinsically woven into the profession affording a self-reflective process. In my approach, I trans context day to day living of migrants and refugees; utilising their culturally diverse narratives and their ‘lived in’ experience of seeing discrimination and inequities occur to them. The questions raised also will allow the students to understand how these new migrants perceive the social construct of privilege. On a personal reflection teaching SWTP 217, has been a great privilege in ACU. As an immigrant academic, the task of teaching this unit provided me an opportunity to reflect upon and relevantly share my narrative of living in Australia. I begin with a statement that some of us bear multiple social identities; live in two cultures—I talk to my own migration, cultural and adaptation experience (Berry, 1997) as I take great pride of being an Australian just as I am equally proud of my land of birth, India. One’s own experiential learning is defined by Houle as ‘education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life’ (Houle, 1980, p 221). Thus teaching this allowed me to pass on such experiential learning (Kolbe (1984) of my direct participation in Australian society.

**A reflective Journey**

At the outset, I found Susan Alder’s approach (2011) of conducting a narrative inquiry into diversity, to be useful. The following diagram is my adaptation for this article.
Profile of My students

My second year BSW students are still in their formative years with limited exposure to social work issues. Their exposure to social issues is varied and has limited understanding of what happens in social work. Many of them come from schools where career guidance or aptitude matching has occurred prior to their entry into the tertiary portals. By the same token they have not had an opportunity to see much social work in action. Within this cohort we also have a very small number of mature age students that bring with them their narratives of real life, pre-existing skills from employment and additional caring responsibilities such as caring for a person with disability or caring for a member of their household with mental illness or caring for siblings that are frail aged that are closer to social work profession (Fraser and Baker, 2014). Some of my students are academically committed and many others are keen to finish the degree in order to obtain a ‘decent job’ (Biggs and Tang’s (2011)). My own reflection is that there are a substantial number of students in the middle order, that respond to a higher level of motivation for them to think? Once we are clear on the students’ perspectives, sometimes pretty challenging for us. Three questions are important in this context. How do we retain the motivation of the students? How do we offer them a new set of information and ideas? And finally how do we create an opportunity for them to think? Once we are clear on how to structure our answers to the above questions, we are already on the right track. On a reflection I understand that values accrue to a task for a variety of reasons: extrinsic, where the consequences bring something that we desire and want (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p55).

Assessment Tasks

I will now briefly address the assessment tasks that were set for this unit with sequenced learning. ‘Sequencing’ learning is very important (Nulty, 2011) and likewise it is also important to make students to get a grasp of the concept. The idea is to let them apply their understanding in tutorial settings and become culturally responsive and confident to utilise them in real life situations when they are in practice settings. The first task that I set is a reflective piece. It begins with the student’s personal reflection. Written as a personal narrative the students introduce themselves and focus on their cultural identity and reflect on how their cultural identity informs their professional identity and their practice as a social worker. The second part of the assignment of 800 words expects the student to choose an ethnic group from a pre-selected list that is provided to the student. The student has an opportunity to display their analytical and research skills in generating a culturally different from their own. The second assignment relates to the concepts of racism and the possibility of social work intervention. This reflective assignment challenges them and expects the students to reflect on practical strategies that will attack prejudices in our society. Three questions are important in this context. How do we retain the motivation of our students? How do we offer them a new set of information and ideas? And finally how do we create an opportunity for them to think? Once we are clear on how to structure our answers to the above questions, we are already on the right track. On a reflection I understand that values accrue to a task for a variety of reasons: extrinsic, where the consequences bring something that we desire and want (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p55).

As a teacher I have made use of this value to bring about positive results and these results are:

• Improved reading habits
• Better quality discussions in tutorials
• Nearly 100 percent attendance in tutorials

To recap the aim of this unit is to build cultural responsiveness to bring awareness to my students about the amazing connections between this unit and the core values central to social work that are of dignity of humanity and global solidarity. We are living in a postmodern world full of subjectivity and crass materialism. All students may not have a well-grounded understanding of racism to the good work of Cartas or EZE or BFW or ICCD and other non-governmental agencies that carry on their silent activities throughout the world in strife stricken areas such as in Syria or elsewhere. Similarly many students may not know that refugees coming by boats actually succumbed to the deep seas and lost their lives before some survivors hitting the Australian shore. Nor many of them know that the Australian federal government has renamed its ‘department of multicultural affairs’ as the department of ‘the border’ or ‘border security’. Thus when we discuss such issues we don’t merely pass information, we briefly critique emerging policies but take their impacts seriously. I consider such teaching to be central to critical theory (Leonardo, 2004) and aligned constructivism (Biggs, 1996). Such an approach not only enhances teaching through constructive alignment but provides us a teaching responsibly to constantly remind the students about the common good, including help for the poor and oppressed, and our shared and intertwined common futures.

Findings

One major finding for me as a mentor / teacher is to provide enough opportunity for reflection for the student. In my teaching I realised that strengths perspective advantages social work teaching as it sits closer to the resilience paradigm that is present in the work of Cartas (2008). Similarly teaching the narratives of the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Similarly teaching about autoethnography. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Fraser, H. and Baker, J.L. (2014). Innovative Teaching in Social Work with Diverse Populations: Critical Reflections from South Australia. International Journal of Innovation Creativity and Change, 1(3).

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When they ask me what I'm doing
at the end of this long campaign
when they ask which causes I'm pursuing
these words are my refrain
I will say:

I am building a wall

I am building a wall
when they ask me what I'm doing
at the end of this long campaign
when they ask which causes I'm pursuing
these words are my refrain
I will say:

I am building a wall
I am building a wall
I am willing a bald spot out of existence
there is no resistance
I am billing you for that call
I am welding you to the toilet stall
I am building my way back to a world
before orange is the new black
I am whitewashing your yellowface
I am waltzing with her majesty her grace
I am building a wall disney world
version of wall-e, the secret walter
mitty my male fantasy, I am bill clintoning
a lewinsky, I am beaming my stupidity
into your feed whether you need it or not

I'm going to cut down the wood
I'm gonna spray paint it white
and I'm gonna use it to build a wall
over both roads
and that's gonna make all the difference

something there is that doesn't love a wall
well fuck you robert frost I'm building it
you lost I'm killing it
so you can be that little dutch boy who sticks his finger
in the hole in the wall
which is a dam or a dyke
we don't give either of those
america chose!

Joshua Ip

Joshua Ip is the founder of Sing Lit Station (SLS), a literary charity that brings readers and writers closer together. SLS organises the 5,000 strong Singapore Poetry Writing Month (SingPoWriMo) writing group on facebook, runs multiple workshop groups for young writers and the migrant worker community in Singapore, and puts together an annual Manuscript Bootcamp for poetry and prose. SLS does its best to inject the beauty of literature into urban life, through programmes like Singapore Poetry On The Sidewalks - invisible poetry stenciled in waterproof ink that only appears in the rain; and poetry flash mobs on subways and buses. You can find out more at singlitstation.com

(Permission from author to reproduce his poem, also in Griffith Review 57, pp.23-26)
Resources

Griffith Review 57
Perils of populism
Edited Julianne Schultz (2017)

Populism: A very short introduction (very short introduction)
Cas Mudde & Cristobal Kaltwasser (2017)

A question of order: India, Turkey and the Return of the Strongman
Basharal Peer (2017)

GETTING TO ZERO — GLOBAL SOCIAL WORK RESPONDS TO HIV
Edited by Mark Henrickson & David Chipanta (2017)

What is populism?
Jan-Weiner Muller (2016)

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