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Occasional papers
Issue 02 October 2017

International Network on Gender, Social Justice and Praxis

02

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA

centre of **excellence** for **equity** in higher **education**

“This Occasional Paper is produced in the spirit of exchange with a wider community of praxis. By sharing the work produced from the Durban meeting, including papers from the Founding Members outlining their projects, we hope to create a dialogic space of praxis and reflexivity with others working on gender and social justice projects.”

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Introduction to the International Network on Gender, Social Justice and Praxis

Written by
Penny Jane Burke &
Lauren Ila Misiaszek

02

The International Network on Gender, Social Justice and Praxis (The Network) is a cross-trajectory, interdisciplinary, and geographically diverse network. The Network aims to develop research and innovative pedagogical resources on issues of gender and social justice. The Network is focused on promoting more equitable access to higher education and lifelong learning around the world, particularly for women.

The Network brings together leading scholars and practitioners who are prepared to take intellectual risks to respond to the challenges of translating research into practice. The aim is to develop innovative approaches that challenge educational inequalities that exist around the globe, with a particular focus on gender and its intersection with other social differences.

The Network was first established under the Paulo Freire Institute-UK (PFI-UK) in 2013. It was rooted in earlier grassroots discussions between women scholars at the post-doctoral level within the Paulo Freire Institutes beginning in 2010. During the 2012 – 2013 academic year, Professor Penny Jane Burke and Dr Lauren Ila Misiaszek (then UK Fulbright Scholar) worked together at the PFI-UK to determine ways to support trajectory-geographic-disciplinary- diverse work through a network. Following these planning meetings, six leading interdisciplinary social justice scholars globally were identified, invited, and accepted to join as Founding Members. Following their acceptance, partnering (early/ier career researchers) were invited to join The Network as Founding Members and all accepted. The Founding Members worked together to build a structure of co-mentoring and research designed to make a difference (Clegg, Stevenson & Burke, 2016) and came together in June 2015 in a symposium presented at the Gender and Education biennial international conference held in London.

The Founding Members have extensive expertise in social justice research. Their complex scholar-activist trajectories and bodies of work illustrate their ability to take needed intellectual risks to respond to The Network's multi-faceted goals. The partners' accomplishments illustrate their expertise in developing and applying creative pedagogical and methodological practices. In August 2016, the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) hosted a meeting in Durban, South Africa with an Africa Working Group of the Founding Members, to share current work, to develop new research collaborations and to discuss the re-establishment of The Network within CEEHE.

Purpose and Focus of the Network

The Network aims to be a global think-tank that provides scholarly input into an international agenda focused on gender and social justice within education. In doing so The Network will contribute to the development of policies and practices at global, national and local levels. In order to reach this long term goal The Network will spend the next three years focused on strengthening existing connections that Founding Members have with international organisations such UNESCO and UNICEF to develop The Network's reputation for excellence in translating research into practice that makes a difference in regards to gender, social justice and education.

The structure of The Network includes the mentoring of emerging scholars in the field, with internationally recognised leaders. Through this mentoring process, particular emphasis and value is placed on bringing together traditional and emerging knowledges to create state-of-the-art methodologies, pedagogies and practices designed to maximise impact for greater gender equity. The mentoring of emerging researchers through The Network will generate new knowledge, innovative solutions and global impact.

The following activities will facilitate the development of The Network towards its aims:

Global Symposia

Engagement with leading and emergent researchers, practitioners and policy makers on the issue of gender and social justice will be at the centre of a series of symposia to be held around the world over the next three years.

Each symposium will coincide with another high profile meeting in the region in order to maximise impact of The Network in various professional circles. In conjunction with the Global Symposia, The Network will hold network meetings for the purpose of exchanging ideas, constructing instrument design and methodologies, data analysis and dissemination of research findings at regular intervals.

Scholarly publications and conference symposia

Academic publications will be a core activity of The Network to contribute to international scholarship on gender, social justice and praxis in educational contexts. Conference symposia will enable The Network to share and exchange its projects with a broader community of feminist and social justice scholars.

Production of global set of resource packs

The Founding Members are dedicated to developing accessible resources for the wider community to draw on in order to develop pedagogical spaces for social justice and equity work. The Network is committed to developing a global set of resources and materials on The Network's central research questions, to be disseminated through The Network's website as open access resources. The aim of this is to support and encourage the development of strategies and practices for gender equity both within but also beyond higher education.

Ongoing development and reflection

The Network will continuously and explicitly turn the gaze on itself as a structure. The Network recognises the danger of claiming to be an 'international' network with geographic diversity while perpetuating historical privileges of the West and the North (e.g. privileging Western/Northern scholarship; language hegemony). The Founding Members recognise that networks are forms of social capital, deeply embedded in the reproduction of social privileges and advantages, and that power relations must be explicitly reflected upon in our work.
This Occasional Paper is produced in the spirit of exchange with a wider community of praxis. By sharing the work produced from the Durban meeting, including papers from the Founding Members outlining their projects, we hope to create a dialogic space of praxis and reflexivity with others working on gender and social justice projects. The pieces that follow present a real-time 'look' at the ways we are conducting work rooted in feminist and critical (particularly Freirean) praxis; they are intentionally 'working' papers – a snapshot of where we have been, where we are, and where we are headed. The pieces explore such interwoven issues of re/imagining theories, methodologies, pedagogies, and policies.

Drawing on Gyamera and Burke's letter writing as a methodology to explore gender inequalities in higher education, the Founding Members exchanged letters to capture their experiences of the 2016 meeting, their aspirations and hopes for The Network and the issues that they identified as significant. The letters are included in this collection together with a reflective piece on letter writing as a methodology (Ronelle Carolissen, Nonhlanha Mthiyane, and Penny Jane Burke). This reflection explores feminist writing methodologies and praxis, and offers an analysis and engagement with the letters and poems exchanged by the Founding Members following our first in-person meeting in Durban, South Africa in August 2016.

The remaining three papers emerged from the Founding Members' work within The Network. Sondra Hale and Gada Kadoda chronicle their collaboration towards creating social justice spaces in Sudan, including an exploration of the significance of their friendship within the context of knowledge production. Gifty Gyamera with Penny Jane Burke explores the impact of neoliberalism on female academics in universities in Ghana using letter-writing methodology. Lauren Misiaszek considers her ongoing book manuscript on critical and feminist global citizenship education with a specific focus on conceptualising methodologies, ethics, and sensitivities in 'hard spaces'.

We invite you to engage with and make connections between the pieces, as well as with your own work. The collection presents an ongoing challenge for social justice research; how might we draw on research to make a difference in ways that do not oversimplify the complex experiences of inequalities in and across social, cultural and pedagogical contexts and in relation to formations of power and difference.

References

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About the authors

Penny Jane Burke

Global Innovation Chair of Equity and Director of the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

Ronelle Carolissen

Clinical Psychologist and Associate Professor of Community Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch.

Gifty Gyamera

Lecturer in the School of Public Service and Governance at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA).

Sondra Hale

Research Professor and Professor Emerita, Anthropology and Gender Studies Departments, University of California, Los Angeles.

Gada Kadoda

Collaborating Lecturer in Computer Science and Information Technology; founding president, Sudanese Knowledge Society.

Lauren Ila Misiaszek

Associate Professor at the Institute of International and Comparative Education, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University.

Nonhlanha Mthiyane

Lecturer in Teacher Development Studies in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Saajidha Sader

Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Reflections on Durban and the Gender Network **August 2016**

It is now about a month since we have been together in Durban and maybe I needed the distance from then to be able to write about it now. I had no expectations when I travelled to Durban except perhaps to have more clarity about the details of the programme and the details of the way forward with the network once we left Durban. I did not know anybody from the group and certainly had only fleeting contact with some members of the group. What a revelation this week was. The biggest memory that remains is the way all of you made me feel.

I often experience much of my day as an ongoing treadmill of doing tasks and thinking about tasks to be done and worrying about tasks that should have been done that haven't been done by deadlines. Even though I know that you all know what I am talking about, I provide an extract from a book review that I have just submitted on the "Politics of Affect" by Brian Massumi. I write my encounter with the book into the review as follows:

"During this time (of doing the book review), I face multiple distractions from this task by the immediacies and urgencies of everyday life in higher education. A tsunami of tasks, 'exam papers are due', 'finalise adjustments to module frameworks for 3 modules to be taught this semester', 'do changes for article that has been accepted', 'read PhD student's work, she wants to graduate', 'review journal article' and let's not forget the sms messages from home, 'Mom, can you help me with my Afrikaans homework this evening?' On this list I also fit in 6 days that run from 8.30 am to 6 pm because our department is selecting students for two professional programmes for 2017. I have a 'to do list' of about 30 tasks of which I can possibly do only two or three in a day."

I also want to quote from this book: "It is not that there is no freedom

in institutional contexts, but the options for resistance are pre-formatted by the modes of conformity that come to dominate the situation. There is little room for invention. People come to our events out of a sense of necessity, as an issue of survival. Many feel held back or battered down, and can't see how to keep going. They may feel chronically fatigued, or that their creative potential is being drained. Their powers of resistance have been taxed too many times, and they are looking for some way to recharge."

I hadn't anticipated that I would leave the week in Durban, feeling this recharged, valued and reconnected to a group of women marked by such geopolitical, demographic and individual difference, yet deeply connected through our embodiment of feminist values of and for social justice in higher education.

We worked very hard which was not unusual in our contexts. What was different was the amount of fun, connectedness and mutual affirmation we shared without becoming echo chambers only for each other.
I certainly felt comfortable to disagree.

Saaj, you made me see different possibilities again and how the burdens of physical pain that are sometimes unspoken, could be brought into this space. We seldom have time to talk about that but during this week it was possible. You were very much responsible for bringing this group of amazing women together and really making this possible. I also appreciated the fact that you made an effort to include often forgotten but important student voices in the Wednesday colloquium. I am very keen to engage in this larger project on neoliberalism in the academy and look forward to working together. And I loved the quarter bunny chow, from the best place in Durban! Authentic and flavourful.

Lauren, I loved the circle and the dancing! The circle reminded me in the moment of what I would most love to do but don't do as often as I should… sleep as much as I want to. I loved the impromptu dancing and how it engaged 'strangers' in our space. Lovely to see all of us having such fun. I also was reminded more seriously of the inequity of opportunity for freedom of speech when listening to and observing some comments from members of the group. I have to remind myself that we live in very different geopolitical contexts where that which I take for granted is not a given across the globe. It also helped me to think about my own (early) youth and how much of freedom of speech I have accessed in some ways (but then not again in others).

Gada, I enjoyed your strong sense of political activism and marvelled at how you combine what at times seem to be opposing poles of activity, that is, academia and activism, almost seamlessly. I can only learn from your commitment and the ongoing challenges of living and working in contexts that are at times less hospitable than it should be.

Sondra, I learnt enormously from the depth of vulnerability that you were prepared to share; not only in the public fora of workshops and seminar discussions during the week, but also in private spaces over pizza and drinks. (Yes, the margheritas, in drink and pizza form were very cheap!). I sometimes think that for me a bad combination in our society is a combination of whiteness and arrogance… and I find this combination more often than your version of humility and vulnerability, combined with whiteness. I think that is what I liked most about you, but of course also your deep, ongoing and lifelong (yes 55 years is a life, I am not even that old yet) commitment to women's social movements.

Nonhlanha, you took up position next to me during the seminars for most of the week. I was particularly interested to hear about your experiences

in academia and the work that drives you. I listened very carefully as I heard many of your experiences reflected in mine; the belonging and alienation as an academic. We can only learn from each other as a collective to strengthen our joint purpose.

Gifty, even though you could join us only later during the week, I felt a strong sense of warmth in your presence, and felt lifted by your deep and infectious laughter. I am more aware of the challenges you face in your space but also the opportunities that you are carving out in order to make your mark as an academic. I particularly enjoyed your letter that Penny read to us as a group and am quite interested in the methodology of letter writing as feedback but also as a valuing process … a process that I think we all need a little bit more of. And, thanks for the wonderful chocolates, especially the one that you cautioned me was the bitter one. That was my favourite.

Penny, I was so pleased to spend time with you again after a whirlwind meeting with you in 2012 at Roehampton. I learnt to know you much better and was struck by how differently and similarly painful and pleasurable our access to higher education has been, but also how similar our interests are. It is always amazing to see how different universes revolve on almost completely different trajectories and collide in the way that we have, allowing us to connect like we have around shared values, theories and interests. I was pleased that I could respond to your keynote on the Wednesday and enjoyed listening to you deliver it even after I had read it in preparation for my public response at the colloquium. And yes, I just love your dancing.

Lebo, I enjoyed meeting you after having read some of your work but never really having an opportunity to be in your space in the way that I was this week. I was encouraged by your warm but firm stance during the week, listening to the joys and challenges of engaging in research in “rural development with women” and all that it brings in South Africa. It was also hard but important to think about how we as colleagues across South African universities face similar but also very different challenges in our institutions. Your work and stories, as well as methodologies viscerally reminded me of that. You also brought an incidental story about rape to our workspace, and importantly so. I still think about the woman who you told us about and who you assisted late that night. Rape was not an incidental story in her life. I wonder what happened to her and her casual, unperturbed rapist, in the aftermath of the events of that Wednesday night? Thanks so much also for taking the responsibility to book for our final supper together at one of my favourite places in Durban. It is always a new experience to eat at the Cargo Hold. This time I was again mesmerised by the shoal of anchovy, fish and sharks on view from the dinner table as well as the conversation at the dinner table.

Belinda, I really enjoyed the way in which you set up opportunities for dialogue in a workshop type space during the Wednesday afternoon of the colloquium space. I had never experienced a discourse/world café and found it exciting, stimulating and creative. It also gave me an opportunity to have conversations with people whom I would not have had conversations with. During other parts of the week, I saw your quiet but efficient way of managing important administrative processes that also had to be done.

This was a long piece to tell each one of you how you made me feel and how each one of you contributed to my feeling rejuvenated and energised precisely because I had an opportunity to connect with you; intellectually, emotionally and perhaps even spiritually. This is rare in academic spaces. I felt as if I was in a holding pool of warm water during this week. You made me feel that I could access more of my creative potential, take risks and you helped me to reposition myself in accessing some of my energy and activism again. So even though this seems as if it is about me, it is very much a very personal note to each one of you (and me) about the value of a collective and what we may achieve through it, in spite of finding ourselves in challenging contexts across the globe.

Thank you.

Ronelle Carolissen
September 2016

Constructing a Radical World of Imagination Through Feminist (Writing) Methodologies and Praxis

Written by
Penny Jane Burke

14

When a woman sits down to write, all eyes are on her. The woman who is turning others into the object of her gaze is herself already an object of the gaze. Woman, the original Other, is always being looked at and looked over. A women sees herself being seen. Clutching her pencil, she wonders how 'the discipline' will view the writing she wants to do. Will it be seen as too derivative of male work? Or too feminine? Too safe? Or too risky? Too serious? Or not serious enough? (Behar & Gordon 1995: 2 in Burke & Jackson, 2007, p. 1)

In uncovering how inequalities are produced through hegemonic methodologies, feminist scholars have examined the power relations between ontological contestations, the politics of meaning-making, processes of knowing and being known and the methods that generate knowledge in the social sciences. Feminists have revealed the power of writing, as a key dimension of research practices and the dissemination of knowledge, and its deep entanglement with power, mis/representation, author/ity and inequalities. In *Reconceptualising Lifelong Learning: Feminist Interventions* (Burke & Jackson, 2007), Sue Jackson and Penny Jane Burke draw analytical attention to a range of writing practices at play in educational institutions that are taken for granted. They argue that writing methodologies are often unexamined spaces in which knowledge, power and subjectivity is produced and patriarchal, (neo) colonial relations of othering are sustained through polarising discourses (for example, objective/subjective, science/nature, rational/emotional, hard/soft). Through their own writing practices in creating the book, which aim to challenge hegemonic academic practices embedded in essayist literacies (Lillis, 2003), Burke and Jackson (2007) reveal how everyday writing practices and exchanges are sites in which power and exclusion are produced through seemingly mundane practices of communication, such as emails and minutes of meetings. They also argue that writing practices might be drawn on to create critical and counter-hegemonic spaces of potential transformation, in which different ways of knowing and generating knowledge might take place. Mary Evans conceptualises writing as a "survival strategy", which has "allowed individuals to occupy a conventional private space while constructing a radical world of the imagination" (Evans, 2004, p. 129). "Writing is not just about the conscientious fulfillment of professional expectations; it can also be about protest" (Evans, 2004, p. 129 in Burke & Jackson, 2007, p. 147).

Letter writing as praxis

The founding members of The Network held a meeting in Durban, South Africa, during August 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together nine Founding Members from different geo-spatial locations across the globe to discuss the role of The Network and the nature of specific projects in different global regions. Drawing on feminist and Freirean methodologies, our aim was to open up possibilities for feminist praxis beyond the confines of academic regulatory technologies. As a Network, we want to create opportunities beyond our immediate circle to develop methods and approaches that connect with and have resonance and meaning for women in wider communities of praxis. All of us are feminist activist researchers with a strong commitment to making a difference in and through our research that extends beyond and challenges the individualising project of 'success'. We hope that through our work we can effect change in our own lives and in the lives of the wider communities of girls and women that we and our projects reach out to through creating feminist counter-hegemonic participatory spaces. Through this, we hope that our work will reach the lives of boys and men as well as girls and women, including those from LGBTQI communities, who might engage the insights of feminist and Freirean research for (critiquing) gendered, neocolonial, neoliberal and (neo)conservative ontological orientations to the world. Our long-term aspiration is social transformation.

In our Durban meeting, we shared our work and ideas and Gifty Gyamera and Penny Jane Burke discussed why we had drawn on letter writing as a feminist and Freirean method in our work with women in higher education. We had used letter writing as an/other way to produce meaning, understanding, and insight into our lives as female academics operating in patriarchal, neocolonial and neoliberal institutional spaces. As we discussed the potential of this method for generating powerful, auto/biographical counter-narratives to the dominant discourses of higher education, members of The Network considered letter writing as a method we might draw on collectively. The analysis of themes emerging from our letters (included in the next section) highlight the strong sense of solidarity, belonging and empathy we experienced at our intensive residential

meeting in Durban. Although the themes emerging from the letters could be viewed as overly idealistic or sentimental, the letters capture the emotionality of the meeting and the power of feminist methodologies for bringing together a strong sense of collectivity and purpose in the face of the competitive, individualist and performative spaces of academia.

Letter writing has its own conventions and social practices, although it arguably provides a different kind of writing space that has the potential to inspire the feminist imagination. Two Network members, Sondra Hale and Lauren Ila Misiaszek, pushed the space of letter writing as a powerful way to inspire feminist imagination, capturing the stories of our encounters through poetic analysis. Sondra's poem (next page) expresses the powerful connections we experienced in our sharing across the group:

A Poem to My New Network — Durban in Our Hearts

By Sondra Hale, Durban

Sharing our stories to start the day
means lives revealed in capsule moments.
Not full, but something to lean on,
some measure of the woman.
Those were my favourite moments,
learning you.
Your ideas, too, laid out for all
to touch, to try on for a while.
Let's see how they fit, how they match
what we are already wearing.
Some of us are wearing our Sunday best
on a day that is not Sunday.
That is us in our full rebellious glory!
Refusniks with eyes wide open.
When we lay our precious objects
on the mat we reveal more of us.
We dance, rub noses, greet in strange ways,
laugh and grow nostalgic.
I am silent this time, wanting to tell you
how much I hope to fly again.
Next time I will fly to you
carrying new poems to the circle.

Just three meditations on time

By Lauren Ila Misiaszek

Just?

Just another

...week.

...hotel.

...meeting.

...group of women.

...symposium.

...poem by a student activist.

...grant.

...writing project.

...methodology.

Just?

Lauren's three poems are a meditation on time and opens up feminist reflections on experiences of time, whilst also reflecting more personally on her experiences of the time we spent together in Durban and the impact the short but intensive week had on our understanding of one an/other.

My mama told me ‘you have to slow down the minutes’
or Greetings from ‘normal’ life

I wanted to know (you) more,
but the time was enough.
I wanted to
think
plan
work
dream
play
more,
but the time was enough.

I return now to you from ‘normal’ life,
un/satisfied enough to want to know
think
plan
work
dream
play
more,
carried forth by a time when time was (just)
enough.

Blue waters 'rituals'

Weddings
proms
muzak
dance parties
kept the beat while the earth shook itself out in a series
of minor tremors–
just enough that we barely noticed, and kept going – I mean,
it wasn't The Big One–
but just enough that we can't say it didn't happen.
Reminding us of the fault lines – of our thinking,
of our lives.

Letter writing as a method helps to uncover the power of writing for articulating the often hidden aspects of experience, subjective formation, meaning-making, including the emotional dimensions of knowledge production (which is often occluded from view). In the next section of this paper, we further develop an analysis of the ways that letter writing offered a powerful method to collect our experiences, inspire our feminist imagination and express our dreams. The below analysis draws on the remaining letters written by Nonhlanhla Mthiyane (NM), Gada Kadoda (GK), Belinda Munn (BM), Penny Jane Burke (PJB), Ronelle Carollissen (RC), Saajidha Sader (SS) and Gifty Gyamera (GG).

An Analysis of Letter Writing as Feminist, Freirean Praxis

Written by
Ronelle Carolissen &
Nonhlanha Mthiyane

22

“My mind was spinning, my soul was alive and I was full of joy”

It was, for many of us, the first time that we had met physically as we had been in touch via email only. The common sense of purpose and commitment to feminist activism created an opportunity for us to bond and discuss our work in an unmatched collegial atmosphere. After the week-long encounter, we agreed to write letters to The Network and its nine founding members as reflexive pieces on the week that we had experienced.

The letters were analysed thematically. Most members expressed **strong feelings of connection to each other** in spite of not having met before. They also, in their letters, expressed **commitment to the values of feminist activism and democratic practice.** The section that follows will detail the subthemes within the two broad themes of connectedness and values. It is important to first describe the challenges that women experience as this provides a backdrop to the focus on the experiences of The Network meeting.

Experiences of context of Higher Education

Some group members spoke about the **challenges of their higher education work contexts**, highlighting the ongoing and increasing pressures that they face in neoliberal universities. NM spoke about the hostility and lack of collegiality engendered by increasing burdens of performance criteria and standards:

NM: I've been at the university for many years now, and each year the pressure put on me and my colleagues to 'perform' and meet the university 'standards' gets heavier, and goalposts keep shifting. My working space has become hostile and the collegiality that once characterized it is almost non-existent.

This sentiment of being overburdened by multiple tasks was echoed by RC:

RC: I often experience much of my day as an ongoing treadmill of doing tasks and thinking about tasks to be done and worrying about tasks that should have been done that haven't been done by deadlines.

However RC's letter also acknowledged that women's stories in the group reminded her that other contexts in HE are similar:

RC: It was also hard but important to think about how we as colleagues across South African universities face similar but also very different challenges in our institutions. Your work and stories, as well as methodologies viscerally reminded me of that.

It is perhaps the shared understanding of the challenging HE contexts and joint purpose of The Network that contributed to an overwhelming sense of connectedness over the week.

Positive feelings and connectedness in the group

All participants commented on the **positive emotions and warmth of connection in the group**. These included themes about the **warmth of connection, inspiration and renewed purpose and gratitude** generated by the group. These subthemes will be discussed, in turn.

Warmth and connection in the group

SS expressed surprise at the accomplishments we made during the week's intensive meeting but found it stimulating:

SS: I am still in awe of what we accomplished that week in Durban. I must admit that the build up to the Network week was stressful but mostly stimulating, particularly as the program took shape and plans began to fall into place.

For many in the group the most important positive experience was a sense of belonging and affirmation:

NM: I felt affirmed when you shared your stories, and felt a sense of belonging that is currently very rare in my work as an academic. The experiences we shared, though different, to me are what bind us together as a Network.

PJB: Our meeting in Durban, South Africa (8–12th August, 2016) gave me such a precious and much-needed sense of deep connection, solidarity and hope.
Our sharing of auto/biographical stories – the stories of our lived, personal, professional and research encounters and of the ways we have (and continue to) struggled against complex inequalities–opened up a space of genuine trust and connection amongst us.
It is having one another, having a sense of collective activist-oriented praxis, that makes this feel possible.

BM: After the first few hours, I realised I need not worry. My mind was spinning, my soul was alive and I was full of joy. I had found my people, my tribe, a place and space where I belong, I was no longer an outsider.

GG: I remember the spirit we created in that room, and after so many years, I still feel the same connectedness and commonalities, the joy and love, and cherish the bond that became and grew. I am so proud to be one of you.

RC: We worked very hard which was not unusual in our contexts. What was different was the amount of fun, connectedness and mutual affirmation we shared without becoming echo chambers only for each other. I certainly felt comfortable to disagree.

RC: I felt a strong sense of warmth in your presence, and felt lifted by your deep and infectious laughter.

GG: Whilst I was particularly struck by the warmth, sense of belonging and the space to nurture my career, I was equally excited about the ability to impact on society, the greatest push to serve humanity, to embrace the course of women and the marginalized, and to encourage social justice.

The connectedness and warmth described here contrasted sharply with the sense of disconnection voiced by women in their description of their experiences in their own HE contexts. These descriptions hinted at alienation and disconnectedness felt by women in The Network in their respective academic spaces.

Inspiration and renewed purpose

Given the positive experiences expressed in the letters, a strong theme about **inspiration and renewed purpose** was evident. SS and BM were inspired by the intellectualism, activism and authenticity of other participants:

SS: I was inspired and encouraged and mostly honoured to have been among such inspiring intellectuals and activists.

BM: In those few short days I learnt so much from each and every one of you. I learnt about what it means to be an authentic, activist and academic, about the possibilities for research and action to change our communities.

The inspiration also sparked a renewed energy for many of us:

NM: So I returned to my work with a renewed sense of purpose and vigor.

RC: I hadn't anticipated that I would leave the week in Durban, feeling this recharged, valued and reconnected to a group of women marked by such geopolitical, demographic and individual difference, yet deeply connected through our embodiment of feminist values of and for social justice in higher education.

RC: I listened very carefully as I heard many of your experiences reflected in mine; the belonging and alienation as an academic. We can only learn from each other as a collective to strengthen our joint purpose.

GG: Undeniably, my interaction in the workshop has enhanced my perspectives of life not only academically, but professionally, culturally and socially. I had a real transformative experience. The need to develop strong feminism with my work has not been so compulsive.

BM: That last night in Durban and we were full of ideas, hopes, renewed energy and purpose.

RC: To tell each one of you how you made me feel and how each one of you contributed to my feeling rejuvenated and energised precisely because I had an opportunity to connect with you; intellectually, emotionally and perhaps even spiritually. This is rare in academic spaces. I felt as if I was in a holding pool of warm water during this week. You made me feel that I could access more of my creative potential, take risks and you helped me to reposition myself in accessing some of my energy and activism again.

The experiences of collegiality, warmth, connectedness, inspiration and renewed sense of purpose engendered a dominant theme of **gratitude**.

Gratitude

Women expressed deep and sincere gratitude to individuals and The Network for the opportunity to contribute to meaningful conversations in Durban but also remembered those who had gone before:

SS: Thank you Penny for finding a home for The Network and thank you CEEHE for making this possible. The fact that we were all here now was simply overwhelming.

BM: I feel immensely privileged and thankful for the time and conversations we shared in Durban.

NM: I want to say thank you to each and every member of my Network; and thanks to Saaj I can confidently call the Network mine too.

PJB: The main message I want to send is of sincere gratitude and appreciation. Thank you all so much for your love, generosity, support, encouragement, inspiration and solidarity – our connection and our network is a source of great energy, and is a precious gift.

GK: I salute our comrades who live in our memory and through their work, and the still living from that small founding group, and I salute every single member of the network where they are.

The common themes that arose focused on the feelings that were generated by the sense of collegiality and nurturing experienced by all. In this context, a strong theme about **values of The Network** such as **feminist activism** and **democratic practice** emerged.

Feminist activism

PJB, GK and RC, in writing letters to colleagues, highlighted what was important for them in terms of one of the goals of activism in The Network. They spoke about the importance of research combined with activism as well as moving towards eradicating gender injustice globally:

PJB: This feeling is rooted in something intensely meaningful to me – a shared and collective energy, passion and commitment amongst our group to develop activist-oriented research – embedded in praxis-based, feminist and social justice approaches and driven by a strong belief that major work still needs to be done to make women's lives better, to unsettle neoliberal, neo-colonial, racist and patriarchal hegemonies.

PJB: Our shared commitment to social justice and praxis as a way to make sense of the formations of identity that shape our worlds, relationships and practices cemented our shared commitment to a long-term collaborative project of social justice.

RC: I enjoyed your strong sense of political activism and marvelled at how you combine what at times seem to be opposing poles of activity, that is, academia and activism, almost seamlessly. I can only learn from your commitment and the ongoing challenges of living and working in contexts that are at times less hospitable than it should be.

“Our shared commitment to social justice and praxis as a way to make sense of the formations of identity that shape our worlds, relationships and practices cemented our shared commitment to a long-term collaborative project of social justice.”

GK used the creativity of the letter writing space to articulate a future scenario, imagining the realisation of our dreams for transformed lives:

GK: We fought so hard to be where we are today, a global think tank to reckon with when gender is discussed. Not only did we help change the plight of women in higher education, but we also touched every other profession. The policies we helped draft and pass at global, regional and local levels are too numerous to list. At their foundation, we know, is the setting of the international agenda for education for social justice followed by the surge in countries ratifying the GSJT (Global Social Justice Treaty) and implementing their own 10-year plan to eradicate all forms of gender discriminations and social inequalities. As we remain committed to our values and mission, to collective ownership of the knowledge we produce, and to the notions of equal partnership, we remain vigilant of new forms of discrimination and opportunities for democratisation.

Linked to the feminist activism theme was our shared focus on the importance of **continuing and sustaining social justice work**. The theme was slightly different from the feminist activism theme as GK and RC, in particular, implored us to use the feeling of renewal to continue our collective project. GK, drawing on an imagined future, recognised the gains that had been made but also the work that still has to be done in the face of newer forms of oppressions such as neoliberalism, experienced by women.

GK: Let us continue collaborating, consulting, negotiating and creating new social justice spaces in our classrooms and communities. We indeed came a long way but there is still work to do to close the gap between theory and praxis, and to declare equity and justice complete worldwide. After all, it took us 15 years just to reap those seeds we planted in Durban.

RC: I hadn't anticipated that I would leave the week in Durban, feeling this recharged, valued and reconnected to a group of women marked by such geopolitical, demographic and individual difference, yet deeply connected through our embodiment of feminist values of and for social justice in higher education.

GG: Whilst I was particularly struck by the warmth, sense of belonging and the space to nurture my career, I was equally excited about the ability to impact on society, the greatest push to serve humanity, to embrace the course of women and the marginalized, and to encourage social justice.

GK: I am optimistic that we will continue to move forward to represent the interest of the marginalized groups and to challenge the dominant neoliberal discourse and its permeation of public dialogues.

Democratic practice

GK commented on experiencing democratic principles of valuing contributions, irrespective of social status in their home contexts. RC focused on freedom of speech and listening to others but also commented on the amount of fun that built collaborative and collegial relationships in the group:

GK: This is because we never distinguished between a government minister, a university professor and a kindergarten teacher when approached for assistance.

RC: We worked very hard which was not unusual in our contexts. What was different was the amount of fun, connectedness and mutual affirmation we shared without becoming echo chambers only for each other. I certainly felt comfortable to disagree.

RC: I also was reminded more seriously of the inequity of opportunity for freedom of speech when listening to and observing some comments from members of the group. I have to remind myself that we live in very different geopolitical contexts where that which I take for granted is not a given across the globe. It also helped me to think about my own (early) youth and how much of freedom of speech I have accessed in some ways (but then not again in others).

Summary and reflections

The letters offered a feminist method to capture our experiences of, and express our feelings about, working together in an intensive week of exchanging and further developing projects for social justice. Through an analysis of the letters we were able to highlight the strong feelings of connectedness and warmth we shared as well as explicit values of feminist activism underpinning our social justice work. It reinforced the importance of creating supportive meeting spaces that have local and global connections to sustain energy and enrich creativity against the grain of the patriarchal, performative structures we often work within. The methodology of letter writing is an interesting one. It provided a novel form of evaluation of the workshop and the methodology has the capacity to draw out affirmations of each other. However, letter writing may predispose group members to affirm and minimise or ignore challenges that may exist. The letters were overwhelmingly positive representations of our exchange meeting and do not address contradictions or power dynamics amongst the group. Perhaps this is partly due to the conventions around letter writing as a social practice and that letter writing may be seen as a gift, particularly when presented in the form of poetry. Indeed, we found it difficult to analyse the two poems thematically due to the underpinning hegemonic discourse of 'evidence' that frames thematic analysis, and tends to exclude figurative language to express ideas and feelings. It is nevertheless clear from the themes that emerged from the letters that the meetings provided a powerful feminist space of solidarity in our shared commitment to social justice, leaving all participants with an unexpected glow of affirmation and connectedness, a rare feeling in many academic contexts today. Feminist (writing) methodologies opened up other ways of representation of our experiences, including through poetry, visionary writing and imagination. The letters not only supported our aim to learn (you) more, but also provided material to sustain our commitment beyond the week and into the future.

Reflecting on a refreshing week

August 2016

Dear Network Members,

I've been at the university for many years now, and each year the pressure put on me and my colleagues to 'perform' and meet the university 'standards' gets heavier, and goalposts keep shifting. My working space has become hostile and the collegiality that once characterized it is almost non-existent. Spending a week with the Network members, therefore, came as a refreshing experience. I felt affirmed when you shared your stories, and felt a sense of belonging that is currently very rare in my work as an academic. The experiences we shared, though different, to me are what bind us together as a Network. What we've been through individually, what we've managed to 'conquer', but most importantly what we plan and aim to achieve in our different spaces and collectively, is something that excites me. I felt honored to be with women who are succeeding in navigating and reconciling their personal lives, their teaching and research, and their activism. Women who refuse to be 'boxed', and who continue to defy the odds and succeed where no one thought they would. So I returned to my work with a renewed sense of purpose and vigor. I want to say thank you to each and every member of my Network; and thanks to Saaj I can confidently call the Network mine too. I draw strength from each of your stories, and look forward to learning from and with all of you. So as we wrap up Women's month in South Africa, we know the struggle continues, and will do so for a long time. We say here, "Wathint' abafazi wathint' imbokodo! Uzokufa!!", meaning "You strike a woman, you strike a rock, and you will be crushed!!".

Let's continue to be the rocks that we are!

Warm Regards

Nonhlanhla

Dear Sondra, Gada, Penny, Nonhlanhla,
Belinda, Lebo, Lauren, Gifty & Ronelle

I am still in awe of what we accomplished that week in Durban. I must admit that the build up to the Network week was stressful but mostly stimulating, particularly as the program took shape and plans began to fall into place. I couldn't contain my excitement about the planned events and everyone around me had a sense of my anticipation and anxiety, especially my family. My anxiety also stemmed from my health problem (Lupus) and my concern about how I was going to manage the week given my chronic fatigue and chronic pain. Yep, I was armed with painkillers and energy boosters. On Monday Nonhlanhla and I drove from Pietermaritzburg with great anticipation. Thank you Lauren for sharing our ideas with Penny. Thank you Penny for finding a home for the Network and thank you CEEHE for making this possible. The fact that we were all here now was simply overwhelming.

Over the week I listened, shared, reflected, remembered, claimed my space, marvelled at our individual/collective achievements, strength, power, resilience, creativity, and commitment to making this world a better place–through our work, our research and our activism. I couldn't get enough and the more I learnt about each of you and your work, the more in awe I was about what we had accomplished by coming together and the potential of what we could do together. I still have this feeling that I am running out of time and have to do it all … and do it NOW!

I was inspired and encouraged and mostly honoured to have been among such inspiring intellectuals and activists. Aluta continua… until we meet again.

Much love,
Saajidha

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to you on our 15th anniversary. We have come a long way since our meeting in Durban in 2016. I remember the spirit we created in that room, and after so many years, I still feel the same connectedness and commonalities, the joy and love, and cherish the bond that became and grew. I am so proud to be one of you. We fought so hard to be where we are today, a global think tank to reckon with when gender is discussed. Not only did we help change the plight of women in higher education, but we also touched every other profession. The policies we helped draft and pass at global, regional and local levels are too numerous to list. At their foundation, we know, is the setting of the international agenda for education for social justice followed by the surge in countries ratifying the GSJT (Global Social Justice Treaty) and implementing their own 10-year plan to eradicate all forms of gender discriminations and social inequalities.

Our network is growing. We have representatives in every country gender council that we helped conceive, and later institutionalise. More importantly, through our dedicated efforts from our very small beginnings in our own classrooms, we influenced how curriculum is developed, students evaluated, and universities ranked. Ethics, collaboration, and relevance to context, replaced traditional notions about individual success and institutional excellence. They became community oriented and validated. No wonder we are not only present at international decision tables, but all the way to parent/teacher associations and neighbourhood/ village schools. This is because we never distinguished between a government minister, a university professor and a kindergarten teacher when approached for assistance. I will never forget the

day we were nominated for the UNESCO award for change makers in education and life-long learning as well as for the title of social justice defender of the year by the ISJDF (International Social Justice Defenders Forum). That was 5 years ago. While these achievements were important, it was the combined recognition by formal bodies and ordinary people that felt more surreal. We are truly lucky to receive congratulations from the Guild of Women Professors and Vice Chancellors that we inspired, and from the four grandmothers who solar electrified Mirri village 20 years ago against all the odds that inspired us. We touched their lives and they touched ours, and worked together to see the numbers of accomplished women in academia and rural women innovation centres both soar. As we remain committed to our values and mission, to collective ownership of the knowledge we produce, and to the notions of equal partnership, we remain vigilant of new forms of discrimination and opportunities for democratisation.

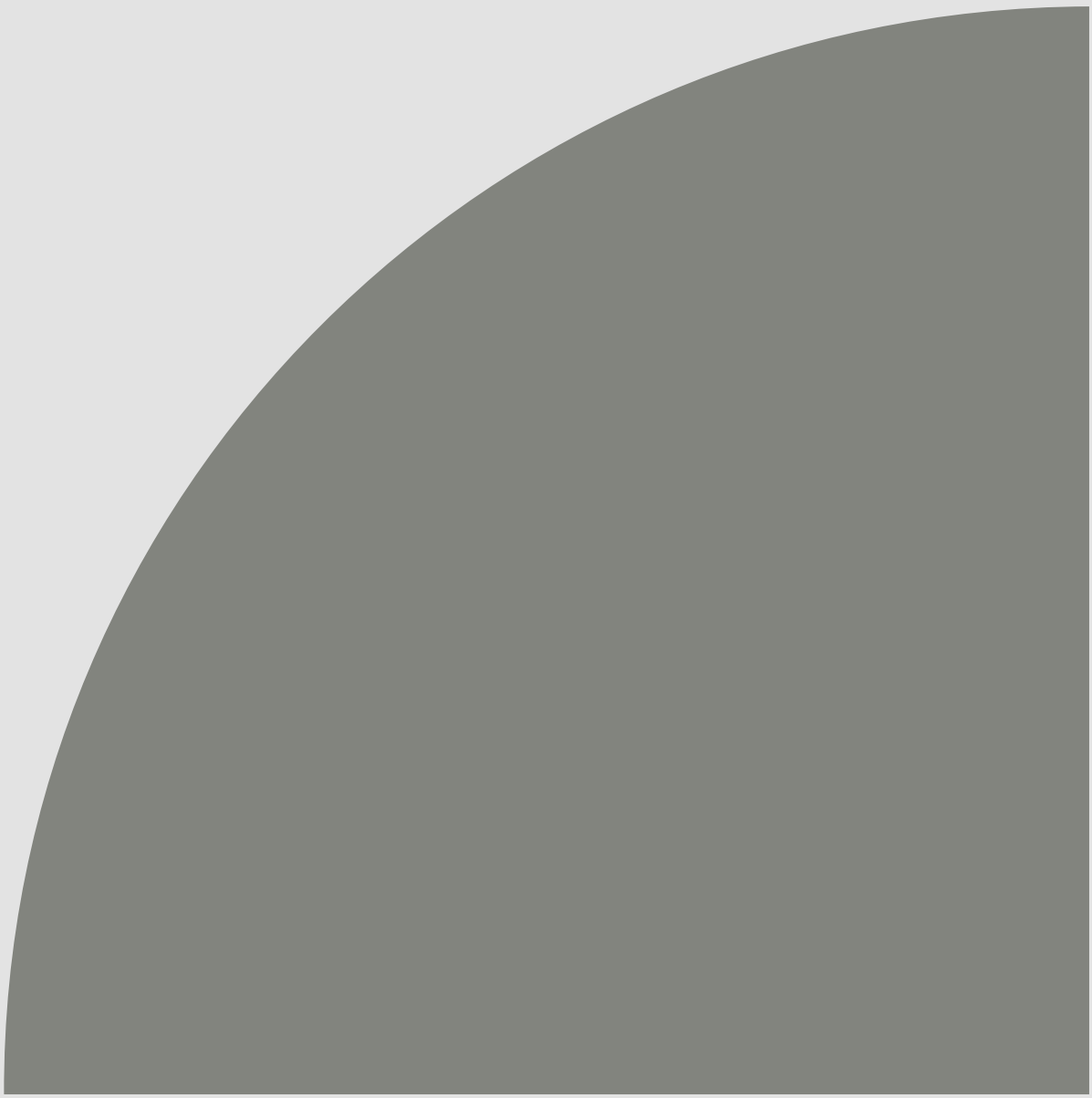
I salute our comrades who live in our memory and through their work, and the still living from that small founding group, and I salute every single member of the network where they are. Let us continue collaborating, consulting, negotiating and creating new social justice spaces in our classrooms and communities. We indeed came a long way but there is still work to do to close the gap between theory and praxis, and to declare equity and justice complete worldwide. After all, it took us 15 years just to reap those seeds we planted in Durban.

Plenty Love and Solidarity,
Gada Kadoda

Khartoum, 30 August 2030

Chronicle of Collaboration: Toward Creating Social Justice Spaces in Sudan

Written by
Sondra Hale & Gada Kadoda[1]



As a team, we are attempting to move into a new realm of critical thinking, especially with reference to Sudan, one that aims to weave together theory, practice, method, and space in an effort to create and teach about and within social justice spaces in Sudan. However, there is also a second dimension to our work that underlies what we have produced. While engaging in transnational feminist praxis we have attempted to analyse the significance of our friendship within the context of knowledge production. We have tried to diagram our process and to capture the ethics of our work, as much as we have tried to further ideas around epistemology and methodology (see Appendices A and B).[2]

Putting Freirian liberatory pedagogy to work in an authoritarian society like Sudan is a challenge. The Islamist-military government, in power since 1989, occupies much of public space, communications, Information Technology, and the production of knowledge (including the educational system), and most organisations and associations. It is, however, nearly impossible for even an authoritarian state to stop certain forms of collaboration toward solidarity.

As a team, and in collaboration with a number of other researchers and activists, we have ventured into a kind of under-the-radar activism in the form of conferences, symposia, and workshops in an attempt to generate or stimulate the creation of social justice spaces. For example, between 2014–2017 we co-authors organised gendered symposia and conducted workshops that explored a number of questions related to liberatory pedagogy and knowledge production within the context of Sudan.[3] These events included: (1) 'Knowledge and Innovation: Technology, Pedagogy and Culture' (2014); (2, 3) two workshops (2015) on 'Knowledge Production and Pedagogical Strategies in Community Settings: Women's NGOs and Women Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs] as Knowledge Producers and Transmitters'; and 'Training the Trainers: Building a Cadre of Facilitators of Workshops Dealing with Diversity'—a thinly disguised exercise in anti-racism; (4) a symposium on 'Contemporary Issues in Knowledge Production: Identities, Mobilities, and Technologies' (2015) in which social media and pedagogy played a role; (5) a symposium on the 'Concept of Hope: Methodology, Pedagogy, and Knowledge Production' (2016); and (6) a symposium on 'The Intellectual' (2017). This paper is a reassessment of these community, academic, and professional collaborations that aimed to instill self-interrogations and the further development of liberatory pedagogies; to examine the nature of knowledge production within the context of authoritarian states, in this case, Sudan; to explore 'hope' as a revolutionary secular concept, method, and pedagogy; and to evaluate the role of Sudan's intellectuals—public and organic—all of these with the intent of creating social justice spaces and examining the roles of Sudanese in these spaces.[4]

Our methodologies for our explorations have included at least once daily communication, despite all these years of having one of us living in Khartoum,[5] Sudan and the other in Los Angeles, USA. These discussions have happened in person in various cities of the world, including our two home cities; through numerous forms of social media; by phone; and through exchanges of material and virtual reading material (see Appendices A and B for a chronology and a mapping of these processes).[6]

Although we had known each other for some time, our two-person team first began to engage in serious theoretical conversations about knowledge and pedagogy in 2008. The first serious and prolonged discussion followed Kadoda's attendance on 2 May, 2008 at one of Hale's talks at Ahfad University for Women, Omdurman, Sudan, on 'Gendering the Politics of Memory and the Politics of Forgetting (or Being Forced to Forget)', a lecture for a workshop on 'Women in Conflict Zones'. Later, in our reflections on working together, we re-enacted the moment when computer scientist Kadoda indicated that anthropologist Hale's lecture had stimulated her thinking about how she could convert the abstract ideas about the politics of memory into a Concept Map. From that point on, we converged in our thinking about the topics just mentioned and more.

Our dialectic and synthesis: Despite our training and work in very disparate fields—Computer Science and Anthropology/Gender Studies (and including strikingly different methodologies), despite our cultural and ethnic differences—Hale is a white American anthropologist and gender studies scholar, who has a long-lasting intellectual and research interest in Sudan, having lived in the country for some seven years, spanning decades; whereas Kadoda is Sudanese, but was born in Moscow and spent many years outside the country (namely in UK and Barbados) studying and teaching—and despite our considerable generational gap, our disparate and far-apart locations, there were very important convergences, not the least of which are our backgrounds on the Left, that highlighted for us that working together would have its intellectual and political rewards. Furthermore, in addition to our growing friendship, mutual respect was one of the driving factors in our teamwork. Among many

other characteristics of our thinking, we recognised that we could focus on our mutual interest in the work of Paulo Freire, in localised knowledge (what we were at that time calling 'indigenous knowledge') and in some of Hale's writings about migrating epistemologies. These were sufficient to lead to a working relationship that is growing each year. Our ideas began to converge into, among other topics (such as youth, women's organisations, and social media) a mutual interest in how community-based groups produce knowledge, the transfer of that knowledge (pedagogy), and the activism that is part and parcel of it.

The first project we co-organised was a workshop that we were going to conduct in the Nuba Mountains in west-central Sudan in June, 2011. Kadoda was already engaged in a project on behalf of the Nuba, the women's solar engineer project. Because of Kadoda's work, we had a solid contact with a Nuba woman activist who headed a non-governmental organisation (NGO) named Ruyia (Vision) in the region. She agreed to have us facilitate a workshop with her group and other groups in the area. Before travelling to the Nuba Mountains we also consulted with a couple of NGOs in the capital (Khartoum/Omdurman), one, a Nuba organisation, and another a woman-headed one, mostly so that we would be able to obtain a permit to travel to the area and have more contacts there. We began with the notion that most community-based organisations do not think of themselves as knowledge producers. Our intent was to demonstrate (or have them demonstrate to themselves, facilitated by us) that they are knowledge producers, but also to identify the forms of knowledge and the methods for transferring the knowledge (pedagogical strategies), managing it, and then putting it to revolutionary use.

However, we never made it to the Nuba Mountains because the Government of Sudan attacked and bombed the region and destroyed a great deal of the town, Kadugli, where we would have been living and working. Many of the women we would have worked with fled to the capital and became Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). While both of us engaged in anti-war activism on behalf of the Nuba, Kadoda, despite the scarcity of safe spaces, continued to work with these IDPs in the capital, collaborating with the remnants of the women solar engineers and other activists in an attempt to build social justice spaces under-the-radar.

In the intervening years of collaboration, between 2008 – 2013, we jointly attended a number of international conferences where we were on the same panel, either presenting a joint paper or each giving presentations on similar topics or ones that converged.[7] In all of these we incorporated elements of liberation pedagogy and illuminated activism that was either a potential or an actual result. Because the events of Sudan and in the world were influencing our discussions (e.g., the Occupy movement, the 'Arab Spring', the war in the Nuba Mountains), we became aware of the importance of international (and Sudanese) youth movements and direct democracy. As a result, we collaborated on two articles that intersect gender, NGOs, youth movements, and social media. In both of these published works we have used social media as a form of pedagogy.[8]

What followed and ran parallel to the above activities and publications was a series of events held in Greater Khartoum that opened up spaces for discussions of knowledge, pedagogy, and practice never before generated in Sudan. The first event was in 2012. Kadoda organised a rare international conference (Hale participated) on 'Knowledge Management Capacity in Africa: Harnessing Tools for Development and Innovation'. The 'tools' referred to in the title included pedagogical tools. In terms of the Kadoda and Hale collaboration (both individually and together), a great deal of the conference content was about pedagogy, that is, the transfer of knowledge, as was much of the conference. Facilitators offered courses on such themes as how to write a research paper, highlighting Freirian concepts. For example, one plenary session was on localised knowledge and included discussions of ethics, appropriate technology, and the politics of localised knowledge (memory and conflict in Sudan).

In the same international conference Gada also included a workshop designed for community-based organisations to stimulate and validate their thinking of NGO work as knowledge-producing. In any one project, for example, new knowledge is discovered – about the community; the techniques and tools employed; the leadership and decision making, etc. In joint facilitating we asked in what ways this new knowledge transfers to the next project with lessons learned and best practices taken into account. The theory of knowledge offers ways of identification and categorisation of our knowledge assets that are essential in finding the most appropriate ways for its utilisation and renewal. However, it is not sufficient to identify, categorise, and manage knowledge. Working with communities entails ethical considerations about what is being brought into the community. Assuming the importance of women as future knowledge innovators – our rationale for this session – we invited active members of local NGOs serving primarily women, along with IDPs, especially newly arrived Nuba. As it turned out, this session became an exercise in Freirean pedagogy in ways we had not anticipated. One of the IDPs, a Nuba woman, was present in the workshop. The other participants became so interested in what the Nuba woman (who had lived through bombardment and had to escape from her home in the Nuba Mountains and make a harrowing trip to the capital), had to say that we were compelled to convert the session into a real-life testimony by one of the members of the session instead of a more academic exercise. Her knowledge transfer was lively, real, and personal.

Our next major collaborative project was in 2014. This symposium, conceived and organised by Kadoda was entitled 'Knowledge and Innovation: Technology, Pedagogy and Culture', and was sponsored by the newly formed Sudanese Knowledge Society. Hale gave a keynote talk on: 'Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Knowledge' in which she discussed: (1) forms and sources of knowledge, especially unrecognised forms of knowledge, subversive knowledge, subjugated knowledge, and knowledge as resistance; (2) the ways in which we can innovate with that knowledge; and (3) the ways in which we can transmit that knowledge, that is, referring to pedagogy – how we teach. By 'critical pedagogy', we refer to a method for figuring out how to bring the specific context to life. Hale argued, following Freire, that pedagogy is a form of resistance and insurrection, and a generator, not only a purveyor, of knowledge. Because much knowledge comes from within, the task of the teacher, the mentor, and the community activist is to facilitate that process of bringing knowledge to the surface and then putting that knowledge into action. We can transmit knowledge in very diverse ways: for example, through our technologies, our arts, media, and culture, through hermeneutics, academic writings, propaganda, modelling, silence and body language and other unspoken messages. We have to consider the ways in which we change not only the listener/viewer/student, but ourselves in the process because of what the listener/viewer/student might be giving back, but also because the context might be changing.

In the same conference the two of us coordinated a Roundtable session on 'Civil Society and "Undone Science": Prioritizing Research for Creating Inclusive "Knowledge Societies"'. The concept of 'undone science' is used as a tool by social scientists to highlight the politics of research priorities where selection leans towards the interests of the powerful and rich. It was also utilised for the theme of this workshop to highlight the gaps between those who work with the most pressing needs of the society and those who produce organised/institutional knowledge (e.g. research centres, universities).[9]

The first set of activist workshops in the collaboration

In many ways the projects that epitomised our activist work as much as any other up until 2017 were two interrelated workshops that we offered in March, 2015. These were entitled 'Using Liberatory Pedagogy in Our Communities and Classrooms – Sudan' and 'Training the Trainers: Building a Cadre of Facilitators of Workshops Dealing with Diversity'. These had been built on previous workshops that dealt with pedagogy, innovation, and community activism. The first workshop, building on two earlier ones in 2012 and 2014, was an attempt to bring to light and to the forefront the extent that NGOs, in this case women's NGOs, are knowledge producers, and then look to the pedagogical practices they are using to present this knowledge to

the communities with which they work. The second workshop was an attempt to launch the first anti-racism workshop ever held in Sudan. Both workshops, each socially and politically sensitive in its own way, were by invitation only; the NGO one had some 40 participants, whereas the anti-racism one had seventeen. Both were held in two different community centres. Kadoda and Hale traded off as central facilitators – Kadoda taking the lead in the NGO workshop; Hale in the anti-racism one, but both facilitating. The ways we worked on these various projects reflected both the feminist and Freirean concepts that guided us – neither of us played 'expert' vis-à-vis the other; we both played egalitarian roles despite our backgrounds in various subjects; and both of us respected the organic knowledge of the other, that is, not just the academic knowledge. In these ways our friendship was enhanced, but also our friendship enhanced our facilitating process.

The NGO workshop involved a broad range of organisations and took place at the Nuba Women for Education and Development Association (NuWEDA) in Omdurman, Sudan. The set of participants, representing their respective NGOs, were working on different problem areas such as literacy, legal rights, issues among the IDPs, with youth, etc. They were from different size/level NGOs – those we categorised as urban and highly politicised, and those which were more rural and community based. The workshop aimed to provide a self-assessment of the process of knowledge production and the tools used to transfer that knowledge. For instance, when new knowledge is discovered about the community, we asked what techniques and tools are employed, the kind of leadership and decision-making process utilised, etc. We also asked how this knowledge is transmitted and transferred to future projects as lessons learnt or best practices, and how these are incorporated into future projects. Furthermore, working with communities entails ethical considerations about what is being brought into the community. Therefore, we asked how involved members of the community are in decision-making and in the ownership of the new idea of doing something, and what the ethical considerations are in developing pedagogical strategies. Would the knowledge transfer be carried out using dyads or a larger circle? Would learners and facilitators name their own ways of learning? Would the transfer come about through mutual identification, observation, repetition, memorisation, consciousness-raising, self-help, applying the knowledge 'on the ground', through a form of fieldwork, participant observation, absorption, or other ways of learning, etc.? Are the NGO facilitators constantly conscious of their pedagogical strategies? Should they, then, make all the participants aware? Should this be one of the ethical considerations – that is, being as explicit as possible about not only the objectives, but also the process, meaning non-manipulation?

The dialogues continued when another opportunity presented itself – an invitation to participate in a training workshop organised by the Confederation of Civil Society Organizations (which brought to Khartoum NGOs from the conflict-ridden areas of Darfur, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile). Through this workshop, we followed and suggested elements of a Freirian model of pedagogy – liberation pedagogy – to examine what may be appropriate in the Sudanese context. The key points in all of these dialogues include: First, the 'high value' of the type of knowledge they produce for being an alternative people-oriented narrative; second, the importance of critiquing dominant modes of knowledge production, ones that leave out much of the knowledge that the communities we work with produce; third, some practical ways to classify and organise knowledge.

Some of the main points raised by the NGOs include: (1) consensus comments on 'difficulties' inherent of the socio-political situation in Sudan, authoritarian rule, conflict, poverty, nepotism, corruption, international sanctions, etc.; (2) theoretical issues like knowledge and power, leading to discussions on knowledge sharing within and among NGOs, but also on ownership and the power relationship with the donor (and sister NGOs); and (3) a more specific question on how one would go about handling knowledge in their organisation.

Since we started in 2012, we have noted that a few down-to-earth experiences have materialised from these workshops and discussions with some of the leading women NGOs. For example, a project was started with the Sudanese Organisation for Research and Development (SORD), a sophisticated and relatively well-equipped NGO headquartered in Khartoum with offices in Eastern Sudan; it was a project aimed at capturing the information they produce in the Legal Aid Project; and another project to develop a Knowledge Management strategy (and train staff) of the Enlightenment and Knowledge NGO. This NGO is based in Nyala (in besieged Western Sudan) and works with people from communities who have not made it to the relative safety of Khartoum. It became clear that our work is not only opening up more opportunities for our future projects, but is generating, influencing and/or stimulating the initiation of projects of other organisations.

'Training the Trainers: Building a Cadre of Facilitators of Workshops Dealing with Diversity' was convened by us at SORD, in Khartoum on 12 March, 2015. The aim was to educate youth and others who do community work in some methods that can be applied in helping others recognise their own lack of understanding of diversity and to acknowledge their own racism and ethnocentrism in the process. Little has been written about the hierarchies of regions, ethnic groups, religions, race categorisation in Sudan, or even the hierarchy within the general categories 'Arab' and 'African'. We presented background ideas about how Sudan has been ridden with fixed notions about racial categories and the perceived characteristics that accompany someone's 'race', and how people have acted on these unverifiable notions. Although the word 'racism' is rarely used in Sudan, many internal and external social commentators have observed that racism (perhaps generated by economic and historical variables) has been a primary factor in a number of Sudan's conflicts. People – both groups and individuals – are unwilling or unable to let go of their long-held prejudices against particular groups. Tensions have built up, making conflict resolution difficult, if not impossible. Our assumption was that launching small anti-racism workshops, which could eventually take place all over Sudan, could start with a small handful of trained facilitators and might have the potential for alleviating some of the tensions of racism. The problem we confronted is that very few (if any) Sudanese have been educated in facilitating anti-racism workshops. We aimed to give some general guidelines to participants who had volunteered to learn how to facilitate anti-racism workshops.

We interpreted critical pedagogy as a method for figuring out how to bring the specific context to life. As we said above, for us, pedagogy is a form of resistance, a form of insurrection, and a generator, not only a purveyor, of knowledge. Furthermore, we began our facilitation of both workshops by assuming that much knowledge comes from within, even when it seems to come from outside. We tried to bring that knowledge to the surface and then put it into action. In the case of this workshop, the pedagogical strategies are aimed toward making a contribution to ending racism. However, we misjudged a number of things and learned a great deal ourselves in terms of pedagogy.

We began with self-introductions followed by our request that participants agree on our **Mission:** To start a movement of workshops; mutual education (i.e., educating ourselves and each other); to link with other groups with the same or similar goals; and to teach ourselves and teach each other how to share these ideas and methods with others. We asked everyone to take a pledge: To take something from what we all teach each other and do something with it – no matter how big or small. At the end of the day each person would be asked to tell the group what it is that she/he is going to do.

We moved to a discussion of terminology, starting with **multiculturalism** – giving a critique of the concept as encouraging parallel societies (Cantle, 2001) perhaps leading to essentialism in the sometimes shallow celebration of cultural diversity. Our participants, who were mostly educated to *appreciate* multiculturalism and the display of cultural diversity (folk songs and dances from various regions, different cuisines, etc.), were uncomfortable with the critique. Their thinking, like many throughout the world, was that the embracing of multiculturalism is a solution to racism in itself, that is, to learn to appreciate our differences. We then moved to a critique of the term **diversity** as a euphemism, and

perceived more discomfort, equally typical of many societies. We started to realise, but a bit on the late side, that we had encountered some sacred cows. We were trying to skip over steps that segments of many other societies (such as the U.S.) had gone through to reach anything approximating a state of self-critique around these concepts. These, however, are usually very small segments of the population. Among the Sudanese in our workshop the idea of criticising the concepts of multiculturalism and diversity seemed very strange for a progressive project such as the one we were initiating.

When we discussed **race** and **racism**, we encountered even more discomfort. We defined 'racism' as either a person's personal prejudices/intentional discrimination or we might simultaneously be talking about a racial justice understanding of racism: a set of societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices – regardless of intention – that subordinate or oppress one race for the benefit of another. We laid out three expressions of racism – personal, cultural, and institutional. In hindsight, we realised that we had imposed a definition on them: we should have had them develop a definition themselves and tried to work with it or deconstruct it – together. Next we stated that, with regard to those in the workshop who have been subjected to racism and have internalised racism, it is important to draw the path of empowerment, which we laid out. Although among our participants were some members of Sudan's marginalised, no one in the room was willing to acknowledge that she/he had been subjected to racism or had internalised it. Only one person acknowledged that she saw herself as a 'marginalised' person and she was complaining that, because she is from Darfur (a marginalised area of mainly non-Arabs) it was assumed that she is one of 'them'. She was positioning herself as a member of a dominant group living among the marginalised (African groups) and resenting that people thought she was a Darfuri, an 'African'. We found this challenging.

Our next goal was to have participants agree on some guidelines or a code of ethics in terms of how to proceed. These ideas began simply enough, but got more difficult as the issues became fraught. We managed to get through the first nine guidelines without many problems. These had to do with conduct within the workshop, for example, not interrupting, respecting each other, holding contents confidential, etc. But by the time we reached the tenth, the discomfort was showing and the objections began. By the time we reached number ten – 'We will acknowledge that we have sometimes said and done racist things' – participants began to object or be silent, refusing to acknowledge directly their racism.

The guidelines next stated that our acknowledging our racist behaviour and speech does not make us a 'bad person'. It means we are someone working on our racism, noting that unlearning racism is a life-long process. We realised later that we should have begun with that, not plunged into asking people to acknowledge their racism. Next, we moved to talking about a parallel process, that is, those of us who see ourselves as the objects/victims of racism may want to acknowledge that we may have internalised that racism. This moved nowhere, possibly because we may have forgotten that acknowledging that one has been an object of racism can be a humiliating process, let alone suggesting that they may have internalised that racism! Next, we asked that everyone in the room acknowledge that we are all privileged in some way; that went a bit more smoothly. We discussed taking responsibility and not blaming others for our racism, which was hard to do, considering that people had not yet acknowledged their racism!

Participants were relatively silent, seemingly acquiescing to these ideas above, but by the time we had reached number nineteen and were asking them to critique 'colorblindness', we ran into opposition. To them, it was a positive act, that is, to gloss over racial and ethnic differences; to reach a state where we do not notice differences. Some participants claimed that they already did not notice racial/ethnic differences and implied that they would continue that process. However, it was perhaps with number 20 that people rebelled the most: the idea of dismantling the Sudanese skin colour codes, which they saw as not symptomatic of racism, but were merely descriptive. We realised that we should have used the term 'critique' instead of 'dismantling'. Seemingly for the Sudanese in the workshop, dismantling was too final, too sudden. Many Sudanese are tenacious about their colour codes (blue, brown, green, etc.), often play with them, make jokes about them and, therefore, do not think they are harmful, only descriptive and 'part of the culture'.

We got additional opposition to number 21 – asking that participants acknowledge that 'race' has no scientific basis and, if we are to use the concept at all (as facilitators we advised discarding the concept entirely), we have to recognise that, based on blood types, there are thousands of races in the world. Those in the room who saw themselves as trained in science, could not agree that there is no scientific basis for 'race'; they seemed to view this as an attack on science, and forwarded genetics as a valid mode of categorisation. Again, we found this challenging.

Discussion of the remainder of the 24 guidelines went by without incident. These were about spreading the ideas into other workshops, considering each other as allies, using each moment as a teachable moment in our families, jobs, and in our communities, etc. The next section, facilitated by Kadoda went by without incident. She laid out in much less radical and sensitive terminology what an inclusive workshop of anti-racism would look like. It might have helped that she is Sudanese (i.e., not a white foreigner imposing ideas on them), but it was also less personal. We were no longer asking them to acknowledge personal things, but to act in particular ways in the community – for example, sharing our stories, using everyday language, taking action that would benefit everyone, community-building, and carrying on despite obstacles. These were clearly acts that the participants saw themselves already engaged in.

The last section of the workshop was supposed to be a discussion among all of us, telling stories of our own racist behaviour or behaviour we had observed in others, and calls for action. However, by then, we realised that we had taken the participants far too fast and had threatened the core of some of their culture or earlier education, aspects that they were not yet willing to give up, at least not in one workshop! It was clear that we had needed to develop particular pedagogical skills for Sudanese culture, specifically, even though the participants had been mostly handpicked. Even though they were among the liberal to progressive segments of the population, at least three to four preceding workshops needed to be developed first, perhaps one of which could have been an ethnographic exploration of Sudan. We also realised that we had needed to ask them what some of these terms meant to them (such as racism) and proceeded from there, that is, rather than starting with a critique. We made too many assumptions about them and the process itself. It might also have helped to have had some vignettes to give them, or to have them do some role-playing, with each playing different ethnic/racial groups in interaction with each other.

We should have realised that we were dealing with a society where people are highly self-protected. We were rubbing against the grain of everything they had been taught, especially since the Islamist government has been in power, for example, that self-criticism is weak, that not protecting the reputation of oneself or one's family is a grave error, etc. It was only later that we began to realise the possible full impact of an Islamist authoritarian regime on people after 27 years, perhaps causing people to be cautious, more self-protective, and less open than they might have been otherwise.

We have since embarked on the 'Sudanisation' of the Diversity Workshop's material and we hope to start another series with smaller groups, working particularly with youth. Sudan presents a very rich (and relatively non-developed and challenging) research landscape for theoretical, or pragmatic, and trans-disciplinary inquiries. In these workshops we focused on pedagogy and 'liberation', in these different and challenging contexts of heterogeneity which is present in Sudan in almost every aspect, along with multiple forms of oppression. Despite all odds, knowledge is being produced by old actors (such as the State and universities) and new actors (such as NGOs, youth, IDPs, and diasporans).

The Chronicle and the Concept Map – experiments with graphical tools

As a collaborative team we have been experimenting with graphical representations of our various processes. Appendix A may, at first, seem like a simple chronological depiction, but the journey from an idea to a material finish was not a simple process. It set up the far more complicated content of Appendix B. The first appendix chronicles, and the second one maps our common experiences and team work. The process of illustrating and materialising 'our common experiences' was as much fun as it was enlightening. We can see continuities and discontinuities in our work, the convergence and

integration of our ideas, responses to events around us and action, as well as ways forward.

Constructing the somewhat complicated Concept Map signalled to us, however, that our attempt to offer new tools for other scholars, in addition to ourselves, and ways of looking at collaboration are mainly experimental. Diagrammatic representations of friendships and collaborations are rare. These are different from Network Analyses of an earlier era because of our attempt to illustrate theory, praxis, and issues and translate these into spaces.

Chronicle of a Collaboration

Using a colour-coded table, a ten-year chronology of the different activities we engaged in together is presented. These activities, we collectively call collaborations, include conversations where we have shared our different interests, ideas, research and teaching, projects, and upcoming conferences, etc. Some of the chats have led to attending a conference together, either presenting different but related papers or co-authoring a paper. Sometimes we have become fixated about a common experience or an idea such that we organise an event about it, always with the underlying theme of the intersections of knowledge, pedagogy (where we started in 2008), and practice. In the case of a number of shared ideas that turned into a common (and important) interest, our collaboration would generate a joint publication.[10]

In reading the table in Appendix A, note that the top row is the key for following the illustration of common experiences between 2008 and today (2017). In yellow are conversations – the seeds; in green are joint participations at conferences and workshops; in turquoise are collaborations in organising events; in blue are co-publications that build on these experiences; and finally, in orange are a shared future outlook as possible projects.

Conceptual Map

In the introduction of this paper, we described our attempt as a team to interweave theory, praxis and space, to create teaching and learning social justice spaces. Concept mapping offers a way to organise and visualise knowledge in the form of concepts (using circles or boxes) and relationships (using lines or arrows) between them in such a way that it allows the abstraction of a 'domain of knowledge' to a set of propositions (e.g., in the domain of our collaboration, memory is a form of knowledge; and memory is important in oral history).
The diagram in Appendix B is an adaptation of the conceptual mapping technique to juxtapose two representations of our collaboration knowledge. The process started by identifying and categorising the 'concepts' that are featured in our various forms of collaborations listed on the chronicle table. The clusters divide into theories or issues that bring us together, practices and methods that we considered, and spaces we utilised. The first representations are the individual concept maps showing the interrelationships between concepts *within* clusters (e.g., issue to issue), and the second *among* clusters (theory to praxis). The relationships between concepts in a cluster can highlight central concepts (indicated by the number of connections a concept has with others in the cluster). For example, the centrality of conflict in issues we cared about, politics of knowledge and social movements in theoretical discussions, activism, community projects and pedagogy in praxis, and community-based organisations in spaces. The arrows linking issues and theory to praxis, and onto spaces, highlight continuity in our collaboration; that is, the issues or theories we acted upon or explored using a praxis, to create what we call – a social justice space for teaching and learning about them.

The relationships between concepts within and across clusters are unnamed for reasons of simplicity; they, however, would have provided a richer picture of our mode of thinking as a team – how issues or intellectual ideas influence our praxis, and therefore the forms of spaces we are able to create. The other set of relationships absent from the diagram are those between praxis and space. This was omitted because most examples of praxis were translated into a collaborative activity in some space, whether in a physical form like a

community project, a study, an event, a publication, or on blogs that accompany events we organise together. Most importantly, the naming of relationships would reveal what gives rise to continuities and discontinuities in our collaborations. For instance, the praxis memorial, which is a transitional justice mechanism and requires critical pedagogy, is an example of a discontinued idea that came up in our discussion in 2013. The idea was discontinued after we took an informal survey in Sudan in which we collected opinions on memorials to honour Sudanese conflicts and whether or not they would resolve anything. From there we instead embarked on a transitional justice path.

As a critique of this methodology as we have manifested it, we can say that ideally, the process of constructing and clustering concept maps that reflect our collaboration should have been performed collaboratively, which was not feasible for this paper. However, this exercise by one team member illustrated the process and highlighted its potential to link and trace ideas. Because the concepts and their relationships can be named and arranged differently by different people, the map would only represent the mental model of who constructs it. For our purposes, this first version will serve as a discussion tool and visual aid to think through our collaborations, and ultimately, reveal a richer picture than our individual mental model.

Concluding remarks – the activist trajectory

Our activist trajectory has included a recognition of how educating cadres and aiming them toward facilitating their own anti-racism workshops – that is, sending them out to create social justice spaces – is moving toward research that makes a difference. Our next plan is to collect responses from the seventeen original participants in our 'Diversity' (anti-racism) workshop as a follow-up to see if they have put any of the ideas into practice and if they themselves have educated facilitators. Our activist trajectory has also included taking part in a 2015 youth festival in Cairo, fresh on the heels of what most Egyptians considered their 'failed' revolution (of 2011). We disseminated among some of these youth activists concepts of 'hope' and related to them the hidden and disguised ways in which Sudanese who claimed that their 2013 uprising had 'failed' were, in fact, engaging in subversive activism all the time, often unconscious of the social justice spaces they were creating. What the Egyptian activists shared with us, among other things, was their website set up to collect 'daily victories'. That this upbeat act was being carried out in the midst of Egyptian progressives seeing their Uprising as having failed was moving. After our connections with these Egyptian youth activists, we integrated some of their work into our symposium on 'Hope' that followed a few months later.

In addition, in 2015, to 'test' Hale's research propositions that challenged the concept of 'failure' in situations where people continue to resist, we assembled a focus group of some twelve activists who had all participated in Sudan's 2013 seemingly abortive Uprising (i.e., they lamented that they did not succeed in overthrowing the Islamist-military regime). First, we had asked them what they did during the demonstrations. All of them, after indicating the ways they had participated, said that, despite their activism, 2013 had 'failed'. The second question, an hour later, asked what each one of them is doing now. After each had modestly indicated the activist projects they are engaged in now, that is, when they were able to hear each other articulate their individual activist projects, they began to say, 'Maybe we didn't fail after all'. The focus group session had resulted in raising their consciousness about their role in political change and their unrecognised (by themselves) creation of alternative and social justice spaces. Our 2017 symposium on 'The Intellectual' asked questions about Sudan's organic and public intellectuals and their role in creating social justice spaces. Gendering these projects has been a challenge because of the behind-the-scenes roles that women have played and the limited definitions held by the elite of what constitutes significant intellectual ideas and political work.

It is clear to us in our continuing studies of education as a life-long process – education in spaces not usually associated with knowledge production; alternative forms of resistance; and hidden-from-history achievements carried out by women – that our chronicle, our conceptual mapping, and our friendship have space for expansion, refinement, and further excitement.

> “The process of illustrating and materialising ‘our common experiences’ was as much fun as it was enlightening. We can see continuities and discontinuities in our work, the convergence and integration of our ideas, responses to events around us and action, as well as ways forward.”

Appendix A – Chronology of Collaboration

Key	Conversations		Joint Participations	Collaborations		Co-Productions		Shared Future Outlook	
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Mutual interest in the work of Paulo Freire, in localised knowledge and migrating epistemologies	Sondra helping with fund-raising ideas for village and youth library Gada sharing experiences on Darfur and Nuba Mountains trips	Sondra sharing her academic freedom work Gada sharing solar electrification project progress Sharing news of talks, conferences and research Chatting about Durham Luce Fellowship	Interest in community-based organisations as knowledge producers; identity forms of knowledge, methods for transferring knowledge (pedagogical strategies), managing it, and putting it to revolutionary use Chats about the 'Arab Spring' and political activities in Sudan	Indigenous knowledge and included discussions of ethics, appropriate technology, and the politics of localised knowledge (memory and conflict in Sudan) Mutual interest in social media as a form of pedagogy	Chats about memorials and transitional justice Chats about Kurdish activism [Istanbul]	Chats about Sudanese diaspora Sudan Studies Association meetings (San Francisco)	PF-UK Conference (London) Conference on 'Oral History in Times of Change' (Aug., Cairo) Sondra 'Women memory as knowledge' Gada 'Women solar engineers narratives (trajectory)'	PF network meeting in (Durban) Symposium on the 'Concept of Hope: Methodology, Pedagogy, and Knowledge Production'	Writing articles for International Women's Day Issue of Alhadatha Magazine Symposium on 'The Intellectual: Old and New Modes of Thought in Sudan and Beyond–Moving into the 21st Century'
Discussion on concept mapping of abstract ideas about the politics of memory, oral history	Converging ideas on youth, women's organisations, and social media	Chats about Women groups in Nuba Mountains (Gada sharing experiences in Nuba Mountains)	Nuba Mountains Workshop in collaboration with local women NGOs (Kadugli)	Chats about youth groups in Sudan	Sudan and South Sudan Studies Association International conference (Bonn) European Social Science Congress in (Mersin) Joining PF-UK network	Symposium on 'Knowledge and Innovation: Technology, Pedagogy and Culture' Sondra talk: 'Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Knowledge'	Knowledge Production and Pedagogical Strategies in Community Settings: Women's NGOs and Women IDPs as Knowledge Producers and Transmitters	Co-edited book on: Networks of Knowledge Production in Sudan	Discussion on possible book(s) productions from Symposium on 'The Intellectual' Chats about 2018 Symposium Discussion about recent publication by Sondra's ex-PhD student on transnational feminist praxis and work on friendships and alliances

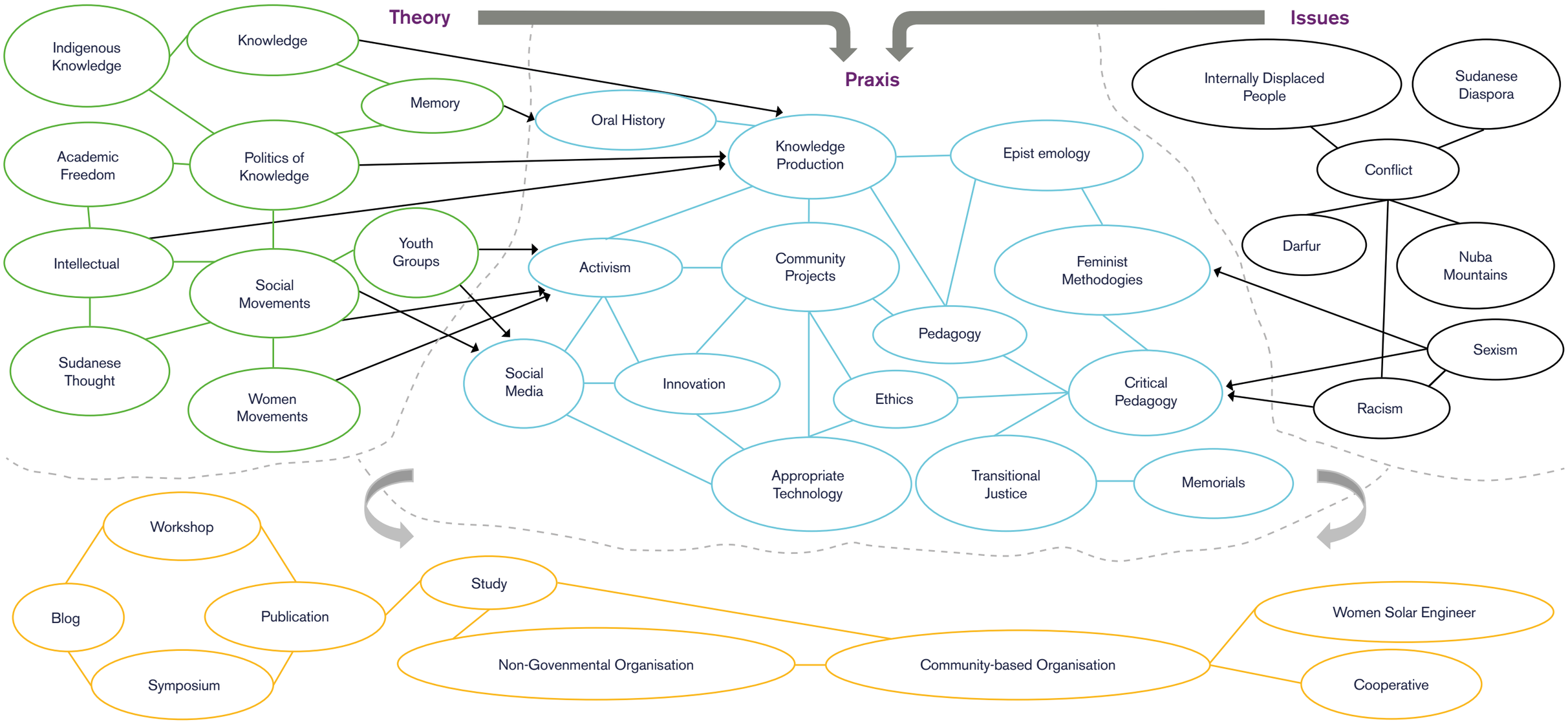
*Appendix carries onto next page.

Appendix A – Chronology of Collaboration

Key	Conversations	Joint Participations	Collaborations	Co-Productions	Shared Future Outlook

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Talk: Gendering the Politics of Memory and the Politics of Forgetting (or Being Forced to Forget) (Sondra, Ahfad, University)	Mutual interest in how community-based groups produce knowledge and the transfer of that knowledge (pedagogy)	Conference presentation: 'Nuba Women as Technological Innovators: The Sudanese Women's Barefoot Solar Engineers Project' (NY) (developed but did not submit)	SEED Grant Application (Ruya and NWEDA -Nuba NGOs) (unsuccessful) [Nuba war breaks out]	KM Workshop: Writing research (Training); Round-table of Women NGOs; Round-table of Youth activism Establishing the Sudanese Knowledge Society	Barefoot Women Cooperative: Proposal building, funding-raising, and establishing	Key areas: Role of ICT in knowledge creation; 'Teaching & Learning: The Role of Pedagogy in "Knowledge Societies"'; 'Civil Society and "Undone Science": Prioritizing Research for Creating Inclusive "Knowledge Societies"'.	Workshop: 'Building a Cadre of Facilitators of Workshops Dealing with Diversity'	Discussion on future collaboration: E.g. Durham/Luce Fellowship. Revision of: Diversity workshop; Hope Part II). Chats about 'The Intellectual and Power' following (Gada) participation at round-table in Khartoum organised by Alhadatha for Publishing; Discussion and Planning a Symposium on 'The Intellectual'	Grant Application for 'Supporting Research to Make a Difference Funding' by International Network on Gender, Social Justice & Praxis Co-authoring: Occasional Paper for publication by Newcastle University; paper for GAPS World Congress
	WAAD (Abuja)	Sondra's Master Class (Ahfad University for Women)	Preparing for Research writing training, Youth activism, and Women NGOs round-table at KM Workshop	Activism against war in Nuba Mountains, appeal to Barefoot College and return of 2 women for training	Book Chapter on: Political Activism in Sudan (focusing on Women and Youth)	Academic freedom workshop at Garden City College (using material from Sondra) – Gada (co-organizer)	Symposium on Knowledge Production: Identities, Mobilities, and Social Media		Developing edited book proposal based on Symposium on 'The Intellectual' Planning for organising a symposium in 2018 on 'Development: A Critique (tentative title)'
		Develop application for women peace makers (for benefit of Nuba woman activist)	JMEWS special issue (Gada participated in article) [Sondra retirement year events in US and Sudan]	Working on papers for Mersin, Bonn, and Moscow	Moscow Panel – Sudanese youth movement (accepted but didn't go)	Deliverable #1 Article on: Sudanese Youth Movements and Social Media. (CJAS)	Deliverable #2 (paper and video)		

Appendix B – Concept Map



Notes

[1]This paper was first produced for a meeting of the International Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Network on Gender, Social Justice and Practice, Sponsored by the University of Newcastle, Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education, Held at University of KwaZulu-Natal, KZN, South Africa, August 8–12, 2016.

[2]Azza Basarudin and Himika Bhattacharya, in discussing the politics of solidarity in ethnographic research, present many interesting ideas about the formation of alliances in the process of doing research. See their 'Meditations on Friendship: Politics of Feminist Solidarity in Ethnography' in Elora Halim Chowdhury and Liz Philipose, eds., *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism, and Transnational Solidarity*. Chicago: University of Illinois, 2016, pp. 43–68. We have taken some of their ideas a step further by trying to work out some tools for seeing various relationships graphically.

[3]Originally working under the auspices of the Paulo Freire Institute of UK and now under the University of Newcastle's Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education.

[4]See Appendix A for a timeline and context for these activities.

[5]Khartoum is the capital of Sudan, but there are three towns bridging the White and Blue Niles – Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman. Sometimes we have used 'Greater Khartoum' or 'the capital' to include all three of the towns.

[6]We detailed some of these activities in what was informally referred to as 'Deliverable #1', which was submitted to the directors of the project by audio recording: 'Report on the Current Collaborative Work of Sondra Hale and Gada Kadoda: Highlighting Existing Praxes that Connect to the Network Themes'.

[7]Among these were a conference held by Women in Africa and the African Diaspora (WAAD) in Abuja, Nigeria; the planning of a panel for an African conference in Moscow (which did not materialise because of visa problems); Sudan and South Sudan Studies Association International conference in Bonn, Germany; the European Social Science Congress in Mersin, Turkey; and the Sudan Studies Association meetings in San Francisco. See Appendix A.

[8]We produced a 2013 article on 'The Changing Nature of Political Activism in Sudan: Women and Youth "Activists" as Catalysts in Civil Society', and an article which was published in Vol. 48, No.1, 2015 in *The Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 'Contemporary Sudanese Youth Movements and the Role of Social Media'.

[9]Other Keynotes and talks that were on the theme of pedagogy were 'Pedagogy, Technology and Culture– Using Service Learning and Appropriate Technologies for Capacity Building'; 'Education, Innovation and Development in Sudan'; and 'Sudanese Medicine: An Alternative Educational Model'. Kadoda chaired a session on 'Information & Technology: The Role of Information and Communication Technology in a "Knowledge Creating" Society'. Kadoda also conceived and coordinated a Roundtable Discussion Session, 'Teaching & Learning: The Role of Pedagogy in "Knowledge Societies"'.

Another Kadoda/Hale collaboration, presented via video, was for a Panel on 'Gender, Social Justice and Education: North and South: Developing a Cross-Trajectory, Geographically Diverse, and Interdisciplinary Network on Gender, Social Justice and Praxis – Reflections from a First Year of Work'. Conference of the Gender and Education Association, London, University of Roehampton. The conference was co-hosted by the Paulo Freire Institute-UK, and Roehampton's School of Education and the Centre for Educational Research on Equalities, Policy and Pedagogy, 24 June, 2015.

[10]We have recently published a co-edited book bolstered by our long Freirean-inspired collaboration. The chapters in the book were generated, for the most part, from a symposium we co-organised in Khartoum in 2015. Our essayists engage in redefinitions, the broadening of concepts, the linking and intersecting of concepts, investigations of methods and ethics, and an approach that is, at once, culturally specific to Sudan and transnational. Sondra Hale and Gada Kadoda, eds., *Networks of Knowledge Production in Sudan: Identities, Mobilities, and Technologies* (Lexington Press, 2016).

> “Whilst I was particularly struck by the warmth, sense of belonging and the space to nurture my career, I was equally excited about the ability to impact on society, the greatest push to serve humanity, to embrace the course of women and the marginalized, and to encourage social justice.”

Warmest greetings from Ghana

Hi Everyone
I remember vividly the day Professor Penny Burke told me about the newly established Network and her desire for me to be a member and her mentee. Then, she challenged me to look critically beyond my PhD work especially in the context of Paulo Freire and social justice. I felt excited about this invitation and the excitement I felt has not waned over the past years. This enthusiasm indeed intensified with the few days of my interaction with members of the Network in Durban, what I call my “Durban experience”.

Whilst I was particularly struck by the warmth, sense of belonging and the space to nurture my career, I was equally excited about the ability to impact on society, the greatest push to serve humanity, to embrace the course of women and the marginalized, and to encourage social justice. The different dynamics, the different nationalities but the common sense of purpose was marvelous. Undeniably, my interaction in the workshop has enhanced my perspectives of life not only academically, but professionally, culturally and socially. I had a real transformative experience. The need to develop strong feminism with my work has not been so compulsive.

In the context of moving beyond the academia I always see vividly the joy of the female academics, my colleagues, who participated in the Ghana workshop on their challenges in a neoliberal era. I remember their enthusiasm and the sudden surge of energy when they had the opportunity to deliberate their problems, when they had the space to talk and the hope that their situation could change for the better. If we could so much impact on female academics who are relatively ‘empowered’, then how much more would we impact on the relatively ‘disempowered’ women?

I am confident that we will move forward in our shared values in challenging dominant discourses that are exclusionary, discriminating and exclusive. I am optimistic that we will continue to move forward to represent the interest of the marginalized groups and to challenge the dominant neoliberal discourse and its permeation of public dialogues.

Indeed, my feelings about this Network and our meeting in South Africa, was aptly summarized by Professor Sondra's poem. I will also reiterate Saaj's appreciation of Penny, Lauren and CEEHE for this noble idea and the practical efforts for this great Network. Thank you also each and every one for the great experiences, contributions and eagerness you bring to this Network. Yes, Saaj until we meet again, Aluta continua. I truly love you all. Meda mo ase.

Much love,
Gifty

Exploring the Impact of Neoliberalism on Female Academics in Universities in Ghana

Written by
Gifty Gyamera &
Penny Jane Burke

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In the context of neoliberalism, which has become the new common sense, universities globally have adopted corporate strategies of competition, self-promotion and being enterprising (Burke, 2012; Harris, 2011; Torres, 2009, 2011). In this regard, academics are presented with a range of demanding and competing tasks for which there is little escape (Davies, et. al. 2005). According to Davies, et. al. (2005) academics are perceived as having a monetary value to their institutions and are compelled into performative orientations, in which they must continually produce outputs of value to the institution.

Individuals must then always be ready to be rejected as relevant players if they are no longer of any (monetary) value (ibid).

In Ghana, academics are expected to develop proposals to attract funding for their institutions. The 'publish or perish' maxim has become a compulsive demand. Academics are expected to continually produce publications amid multiple other intensive administrative and teaching demands. As academics strive to fulfill these competing demands, they are overcome with 'exhaustion, stress, overload, insomnia, anxiety, shame, aggression, hurt, guilt and feelings of out-of-placeness, fraudulence and fear of exposure within the contemporary academy' (Gill, 2009, p. 4).

These demands of neoliberalism often impact more heavily on female academics than their male counterparts (Burke, 2012; Currie & Berverly, 2013; Morley, 2005). Even while every academic is expected to concede to the demands connected to neoliberal discourses, women are positioned differently in relation to complex gendered inequalities and power relations. They have lower salaries, are less represented at top positions and are less likely to attract the most prestigious forms of research funding. They often have to combine the multiple demands of academia with family and caring responsibilities (Morley, 2005; Probert, 2005).

In Ghana, in addition to fulfilling neoliberal expectations and experiencing discriminations, female academics are confronted with various socio-cultural expectations (Manu, et al., 2007; Morley, et al., 2010). A major expectation of women is to fulfill what is often perceived as their 'Divine' and 'Existential' roles of becoming wives and mothers. These expectations reflect Gifty's lived experiences as an academic in one of the private institutions in Ghana and as a PhD and early career researcher.

Davies et al. (2005) have argued that neoliberalism cannot be perceived as something totally external to academics upon which they have no influence. In many cases, academics accept these demands as normal expectations and strive to fulfill them in the wider context of a performative culture (Ball, 2012). Others have argued that neoliberalism works in complex ways in relation to other political forces such as patriarchy and neocolonialism and also needs to be understood in terms of the multiple contexts that shape the interconnection between personal experience, institutional practices and macro level structures and discourses (Burke, Crozier & Misiaszek, 2017).

With the abovementioned challenges, we argue the need to explore the extent to which neoliberalism, patriarchy and other contextual influences shape the education and career experiences and trajectories of female academics in Ghana. We developed a project that aimed to engage women in higher education with critical reflections on the impact of neoliberalised and gendered structures, experiences and discourses on their lives. Through a gender lens, we aimed to develop a feminist approach to collaboratively analyse the women's experiences and to develop interventions. A key aspect was to focus on how, in spite of these institutional and national challenges, females could impact on higher education and society more broadly from a social justice perspective.

The methodology

A qualitative participatory methodology framed this small-scale project. We aimed to open up spaces to allow the women participants to collectively explore and make sense of their experiences, perceptions and practices through a range of critical, conceptual tools, drawing on feminist and Freirean theories.

A small group of female academics in Ghana were invited to participate in the project. The participants were identified from a diverse group of women academics at different stages in their career. The participants came from different subject areas, different age groups, and different marital statuses, although we did not regard this as a representative sample, given the small size and scale of the project. In total, we had a small group of ten women participating in the project.

We drew on biographical methods, which was facilitated through discussion and letter writing as a method of collective enquiry. This provided the women with ways of articulating their experiences of – outside of conventional literacy practices – dominant conventions and frameworks in which what it is possible to say is highly regulated. This enabled us the opportunity to create different kinds of practices within an ethos of collaboration, empathy and support and within a dialogic space of praxis.

The data gathering process involved two phases.

The first phase involved Gifty and Penny in writing a reflective letter to each other on the impact of neoliberalism and patriarchy on their personal, educational and career experiences (see Appendix 1). Our exchange of letters was followed by a workshop for participants in a relaxing, supportive and conducive place that also signified the value of the women participants. Gifty facilitated the workshop, which was co-designed with Penny, and the workshop was held in an executive conference venue in a university in Ghana.

The workshop commenced with a presentation sharing some key feminist and critical literature examining the gendered practices associated with neoliberalism. Our letters were shared with the participants to give them a sense of our personal reflections. Participants were invited to ask questions and also give their own reflective accounts of their experiences, insights and questions. At the end of the workshop, the women were invited voluntarily to write reflective letters on how they think neoliberalism and gendered inequalities have impacted on their lives.

The project was guided by these questions: to what extent have neoliberal discourses and practices influenced the academic careers of female academics in Ghana? How do female academics perceive neoliberalism in Ghanian universities? In what ways do female academics accept, encourage and/or resist neoliberal discourses and expectations in the context of their work in universities? How do these expectations affect their perception and attitude towards traditional gender roles and expectations?

Reflection of female academics on neoliberal practices in the universities

The workshop encouraged the participants to critically reflect on their taken-for-granted assumptions of the practices at play in their respective institutions. All the participants indicated that although they continue to experience the harsh demands of neoliberalism, they had not before conceptualised this in relation to their experiences. For example, one woman writes in her letter:

> I have not really reflected on the effect of neoliberalism on my life. The presentation gave me the opportunity to reflect on my experiences at… [her institution]. Indeed, as I sat through the presentation, I asked myself many questions. Could neoliberalism be responsible for the kind of treatment I got from… [mentions her institution]?

This indicates that the presentation really connected with their experiences. It also helped them to gain insightful reflections of their experiences.

The extent to which neoliberal discourses and practices influence the academic careers of female academics

Three out of the ten women produced letters as a result of their first workshop experience. These three women were all from one institution. They all expressed a strong view that the institution is male dominated, posing many challenges for female academics. As one participant puts it, 'it is a man's world'. The women suggested that the institution paid little attention to gender issues. Indeed, academics who are considered to be gender advocates are actively discriminated against. One woman narrated her ordeal as a gender coordinator in her institution. She felt she was considered as less valued as a result of dealing with gender issues. She explains,

> As a lecturer in gender studies and later on as a manager of the GIMPA Gender Development and Resource Centre, I soon realized that I was not regarded as a 'proper' lecturer. Some colleagues even nicknamed me "madam gender". I was excluded from most meetings, programmes outside and was even denied some entitlements. Yet the Centre was making a lot of money from the courses being run. Can neoliberalism explain this? How can commodification of knowledge explain this? Does culture or ethnicity play a part?

In the institution where the authors of the letters are based, there is no woman in any of senior administrative or senior academic positions. This highly limited participation of women in senior levels of higher education confirms many of the issues raised by the three women in their letters.

The women suggest that it is not only neoliberal demands that impact on their academic experiences. One woman explains that neoliberal demands intersect with the cultural, social and religious settings to further intensify demands on female academics. Another woman also attested to the various forms of discrimination she experienced, including being a black woman and a woman married to a foreign man. According to her, her university administration bypassed her scheduled departure for PhD studies because she was married to a foreign man. In her view, she has been impacted more by liberalism than neoliberalism, benefitting from a concept of equality that enabled her to get the sponsorship and other benefits to enhance her education and career. The women understood race as intersecting with gender to exacerbate their experiences of discrimination in higher education and also mentioned that limited government funding undermined their research activities and development.

Women's engagement with and against neoliberal discourses and expectations in the universities

In the workshop discussion, the majority of participants perceived neoliberalism as a concept which enables women to achieve higher on the educational and career ladder. One woman explained the way she benefitted from neoliberalism in her letter:

> One, it pushes us hard to the wall as far as our progression are concerned, we are made to think and innovate ways to maneuver around the system. Two, the system embraces monetary value of the individual, to me it mean making yourself relevant to the system and bring self-development which is good to have a personal value. Three, as the system values meritocracy where the system is followed strictly – it will bring women to their rightful places which will project their voices (meaning the more the women the louder the voices) to shape our society and the economic environment. Well, I do appreciate the difficulty it will take women to climb the ladder to merit the position for the voice to be heard, I think we can accept the challenge.

However, she also considers that the influences of her educational and academic life are more a result of *liberalism* than *neoliberalism*. According to her, the liberal higher education system offered her equality and the opportunity to pursue her education and career prospects.

In the workshop we discussed and critiqued the discourses of meritocracy and the women expressed their view that meritocracy was both appropriate and acceptable. However, one woman also understood that subjective judgments are tied to who is seen to 'have merit':

> Meritocracy sounds good but again, it takes those in decision making position to decide who merit what; here it is the men and the question is are they ready…?

She however continues that in the neoliberal context: "Each one for himself God for as all; you have to carry your cross. With this in mind I choose not to complain because it offers no solution… it is up to me to devise the required strategy to accomplish the task". Many of the women believed that with hard work they would be able to overcome wider circumstances.

Women's perceptions and attitudes towards traditional gender roles and expectations

Two of the women wrote in their letters about how their educational and career achievements were affected by traditional expectations. Participants emphasised the social importance placed on marrying and giving birth and how this served as a major impediment to women's career advancement. One participant explained that:

> Either you have to be divorced or compromise with your husband… A woman in Ghana has to get married. Without marriage and having children…

According to the women, most men will only support a woman who has had children.

Given these social pressures, many women choose family over an academic career. As one woman, a young married academic explains:

> That is where the difficulty lies because its either you focus on the family or the career. For there is an adage that, 'when you look into the bottle with the two eyes you go blind'. Its either you succeed with the academic or the family. Hence for me, the family is first and the career second. With this I know that the speed with which I will need to climb the academic ladder will be less as compared with my male counterpart, but that is the price to pay and I accept with no complains.

Exploring such issues in the workshop raised some challenges, which are explored in the following section.

Challenges of the workshop

One of the key challenges we faced was lack of funding to sustain dialogue with the women. This meant that we could not follow up with further workshops as we had intended. Exploring such complex and difficult issues required that we develop an ongoing relationship with the women over time. We were unable to do this, although it is now our intention to apply for funding to facilitate further work with the women. All the women expressed their deep appreciation of the opportunity to participate in the workshop, and the desire to build on this with further meetings. As one woman explained: 'I would not have missed it [the workshop] for anything'.

The workshop granted them the platform to explore their experiences as a group. Such a platform was rare and provided not only a temporary relief for them from stressful conditions but the opportunity to deepen their understanding about their personal lives and wider gender structures and discourses.

The way forward

Our aim is to build on this initial workshop and to encourage the women to write about and to analyse their experiences of neoliberalism, patriarchy, neocolonialism and other contextual influences that shape, enable and constrain their lives in higher education. The overarching aim is to draw on this collaborative analysis to develop a handbook of resources openly accessible and available to serve as a professional development guide and to contribute to gender equity. The handbook will provide a means to invite interactive, reflexive engagement beyond the immediate circle of women participating in the project.

The impact of the project will not be limited to women in higher education but will also extend to other contexts in the public sector. Many of the factors that impede the full participation of women in higher education, are similar to factors that limit women's participation in other public services and organisations. In Ghana, the challenges to gender equity include unsupportive arrangements and processes within the political system for selecting leaders and candidates for political positions, weak implementation of existing laws for promoting women's rights, weak capacity of appropriate enforcement and related agencies, limited coverage of the institutions dealing with women's rights, inadequate support for victims of gendered violence, and poor implementation of the Domestic Violence laws (Government of Ghana, 2010).

We aim to establish a Gender Centre to address some of these challenges through research and forums including seminars, workshops and public lectures. The Centre will also link up with the Ghana Association of Public Administrators and Managers (GAPAM) and the GIMPA Gender Resource Centre to further support the organisation of programs. A critical area that inevitably affects effective women's socioeconomic and civic participation, beyond their physical and mental health, is sexual abuse. Studies have confirmed the incidence of sexual harassment and abuse in the Ghanaian universities (Morley, 2011; Manu, et.al., 2007). Sexual abuse is not only at the higher levels but in the lower levels of the educational system (UNICEF, 2012, 2013). A look at the national data on rape and defilement shows mostly a rise in rape and defilement cases in the society (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit, 2001–2011). These cases have direct impact on gender parity (UNICEF, 2012). With the needed funding, we hope to embark on research and many other programs including workshops to address sexual abuse particularly of girls in the senior and junior high schools, as well as the range of issues raised by the women participating in this initial small-scale project.

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> Our aim is to build on this initial workshop and to encourage the women to write about and to analyse their experiences of neoliberalism, patriarchy, neocolonialism and other contextual influences that shape, enable and constrain their lives in higher education.

Appendix 1

Roehampton University
London

Roehampton University
Roehampton Lane
London
SW15 5PJ
020 8392 3000
www.roehampton.ac.uk

Dr Gifty Gyamera
Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration

Dear Gifty

This letter is to express my personal and professional reflections of gender and neoliberalism, following your excellent PhD research, which revealed the ongoing and multiple challenges women face in higher education.

Your thesis illuminates how neoliberalism works in complicated ways with gendered inequalities in diverse contexts across the globe. The working of neoliberalism within Ghana, where your study is located, is deeply entangled with neocolonialism and global power relations and struggles in relation to hegemonic discourses of internationalization'. The prevalence of neoliberalism across cultures and societies must be understood as intersecting with other oppressive forces. These include neo/colonialism, patriarchy, misogyny and racism. Such forces position women (and men) in higher education in unequal ways and yet play out differently for women in different cultural, national, institutional and local contexts. Feminist research has argued and demonstrated that knowledge associated with femininity is often marginalized, undermined and silenced, and your research exposed that this remains true as well for indigenous forms of knowledge. This helps to understand that research, theory and analysis must be adequately sensitive to complex formations of power and difference and to the intricate interconnections of inequality that create possibilities and limitations for women in higher education. Your work, and the process of acting as your supervisor, often engaged me in deep reflection about my own experiences as a woman academic in a neoliberal university. How have the structures, cultures and practices of neoliberalism intersected with patriarchy, racism, misogyny and other forms of oppression to shape my personal and professional experiences as an academic?

As many others who might be perceived as successful academics, I have benefitted from neoliberalism, particularly as it intersects with discourses of meritocracy. This is because it foregrounds individual 'choice' and particular forms of self-regulation, so that when an individual performs and masters the discourses of neoliberalism, including making the 'right' choices' and showing 'potential', she is often able to succeed in and through a system, even while that system is simultaneously structured by traditions of patriarchy. Individualism, once it is mastered, and the performance of 'achievement', often facilitates social mobility. In many ways, I am the 'ideal neoliberal subject'. I am able to work in 'flexible' ways, to be 'productive' and to demonstrate powers of self-discipline. Although my motivation might not be driven by the values and perspectives of neoliberalism, I am able to meet the expectations of neoliberalism and thus to be recognized as 'successful' within hegemonic discourses of 'success'. However, I am simultaneously attempting to subvert these very discourses, searching for ways of resisting and 'refusing' the frameworks of neoliberalism, through engagement with feminism and Freirean orientations and perspectives.

By drawing on feminist and Freirean perspectives, I am committed to being a critically reflexive academic who problematizes my success in higher education and locates it in the structures that are also seeped in histories of oppression and exclusion. By meeting the expectations of neoliberalism, and 'overcoming' (to some extent) patriarchy, it appears that, as neoliberal discourse suggests, I am 'free' to exercise choice and by making the 'right' ones, I am successful despite my social positioning. I came through the system as a marginalized subject; I was a 'Widening Participation' student, who demonstrated (so it seems) that meritocracy works. This is troubling and needs to be troubled. In my recent book, *The Right to Higher Education* (Burke, 2012), I analyse my own autobiography to show that

Roehampton University
London

Roehampton University
Roehampton Lane
London
SW15 5PJ
020 8392 3000
www.roehampton.ac.uk

more than individual determination, I benefited from the social, economic and cultural structures that were in place to support my achievements. This included a full-time Access to Higher Education programme, where my son had a nursery place while I studied, and a full-time degree with financial support that enabled me to gain my degree as a mature student with three small children to care for. Furthermore, my position as a White, heterosexual woman bestowed some social and cultural privileges upon me that might not have been available had I been differently positioned as a woman.

In my book, I argue that *symbolic* recognition is as important as *material* redistribution, and although the childcare and low fees (I did leave my studies with a small student debt) were of importance, the ways in which I was recognized as having potential was of equal significance for my success. This included that I was 'recognized' as having potential and selected for the Access course, and later for my degrees, and that tutors and mentors then encouraged me as I progressed through higher education. Without such recognition, it is unlikely I would have progressed through higher education in the ways that I have.

However, I have seen how gender matters and shapes educational aspirations and opportunities for other women. This has been apparent in my research, from which I have written extensively of the impact of femininity and masculinity on educational identities, experiences and access to and participation in higher education. I have also observed the ways women colleagues have been differentially treated in higher education and have made sense of this in terms of a deep-seated institutional misogyny that is often exacerbated by neoliberalism. I have seen, for example, highly established and successful feminist scholars being misrecognized and undermined in ways that I have not seen happening to their male peers. Indeed, it often seems that age and experience increase men's 'marketability', whilst women academics of the same stature and profile are often seen as 'redundant'.

Your thesis and our project reenergizes my passionate commitment to explore, critically analyze and document the impact of neoliberalism with intersecting forms of oppressions (such as patriarchy, racism and neocolonialism). It is important that women engage processes of consciousness-raising about the ways they are positioned by social structures and discourses, but at the same time, have the resources and tools to theorize this and create praxis, with the aim of social change and transformation. Our project is one more step in this direction and I am honoured and inspired to share this project with you.

With warmest regards

Dr Penny Jane Burke
Professor of Education
Director of the Paulo Freire Institue-UK
University of Roehampton, London

30th November, 2014

Prof. Penny Jane Burke
University of Roehampton
London

Dear Prof. Burke,
Thank you very much for your insightful reflections on the impact of neoliberalism on female academics and, particularly, your account of its impact on your career, as a successful academic and researcher. It is really an interesting and informative account.

Neoliberalism has indeed emerged as a major force driving not only many institutional policies and practices but national policies. It has become an acceptable, inevitable way of life to which there appears to be no sensible or logical alternative.

However, neoliberal discourses and practices are bedeviled with many challenges, which, as you rightly pointed out, play out unequally among race, ethnic, gender, as well as social-economic, cultural, political and geographical spaces. As the findings of my PhD research revealed the depth and impact of internationalization and neoliberalism on Ghanaian universities, I began to think reflectively of how female academics in these institutions negotiate through their myriad needs and expectations. I equally began to think of the impact of neoliberalism on my own life and how I have negotiated through these diverse needs.

Many women in Ghana are confronted with varied complex global and local challenges, intersected with colonial/neo colonial influences. In addition to the obvious and ubiquitous challenges confronting the universities to as they compete internationally, many Ghanaian female academics are confronted with various cultural and social expectations, which impact on their work. There is the 'non-negotiable' traditional expectation of getting married and raising children. These are undisputed superior roles of, 'a proper woman'. Female academics are equally supposed to compete with their male counterparts in the academia. They are required to work as men in the academia and as women in the house.

While some women are able to combine these two roles, I will say, in many cases, this ability needs the unflinching support of the partner and support of the families of both partners (In many cases, families of spouses have much influence on marriages). In the end, many female academics are unable to meet the expectations and demands, which reflect in their limited presence in higher positions and ranks in the universities.

This is not to say that many women in Ghana do not benefit from neoliberalism. Its discourses and meritocratic conditions push some women to the top. Similar to your experiences, I have benefitted from neoliberal ideologies and practices including emphasis on individualism and meritocracy. The discourses enabled me to progress in my Masters programme and my PhD. As a university instructor with a Master's degree, my employers granted me a scholarship to pursue further studies based on

their perception of my abilities. In my PhD, my supervisors' positive perceptions of my abilities and capabilities enabled me to acquire the confidence and motivation I needed to pursue the programme. Such confidence in my abilities equally enabled me to obtain a scholarship for the entire duration of the programme. I still had the advantage of participating in many professionally enriching activities and events which were based on merit.

Unfortunately, as you rightly indicated, this cannot be said of all women. The social-economic positioning of some females determines how far they are able to go on the educational and academic ladder. One of the key offshoots of neoliberalism, which I argue affect many females (and of course males), are the effects of structural adjustment programmes which have led to austerity measures embarked upon by successive governments in Ghana since 1983, to stabilize the economy. These measures involve minimizing government expenditure on various sectors of the economy including the educational sector. In such cases, there have been limited opportunities for the universities to give scholarships and other facilities to help students, especially mature ones to pursue higher and further education.

After my PhD, and back to the academia, I am striving to learn how to tune myself to the discipline that goes with attaining success as an academic and as a researcher in a neoliberal era. Parallel to striving to attain this success, I am also concerned with addressing the inequalities permeating neoliberal discourses and practices in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and neo/colonialism.

Major questions I have been asking are collectively and individually, how do Ghanaian female academics think of neoliberal practices and discourses? How do they balance their cultural and traditional roles and demands on one hand, and their academic and educational demands on another? What have actually been their responses to these two competing demands?

I am very excited about the opportunity to embark on this research to seek answers to many of these questions. The research will also help to articulate an alternative feminist agenda and help address some of the many challenges associated with neoliberalism. Once again, thank you.

My kind regards

Gifty Oforiwaa Gyamera (PhD)

International Network on Gender, Social Justice & Praxis **15 September 2016**

Dearest colleagues and friends

Our meeting in Durban, South Africa (8-12th August, 2016) gave me such a precious and much-needed sense of deep connection, solidarity and hope and so the main message I want to send is of sincere gratitude and appreciation. This feeling is rooted in something intensely meaningful to me – a shared and collective energy, passion and commitment amongst our group to develop activist-oriented research – embedded in praxis-based, feminist and social justice approaches and driven by a strong belief that major work still needs to be done to make women's lives better, to unsettle neoliberal, neo-colonial, racist and patriarchal hegemonies and to expose the deeply entrenched and insidious inequalities that often operate in the name of 'equity', 'merit', 'inclusion' and 'fairness'.

Our sharing of auto/biographical stories – the stories of our lived, personal, professional and research encounters and of the ways we have (and continue to) struggled against complex inequalities – opened up a space of genuine trust and connection amongst us.

This highlights the power of auto/biographical story-telling – bringing together the personal and emotional layers of knowing in concert with reflexive and conceptual tools – sets of critical practices rooted in feminist and Freirean methodologies, pedagogies and principles. Our shared commitment to social justice and praxis as a way to make sense of the formations of identity that shape our worlds, relationships and practices cemented our shared commitment to a long-term collaborative project of social justice. This is rooted in our personal and collective hopes and dreams for creating possibilities for pedagogical spaces that are framed and underpinned by feminist, Freirean, social justice values and principles. It is having one another, having a sense of collective

activist-oriented praxis, that makes this feel possible.

Thank you all so much for your love, generosity, support, encouragement, inspiration and solidarity – our connection and our network is a source of great energy, and is a precious gift.

With much respect, admiration and love,

Penny

Reflections on book-writing in progress: Exploring the Complexities in Global Citizenship Education: Hard Spaces, Methodologies, and Ethics

Written by
Lauren Ila Misiaszek

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For my Durban working paper, I shared the main narrative from one of my first sole-authored book proposals, which has been further developed for this Occasional Paper series.

When I presented the work in Durban (August 2016), it was in a final peer review; it is now under contract and I am conducting research for it (Misiaszek, forthcoming 2018a). Ideas for the book originated in my work for the International Network of Gender, Social Justice, and Praxis (henceforth, The Network) from 2013 onward, were further developed for The Network's 2015 Gender and Education Association Biennial Conference symposium, and were directly related to both overarching questions of The Network's August 2016 Durban meeting: (1) How can impact 'beyond academia' be conceptualised within a social justice framework?; and (2) How do researchers' processes facilitate a shift from 'research attempting to make a difference' to 'research that makes a difference'?, as well as the current Network themes generally.

In the introduction to this paper in Durban, I noted: *I'm quite apprehensive to share this piece. This will be the first group to read it. I know it has a lot of holes. It's too long for this working paper, but when I tried to cut it down, it didn't make a lot of sense, so I just left it long. Perhaps it may come across as naïve at times. Certainly, some of it will be completely obvious, particularly since I am drawing on work you all are so familiar with and/or your own work! For example, you will see that I briefly draw on Network Founding Members Professor Sondra Hale's reflections on self-subversion and Professor Penny Jane Burke's work on misrecognition. There are surely missteps. So, thanks for bearing with me as I think through these ideas and thanks for thinking through them with me.*

I thank the reader of this (still) working paper for doing the same.

[1]The quotation marks around 'sensitivity' are intended to indicate the need to problematise this categorisation; although henceforth I will omit these quotation marks for readability, it is intended to be understood in this way.

Introduction

This book builds on four years of work around my positionality as, along with my partner, and among my many identities, one of the first full-time, long-term foreign professors of education in a Chinese university, and my continued positionality as the only foreign woman faculty member in my faculty. By the time of publication, I will have spent approximately five years in this position. I am concurrently exploring this experience in another publication (Misiaszek, forthcoming 2018b).

This book is rooted in my work (Misiaszek, 2016) around the concept of 'sensitivity'[1] as it relates to pedagogies, methodologies, and ethics in my current context and beyond, an issue that cuts across social identifiers. In this book, I now aim to engage in a meta-research project – research on Global Citizenship Education research – by building on this work.

In this earlier work (Misiaszek, 2016b), I reflect upon how I (re)negotiate issues of sensitivity in our institutional context. I analyse my work with my colleague, Professor ZHANG Lili, within the context of our partnership in The Network, drawing on a section of an unpublished internal progress report (Misiaszek & Zhang, 2015) entitled 'Making the path by walking [slowly]: co-facilitation of student-led gender events on campus' (a reference to Freire and Myles Horton's spoken book, *We Make the Road by Walking* (Horton, Freire, Bell, Gaventa, & Peters, 1990)', in which we note:

> We work slowly, following our students' leads, to participate in workshops that are meaningful to them, to center these grassroots approaches as much as possible in the future of our work together, with the aim to 'facilitate advancing an interpretation of situations that emphasizes their **'small culture'** (Holliday, 1999, p. 237) nature, rather than representing them as evidential of national 'large culture' (Holliday, 1999, p. 237) practices' (Hett & Hett, 2013, p. 498). By this we mean that we don't seek to theorize larger situations within China or about 'gender,' but that we see our institution as a 'small culture' in which, according to the participants, these experiences have had a meaningful impact (my emphasis).

Thinking of this idea of 'We Make the Road by Walking', the issue of navigating a sensitive 'small culture' context in relationship to pedagogy, and particularly pedagogy around gender issues, is a constant issue that my colleague and I navigate from start to finish of an event that we hold on campus. It is important here to note how complex sensitivity really is – to not position our context with a deficit due to sensitivity nor to ignore it.

In addition, this has come out particularly in relationship to mentoring local and international students both conducting research locally and abroad. I argue that sensitivity is a problematic concept, understood in practice to mean many different things – meanings that are often not understood by/visible to students, thus making teaching around ethics highly challenging. We negotiate issues of research being considered 'too sensitive' either in our context or in the context of the research, or both. 'Sensitivity' is not a homogenous concept. Foreign students may or may not have opportunities to understand the highly complex higher education context in which they are living and studying in Beijing, and more generally, in China, and this may come out in spaces like a thesis defence when, for instance, topics that they have selected are deemed 'too sensitive'. I am interested in how both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' may understand sensitivity as what I call a 'non-navigable deficit' in my context.

I also face the challenge of negotiating a system as well as teaching students how to negotiate a system in which there are no ethics review/Institutional Review Board processes in our context and often also in their country of research; leading to unique burdens on students, my colleagues, and me as we attempt to address these systemic gaps in 'patchwork' ways in classes and thesis defences.

Other thorny issues around sensitivity include experiences with misrecognition – 'a lack of genuine reciprocal recognition' (Fraser, 2011, p. 2). As Fraser notes,

> Recognition has to do with respect, esteem, prestige: the way society values different traits could call 'patterns' of cultural value… The focus is on what the institutions are *saying*, implicitly or explicitly, by the way they're designed… 'Do I have the possibility to be a full participant in society, to participate on equal terms with others?' And I call that question, the question of parity of participation. So I would say that if the institutions are designed in such a way, that everyone has equal chances for full participation on full terms of parity, that's what we mean by reciprocal recognition, by equal respect. (Fraser, 2011, p. 1)

Misrecognition that I have seen has manifested itself within experiences within the classroom (Burke, 2012; Burke & McManus, 2009), around the lack of structures to accommodate heterogeneous family needs, and lack of staff understanding of global issues, such as Ebola, which led to racist treatment of students; as I am made aware of these situations, and even as I write about them now, I navigate sensitivities around my own actions or, in some cases, inability to act. These issues are compounded particularly since for most of the time we have been on campus, there has not been an English-speaking counsellor on campus, and I (and other colleagues) are informally serving in this role.

Finally, it is worth noting that Prof. ZHANG has brought me into a Chinese NGO-based grant project on girls' sexual health and security as a co-investigator, at times considered a sensitive issue – and, not mutually exclusive, sometimes a 'hot topic' in China. As special permission has been required for me to travel with the group to certain regions of the country, I reflect a great deal on what my presence means as an 'outsider' in this project.

Ultimately, I believe that these experiences point to the need to centre these 'small-culture', grassroots (student and/or community-centred) approaches as much as possible in such collaborative faculty work.

In doing so, perhaps, given our institutional location, and the fact that Prof. ZHANG's and my collaboration is given backing and therefore legitimacy by The Network – for example, our project is being made visible in virtual and in-person spaces (e.g. website, blog, conferences, grant proposals, this paper series) – these possibilities emerging from this project may be able to reverberate and start similar conversations in other similar settings.

It is from this work around 'small cultures' and sensitivities that I approach this book.

Towards a conceptualisation of 'hard'[2] spaces

In this book, I aim to develop a grounded theory around GCE (Global Citizenship Education) work in hard spaces in the Global South through case studies of students, academics, and practitioners doing GCE research in these contexts. At this stage of the project, I primarily engage with the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, an analysis of which I develop in the next section.

I conceptualise hard spaces as contexts (geographical or otherwise) that have been defined by multiple outside international actors and perhaps internally as well, as facing unique challenges to conducting GCE work. This may be because they are heavily surveilled, regulated, Panoptic spaces (Foucault, 1977, pp 195–228), because of political instability or another reason. This is not to say that surveillance does not exist outside the Global South or that it necessarily exists *in* the Global South, but the focus of my book is on this intersection of hard/Global South. The contexts are being kept anonymous at this stage due to ongoing negotiation and sensitivity.

I came to this topic because, in three years of teaching a core PhD course, Comparative Education Research Methodologies, I have not seen a book that confronts, responds to, and/or resonates with the realities of my students' and my research contexts, nor responds to how they can do work on GCE in those contexts (which they and I are doing). Barely a week will pass without a new vignette from one of us about methodological challenges in these settings. Some of these realities were highlighted in the above section on sensitivities.

I believe that new ways of thinking about liminalities of GCE in hard spaces is necessary to facilitate dialogue on these issues from a place of sensitivity. As I state in another paper (Misiaszek, 2016a) Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2012, p. 588) explained how they arrive at *liminalities* as a useful construct:

> This post-structural emphasis on simultaneity can be identified in Youdell's (2010) exploration of pedagogy and boys with 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties'. Rather than deploy social and cultural categories as intersecting, the use of simultaneity facilitates a conceptual liminality. This liminality is a position that is 'necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space (Turner 1969, 95)'.
>
> Theorising opacity and ambiguity as it relates to doing GCE is of interest to me, as, to draw on Turner (1969) in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2012, p. 588), I am called to conduct research in or mentor others conducting research in contexts that "elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space". This book aims to rethink the liminalities of GCE.

Specifically, I explore liminalities in my research in relationship to large global GCE initiatives. For instance, I look at UNESCO's 'first pedagogical guidance on GCE' in the form of cognitive, socio-emotional, and behaviour learning outcomes in such contexts; these are broad indicators for 'education systems' geared towards a wide range of actors working in policy and practice (UNESCO, 2014, 2015). Considering one of these two key socio-emotional learning outcomes, "learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 22), I ask, for example, how should the researcher navigate this learning outcome in a place where this is not a taken-for-granted base/starting point? And how should they navigate the socio-emotional learner attribute, "they develop an understanding of difference and diversity (for example, culture, language, gender, sexuality, religion), of how beliefs and values influence people's views about those who are different, and of the reasons for, and impact of, inequality and discrimination", in a context where (some of) these differences are not openly discussed? As well, considering the UNESCO Clearinghouse on GCE (https://gcedclearinghouse.org/), a global database

[2]The quotation marks around 'hard' are intended to indicate the need to problematise this categorisation; although henceforth I will omit these quotation marks for readability, it is intended to be understood in this way.

of relevant resources, a search of the term 'political sensitivity' yielded no results and a search of the term *sensitivity* yielded just one result on 'gender sensitivity' in an article on gender equity.

This analysis of these global initiatives leads me to ask, beyond international pressure, working where a context is at, can there be new ways to more 'authentically' come to GCE from within these spaces instead of just doing lip service to these UNESCO targets; instead of being a self-fulfilling prophecy of non-authentic engagement? This idea of lip service reminds me of Graham Hingangaroa Smith's (2016) reflection that ethics are "not just a voyeuristic tool to describe our pathologies". Smith inspires me to ask, how can thicker, more substantive, more nuanced GCE in hard spaces go beyond just a box-checking, scientistic (Lather, 2007) tool, with ethics that are necessarily and equally thicker? To try to confront this question, I believe there is much work to be done on understanding how a researcher-practitioner examines *inéditos viáveis* (Romão, 2007, pp 133–137) and navigates GCE in a square peg-round hole situations, on supporting critical research on GCE that can address nuance in hard spaces.

I argue that the UNESCO site's undoubtedly and purposefully aspirational learning outcomes leave much in doubt for these researchers, working in many UNESCO partner countries. Considering Sarah Ahmed's idea that emotions work to shape the 'surfaces' of individual and collective bodies (2004, p. 1), in the context of this doubt caused by these aspirational learning outcomes, I ask, what do hegemonic GCE discourses (including the performativity of these discourses) do to actors in these contexts, including to me? Considering issues of equity in GCE, I consider sensitive issues of emotionality of scholars working from the Global South, such as resentment towards these 'international' learning outcomes and those ('objects of resentment') who benefit from their implementation.

[3]One of the challenges of engaging in a critique of dSS' work is that, while it is quite well known and disseminated in some contexts and languages, it is not as well known in many others. Given its complexity, I am thus faced with the challenge of how extensively to quote him. In this paper, I have chosen to quote at length, to allow the readers to themselves engage with the richness of his arguments that my own work departs from.

For me, the above questions respond to The Network's Durban meeting question, *How do researchers' processes facilitate a shift from 'research attempting to make a difference' to 'research that makes a difference'?* because they call into question the 'authenticity' (itself a contested concept) of 'attempting to make a difference' through GCE.

Towards a sociology of emergences in GCE?

To confront these questions, this work departs from Boaventura de Sousa Santos' (henceforth dSS[3]) concept of epistemologies of the South (de Sousa Santos, 2012). He explains the concept in the following way:

> … the diversity of the world is infinite. It is a diversity that encompasses very distinct modes of being, thinking and feeling, ways of conceiving of time and the relation among human beings and between humans and non-humans, ways of facing the past and the future and of collectively organising life, the production of goods and services, as well as leisure. This immensity of alternatives of life, conviviality and interaction with the world is largely wasted because the theories and concepts developed in the global North and employed in the entire academic world do not identify such alternatives. When they do, they do not valorise them as being valid contributions towards constructing a better society. Therefore, we do not need alternatives; we need rather an **alternative thinking of alternatives**. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 52)

It is the 'alternative thinking of alternatives' that I explore around GCE.

I analyse the noun 'Global Citizenship Education' through the lens of dSS' analysis of the way critical theory has had to resort to adopting hegemonic language for counter-hegemonic work:

> The truth is that **nouns continue to establish the intellectual and political horizon, defining not only what is sayable, credible, legitimate or realistic, but also, by implication, what is unsayable, incredible or unrealistic**. That is to say, by resorting to adjectives, theory assumes it can creatively take advantage of nouns, while agreeing, at the same time, to limit its debates and proposals to what is possible within a horizon of possibilities which is originally not its own. Critical theory, therefore, **takes on a derivative character which allows it to engage in debate but not to discuss the terms of the debate**, let alone explain why it opts for one kind of debate and not another. The efficacy of the counter-hegemonic use of hegemonic concepts or tools is defined by the consciousness of the limits of such use. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, pp 47–48, my emphasis)

I am very interested in two issues here. The first is the way certain aspirational GCE discourses create a self-fulfilling prophecy in the way their languages define what is 'un/sayable, in/credible, or un/realistic'. The second is the way in which GCE has the potential to 'take on a derivative character which allows it to engage in debate' using concepts that are perhaps, at face value, contradictory to its aims.

I look at how theory and practice around GCE collide in these contexts:

The blindness of theory entails the invisibility of the practice, and hence its sub-theorisation, while **the blindness of practice entails the irrelevancy of the theory**. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 49).

> Under these conditions, the relation between theory and practice assumes strange characteristics. On the one hand, **theory is no longer at the service of the future practices it potentially contains, and serves, rather, to legitimise (or not) the past practices that have emerged in spite of itself**. Theory stops being orientation to become ratification of the successes obtained by omission or confirmation of foreseen failures. On the other hand, practice justifies itself by resorting to a theoretical potpourri focused on the topical needs of the moment, made up of heterogeneous concepts and languages which, from the point of view of theory, are no more than opportunist rationalisations or rhetorical exercises. In a nutshell, the phantasmal relation between theory and practice can be formulated in this way: from the point of view of theory, theoretical bricolage never qualifies as theory; from the point of view of practice, a posteriori theorisation is mere parasitism. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 49, my emphasis)

I argue that GCE in these contexts runs this 'blindness' risk and at not being able to serve the actual practices that are being conducted in its name in these contexts. I explore how epistemological and ontological differences contribute to this collision:

> It goes without saying that the phantasmal distance between theory and practice is not merely the result of context differences. **It is a far more epistemological, if not ontological distance**. Way beyond context, the movements in different continents construct their struggles on the basis of ancestral, popular and spiritual knowledge that has always been alien to Eurocentric critical theory. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 50, my emphasis)

To do so, as dSS states, "we are confronted with non-Western world visions which call for intercultural translation before they can be understood and appreciated" (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 50). I focus on the 'intercultural translation' of GCE to these hard contexts:

> The Indian sociologist Shiv Vishvanathan formulated eloquently the notion of want and motivation that I here designate as the work of translation. Says Vishvanathan (2000: 12): 'My problem is, how do I take the best of Indian civilisation and at the same time keep my modern, democratic imagination alive?' If we could imagine an exercise of work of translation conducted by Vishvanathan and a European or North American intellectual/activist or social movement, it would be possible to think of the latter's motivation for dialogue formulated thus: **'How can I keep alive**

> **in me the best of modern and democratic Western culture, while at the same time recognising the value of the world that it designated autocratically as non-civilised, ignorant, residual, inferior, or unproductive?'.** (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 60, my emphasis)

The 'exercise of work' gets to the root of this project as it relates to contexts in which GCE, in its aspirational role, may again perpetuate notions of some contexts as being a lost cause, – "non-civilised, ignorant, residual, inferior, or unproductive, terms which evoke discourses of deficit thinking – blaming students (or, to adapt it for this case, some contexts) failure on internal deficits or deficiencies" (Valencia, 1997). I am interested in dSS's concept of *diatopical* hermeneutics as a way forward from this deficit trap:

> The work of translation concerns both knowledges and practices (and their agents). The 'translation of knowledges' assumes the form of a 'diatopical hermeneutics'. This kind of work is what makes the ecology of knowledges possible. 'Diatopical hermeneutics' consists in interpreting two or more cultures, aiming to identify isomorphic concerns among them and the different answers they provide. **I have proposed an exercise in diatopical hermeneutics apropos the isomorphic preoccupation regarding human dignity, bringing together the Western concept of human rights, the Islamic concept of *umma* and the Hindu concept of *dharma*** (Santos 1995: 333–347; 2002: 39–60). (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 59)

I believe diatopical hermeneutics can help GCE release its grip from words that have become so loaded in certain contexts that they become paralysing and GCE then becomes a non-starter.

But I am left asking about this work of translation when the words being employed by dSS are, at least contemporarily, from a relatively privileged 'safe' position, places from which concepts like counter-hegemony can be thrown around:

> The work of translation aims to clarify what unites and separates the different movements and practices so as to ascertain the possibilities and limits of articulation and aggregation among them. Because there is no single universal social practice or collective subject to confer meaning and direction to history, the work of translation becomes crucial to define, in each concrete and historical moment or context, which constellations of subaltern practices carry **more counter-hegemonic potential.** (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 61)

What if the potential must be separated from the notion of counter-hegemony in order to achieve that very counter-hegemonic effect? Clearly these are not words necessarily used with all actors, but equally dSS posts them freely on his website but likely now enjoys protected 'visitor' status in the most challenging contexts. Of course he can and does use this privilege counter-hegemonically, but it runs the risk of overlooking this challenge for many readers. But dSS leaves me asking uncomfortable questions about counter-hegemony in certain contexts, and about doing GCE when that requires embodying this counter-hegemony, particularly for more vulnerable actors. In his article, it is not that repression is absent from the country contexts whose counter-hegemonic movements he draws upon (historically or presently), and it is not that I wish to undermine the historical and current challenges and victories of these movements (indeed I have been a part of them and they are my inspiration), but I am interested in looking at how contemporary GCE is existing in spaces in the Global South where it has outwardly the slimmest of possibilities for making a difference; in other words, not just Global South contexts but hard Global South contexts. How can "limit acts" (Freire, 1970, p. 90) and *inéditos viáveis* (Romão, 2007, pp 134–137) be understood in hard contexts? I am interested in re-writing engagement on GCE in these contexts, and I argue that to do so requires new theoretical strategies:

> **The loss of critical nouns, together with the phantasmal relation between Eurocentric critical theory and the transformative struggles in the world,** not only recommends some distance vis-à-vis previous critical thinking; more than that, **they demand thinking the unthinkable, that is to say, adopting surprise as a constitutive act of the theoretical work.** Now, since, by definition,

> avant-garde theories are not taken by surprise, I believe that what we need in the present context of social and political change is not avant-garde, but rather rearguard theories. I mean theoretical work that goes hand in hand with the transformative work of the social movements, putting it in question, establishing synchronic and diachronic comparisons, and symbolically enlarging its dimension by means of articulations, translations, and alliances with other movements. **It calls for artisanal rather than architectural work, work of committed witnessing rather than clairvoyant leadership, accessing what is new for some and very old for other people.** (de Sousa Santos, 2012, pp 50–51, my emphasis)

The methodological strategy, described below, aims to allow space for this 'surprise', 'artisanal' work, 'committed witnessing' to 'acces[s] what is new for some and very old for other people'.

Furthermore, along with intercultural translation and the concept of *ecologies of knowledge*, dSS develops the concepts of *sociology of absences and sociologies of emergences* as the two other steps in the construction of *epistemologies of the South*:

> By sociology of absences I mean research that aims to show that what does not exist is actually actively produced as non-existent, that is to say, as an unbelievable alternative to what exists. Its empirical object is impossible from the point of view of conventional social sciences. Impossible objects must be turned into possible objects, absent objects into present objects. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 52)

This language echoes my earlier discussion of 'un/sayable, in/credible, or un/realistic' language. Furthermore,

> The sociology of emergences consists in undertaking a symbolic enlargement of knowledges, practices and agents in order to identify therein the tendencies of the future (the Not Yet) upon which it is possible to intervene so as to maximise the probability of hope vis-à-vis the probability of frustration. Such symbolic enlargement is actually a form of sociological imagination with a double aim: on the one hand, to know better the conditions of the possibility of hope; on the other, to define principles of action to promote the fulfillment of those conditions. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 56)

This echoes Freire's concept of *inéditos viáveis*, and complements sociology of absences.

> Therefore, the sociology of emergences replaces the idea of determination by the idea of care. **The axiology of progress is thus replaced by the axiology of care.** Whereas in the sociology of absences the axiology of care is exerted vis-à-vis available alternatives, in the sociology of emergences the axiology of care is exerted vis-à-vis possible alternatives. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 56)

I consider how valuing of progress as it relates to GCE can be replaced with care through available and possible alternatives. In other words, what would it look like for 'care' to be valued and to replace/decentre an inherently temporal idea like 'progress' within GCE? Or, perhaps, how might 'progress' be redefined to embody 'care'? And what might this look like in hard spaces where both concepts are not easily understood concretely?

Other methodological notes

It is necessary to strategically draw on many disciplinary/methodological traditions to explore this topic, starting with, but not limited to, critical (particularly Freirean) and feminist methodologies (including work around reflexivity and positionality (Nagar & Geiger, 2007) and Butler's notion of the responsible self (Butler, 2005) in anthropology, sociology, philosophy, education, and the humanities.

Theoretically and methodologically (particularly as it relates to reflexivity and positionality), perhaps the hardest bottom line of this project is one of the most well-known, even clichéd ones:

> Recognising the relativity of cultures does not necessarily imply adopting relativism as a philosophical stance. (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 59)

Here, I consider Harding's concept of *strong objectivity* (Harding, 1991) as a potential way forward in thinking about GCE in hard spaces for both myself as the researcher and for the participants. I also consider Hale's reflections on half a century of her work in what I would deem hard spaces:

> Can any ethnographer, biographer, or oral historian avoid imposing what we have become? Can we be different from who we are? **If we are committed to a particular theory and methodology, and are engaged in praxis, is it authentic (a term to be interrogated) to be or do otherwise?** If, however, we try to act as more than conduits of the narrator's story, e.g., as interpreters, dialogists, or even collaborators, do we become cultural imperialists? (Hale, 2014, p. 151, my emphasis)

It is important to examine this question of 'authenticity' – my own, other actors, and notions of GCE – in these contexts. I also draw on Hale's concept of 'uncertainty' as 'creative' and caution as 'giv[ing] others a chance':

> All of this adds up to my reluctance to use conventional research methods in participating with Sudanese and other African and Middle Eastern women. As my drive toward political solidarity and liberatory agendas grows, my anxiety about what and how to be in this context increases. My not-totally satisfactory and hopefully temporary solution has been to self-subvert my every academic move, to hold myself accountable at every turn. This gives some scholars pause about my work, often not fully understanding or intentionally choosing to misinterpret my caution when I interrogate issues such as Western women writing about the most intimate aspects of our 'subjects'' lives. I return to this theme at the end of this brief essay when I claim that uncertainty can be very creative and that caution can give others a chance. (Hale, 2014, p. 153)

Grounded theory is also being used as a data analysis strategy in this project, heeding Charmaz's caution about what researchers 'see'.

> What researchers see may be neither basic nor certain (Mitchell & Charmaz, 1996). What respondents assume or do not apprehend may be much more important than what they talk about. An acontextual reliance on respondents' overt concerns can lead to narrow research problems, limited data, and trivial analyses. (Charmaz, 2010, p. 186)

How case studies are presented in this book is carefully considered, rooted in Charmaz's aims:

> Written images portray the tone the writer takes towards the topic and reflect the writer's relationships with his or her respondents. **I aim for curiosity without condescension, openness without voyeurism, and participation without domination.** Maintaining balance is difficult, because I try to portray respondents' worlds and views. (Charmaz, 2010, p. 202, my emphasis)

I believe the ideas drawn upon for my study – ideas like liminalities, *inéditos viáveis*, caution and uncertainty – which all are related to the un-known, make 'new-for-some-and-very-old-for-other-people' methodological strategies (such as poetry as a form of critical pedagogy, which I explore in a prose-poem form in Misiaszek [under review, March 2016]), and sketches, are appropriate ways forward for this project.

In Misiaszek (2016a), I adapted a concept of sketches, choosing to play with the methodological strategy of a sketch inspired by Stephen Ball's (2012) utilisation of workbook to describe one of his recent books, which begins with a foreword entitled '(Not) reading this book':

> First, the book is in part a workbook. It is an attempt to develop a method of policy analysis fitted to the current context of global education policy. A lot of things are being tried out for size. Some of the ideas or analyses you may think do not work or could be done differently. That is fine! I hope you will decide to take on some of the approaches outlined and take them further. (Ball, 2012, p. xii)

I argue that the precedent of this discoursal comfort in the inevitable discomfort of 'try[ing] [things] out for size', again brings to mind the central characteristics of the *inédito viável* (incompleteness, inconclusiveness, and unaccomplishedness). So while the space in Misiaszek (2016a) didn't allow for a 'workbook', per se, I approached the sketches with these same intentions.

I note that, interestingly, the English word 'sketch' traces its origins to the Italian word *schizzo* (of whose meanings include splash), which is appropriate as these sketches ask the reader to 'dive' into the subsequent sections of this book. A sketch can be "a rough drawing representing the chief features of an object or scene and often made as a preliminary study", "a tentative draft (as for a literary work)", "a brief description (as of a person) or outline", "a short literary composition somewhat resembling the short story and the essay but intentionally slight in treatment, discursive in style, and familiar in tone", or "a slight theatrical piece having a single scene; especially: a comic variety act" (Merriam-Webster.com). These first four definitions are each subtly different from each other and each brings out specific nuanced characteristics of these sketches.

I aim to write a workbook style book in the spirit of Ball, driven by any of the above and other types of sketches, and written for both 'insiders' and 'outsiders', particularly those in the same or similar contexts and written particularly for early career educators.

Conclusion

Reading the title of the book series in which my book will be published – Critical Global Citizenship Education: Globalization and the Politics of Equity and Inclusion – through the lens of this project, I argue that the politics of equity and inclusion in GCE research, particularly of GCE researchers in hard contexts, is fundamental for the future of 'authentic', complex GCE work that combats theoretical and practical 'blindness', to draw on dSS (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 46) once more (at length to fully reflect his analysis of Habermas):

> Keeping distance does not mean dumping all this rich tradition into the dustbin of history, let alone ignoring the historical possibilities for social emancipation of Western modernity. It means assuming our time as a time displaying an unprecedented, transitional feature which we may formulate in the following way: **we have modern problems for which there are no modern solutions**. The modern problems of equality, liberty and fraternity are still with us. However, the modern solutions proposed by liberalism as well as Marxism no longer work, even if pushed to its possible maximum consciousness (to use Lucien Goldmann's phrase), as is the case of Habermas' magisterial intellectual reconstruction of Western modernity. The limits of such a reconstruction are inscribed in the dominant version of modernity from which Habermas takes off, and which is, actually, a second modernity developed from the first one, the Iberian modernity of the Coimbra scholars in the sixteenth century. What characterises the second modernity and renders it predominant is the abyssal line it traces between metropolitan societies (Europe) and colonial societies. This abyssal line traverses Habermas's thinking in its entirety and is therefore also relevant for the concept of public sphere. **His extraordinary lucidity allows him to see it but not to overcome it**. His theory of communicative action, as a new model of discursive rationality, is well known. According to Habermas, this theory constitutes a telos of development for all humanity and that with it, it is possible to refuse both relativism and eclecticism. However, once asked if his theory, particularly his critical theory of advanced capitalism, could be useful to the progressive forces of the Third World,

> and if such forces could be useful to the struggles of democratic socialism in developed countries, Habermas (1984) begged not to answer: 'I am inclined to reply 'no' in both cases. I am aware that mine is a limited and Eurocentric vision. **I would rather not answer**'. Such response implies that Habermas' communicative rationality, in spite of its resounding universality, actually excludes four fifths of the world population. This exclusion is declared in the name of inclusion/exclusion criteria whose legitimacy resides in their supposed universality. In this way, exclusion may be declared simultaneously with extreme honesty ('I am aware that mine is a limited and Eurocentric vision') and extreme blindness vis-à-vis its non-sustainability (or, to be fair, the blindness is not total, considering Habermas' strategic way out ('I would rather not answer'). Thus, Habermas' universalism turns out to be a benevolent but imperialist universalism, for it fully controls decisions concerning its own limitations, imposing on itself, with no other limits, what it includes and excludes.

Thus, I end by asking, what are modern solutions for this 'problem' of (trying to) conduct GCE research in hard spaces? What does 'overcoming' this 'problem' look like? And, when asked about this 'problem', is it possible to reach a place in which one '*would* rather answer'?

Epilogue

One of the realities of working on this project is that I have navigated great access to online resources using electronic tools provided without cost by my colleagues in other parts of the globe, and with books I had already on hand before arriving in this context. However, without these tools, most of what I am writing would not be possible from where I am writing it. These are the tools my students and colleagues lack, and there is not extensive hard copy access to these resources, at least not without great efforts and financial resources. But this situation precisely reflects the saturated and well-documented theme of the ways in which material limitation can be flipped into a unique epistemological standpoint.

Thus the perceived intellectual and material limitations faced by those doing work on GCE in equally or more surveilled contexts, and the contributions that they can make to GCE from these 'challenging' epistemological standpoints, facing risks that I do not face, are of great importance to me.

Finally, it is important to recognise how the various iterations of writing this piece have been mildly (and appropriately) uncomfortable, precisely due to the vagueness and ambiguity surrounding my own positionality and that of the actors who I am working with. I aim for this project to be driven by a non-self-indulgent, non-commodified (Tierney, 2016), self-subversive (Hale, 2014) discomfort.

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Reflections on Durban **August 2016**

Dear friends
I am not sure where to start this letter, what words to use to express my immense awe and thanks to each of you, but perhaps words are not needed…

I remember how apprehensive I felt leading up to our time in Durban, what could I possibly contribute, where would I fit, should I be here?

However after the first few hours, I realised I need not worry.
My mind was spinning, my soul was alive and I was full of joy.

I had found my people, my tribe, a place and space where I belong,
I was no longer an outsider.

My knowledges and practitioner wisdom were valued and celebrated, as were all of our unique experiences and individual journeys.

I feel immensely privileged and thankful for the time and conversations we shared in Durban.

The shared curiosity and commitment to exploring ideas, challenging the status quo and creating new possibilities.

In those few short days I learnt so much from each and every one of you. I learnt about what it means to be an authentic, activist and academic, about the possibilities for research and action to change our communities.

The warmth and camaraderie from this time I know will hold me in good stead as I start my own PhD journey. A journey that I know will be richer and more challenging because it has started with you.

The moon was full and bright as it rose over the Indian Ocean, that last night in Durban and we were full of ideas, hopes, renewed energy and purpose… Thank you

Kindest regards,
Belinda x

Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education Occasional Papers,
Issue 02 October 2017

ISSN: 2206-4362